

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

1 ADVICE SERVICES CONTRACT 2019-22

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Executive on 5 December 2018 to Full Council with a recommendation on the Advice Services Contract 2019-22.
- 1.2 An extract of the key elements of the report of the Assistant Director, Community & Housing Services to the Executive is appended.
- 1.3 The Executive recognised that, as the current service provider, Citizens Advice Rochford and Rayleigh were providing an excellent level of service at good value that reflected well on the Authority.
- 1.4 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES** that the advice services contract 2019-22 be awarded to Citizens Advice Rochford and Rayleigh.

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ADVICE SERVICES CONTRACT 2019-22**1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 To agree the outcome of the Advice Services Tender Evaluation Panel and award the Advice Services Contract 2019-22 to Citizens Advice Rochford & Rayleigh (CARR).
- 1.2 To recommend that this report is presented to Full Council on 11 December 2018 to endorse the proposal as set out in the sections below.

2 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT REFERENCE No: 12/18**3 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The only bid for the contract received was from Citizens Advice Rochford & Rayleigh (CARR); however, the tender submission met all the requirements of the specification. CARR was able to demonstrate, using the organisation's local experience of need that social value can be clearly delivered through economic benefits, early interventions and community engagement, all of which will be able to add value and enhance services provided by the Council.

4 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Advice Services Contract is part of the Council's current provision to ensure that the general advice needs of residents of the District are met. Demand for free advice remains high in Rochford District, particularly in relation to employment, relationship and family issues, monetary and housing advice. Funding a general advice service provides support that can help residents prevent an escalation of health, care and housing needs, which in turn reduces the likelihood of requiring more intensive and costly support in a crisis.
- 4.2 Agreement to proceed to tender to maintain the current level of advisory services was approved by the Executive on 11 July 2018 and endorsed by Full Council on 17 July 2018. It was agreed that the Advice Services Contract starting in April 2019 would be tendered for a further 2 years, with the option for the Council to extend the contract for a further 1 year. The value of the contract was estimated to be £70,000 per year, plus accommodation at a peppercorn rent.
- 4.3 The tender was subsequently published in July 2018 and an evaluation panel met on 11 October 2018 to review the returned tenders and make a decision on which organisation should be awarded the contract. One bid was received from CARR and on evaluation it was confirmed that this met all the requirements of the specification and hence CARR should be awarded the contract.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The only option considered was the “do not endorse the recommendations of the tender evaluation panel” and effectively discontinue the services. This option has not been fully considered because of the benefits the advice services provision brings to both residents and the Council, as demonstrated in the tender submission.

6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Any reduction in the current advice services provision would impact adversely on the wellbeing of residents and would significantly increase the workload of Council staff in areas such as benefits and housing, impacting on prevention outcomes and associated savings. It is a service that many residents use and have come to rely on over a number of years for support and independent advice.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The current value of the contract remains unchanged and will be £70,000 per year for two years from April 2019, with the option of extending for an additional year. This is to be funded from the Advice Services budget. Funding for subsequent years would be reviewed annually based on delivery of the previous year's outcomes.
- 7.2 It is anticipated that the Council owned accommodation at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh and Back Lane, Rochford would continue to be made available to CARR at a peppercorn rent. That said, Council owned assets are under review and CARR would be expected to discuss and consider future accommodation options through the period of the contract.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 CARR will be granted use of the Council premises on a licence for two years, extendable by one year to mirror the contract awarded. A termination clause will be inserted into the licence agreement, should either party wish to terminate earlier than the full term or in the event of any breaches in the obligations.

9 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the council when it makes decisions. The duty requires the Council to have regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnerships, pregnancy/maternity.
- 9.3 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a protected characteristic.

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