



# RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION – Part 3 Section 16

DELEGATED  
OFFICER DECISION  
TAKEN BY:  
PORTFOLIO AREA:

Paul Fleming, Strategic Director of  
Resources

Finance and Governance

**SUBJECT: Award of Advice Services contract**

## 1. DECISION

That the Strategic Director of Resources approves the award of the contract for the provision of Debt, Welfare and Housing Advice to Shelter for a three year period from July 2023, and participation in the Council's Supported Housing Improvement Programme from January 2023 – March 2025.

## 2. REASON FOR DECISION

The current Debt and Welfare Advice service contract is due to end at the end of June 2022 and to continue support to vulnerable households; a new contract award is required.

Tenders were evaluated using a method known as MEAT (Most Economically Advantageous Tender) with the recommendation from the panel that the contract be awarded to Shelter.

## 3. BACKGROUND

Following an independent external review of the current service and a comprehensive review of the specification needs, the Executive Board gave approval on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 for the retendering of an Advice Service. Subsequent to the Executive Board decision, approval to commence procurement was given from the Head of Corporate Contracting & Procurement to progress via the recommended strategy for the procurement.

## 4. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

One of the key objectives of the procurement exercise was to ensure that there would be a seamless transition to the new contract and potential new provider. Completing the procurement process more than 6 months before the end of the existing contract provided the necessary time to negotiate and transition to a new provider if required. As the award is to the existing provider, the time will now be used to ensure that the enhanced service is fully discussed and launched in July 2023.

During the review of the current service provision and data, it has become evident that the majority of the customers have housing needs in addition to Debt and Welfare requirements. The new specification will therefore incorporate housing advice to ensure a full service is delivered to the residents of the borough. Failure to incorporate this aspect of support would adversely affect customer outcomes, and potentially result in many customers being referred to other providers to receive housing advice.

Unfortunately, the Council only received one submission for the Advice Services contract. Whilst limited response to a tender would normally be cause for concern, in this case, it illustrates the lack

of organisations with the skills and knowledge to provide a comprehensive Advice Service. To overcome the shortage of organisations who may bid for the contract, the tender document did suggest that consortium approaches would be welcomed. It is highly unlikely that additional submissions could be elicited from a re-procurement exercise.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The estimated value of the contract over the three years is £720,000. This is made up of the existing Debt, Welfare and Housing Advice budget of £150,000 p.a. with the remaining value being funded from government monies received by BwD to deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The procurement process complies with the regulations of the Council's Contract and Procurement rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015. All contracts and contract variations will be in a form approved by legal officers in the Commissioning and Procurement team.

## **7. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

A full external review of the Advice Service was conducted in June – July 2021. This review engaged with internal departments, service users and other Voluntary, Charity and Faith based organisations to obtain a view of the needs of the residents of the borough.

The review and engagement work undertaken in June – July 2021 did consider whether the advice requirements could be delivered fully to residents by the existing Voluntary, Charity and faith based organisations in the borough, thereby removing the need of the Council to make provision. The perilous nature of funding for Voluntary, Charity and Faith based organisations, and the need for specialist advice services resulted in this option being rejected.

## **8. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and the any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Andy Ormerod
<b>DATE:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2022
<b>BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:</b>	Executive Member Decision 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2022

Signed:

**Paul Fleming, Strategic Director Resources**

**Date:**