

Notice of NON KEY Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Approval to extend the Autism Hub peer support and social inclusion contract for a period of 3 months and waive contract procedure rules to ensure continuity of the service
Decision Maker:	Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gillian Ford, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care Services
ELT Lead:	Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People
Report Author and contact details:	Sophie Barron, Senior Commissioner T: 01708 431082 E: Sophie.Barron@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	Delivering Integrated services and working in partnerships to achieve improved outcomes and value for money services for residents.
Financial summary:	The current contract is £80k annually, and is an offer for adults 18+. The cost of the 3 month extension will be £20,000.
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	The decision will be exempt from call in as it is a Non key Decision

Non-key Executive Decision

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People -Supporting our residents to stay safe and well X

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

For the reasons detailed in this report the Strategic Director of People is recommended to agree extend the current contract with Sycamore Trust for the Autism Hub (Peer Support and Social Inclusion) for a period of 3 months (from 1st August 2024) at a cost of £20,000.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution

3.3.3 Powers common to all Strategic Directors

1. General

1.1 To take any steps, and take any decisions, necessary for the proper management and administration of their allocated directorate, in accordance with applicable Council policies and procedures.

4. Contracts

4.2 To award all contracts with a total contract value of below £1,000,000 other than contracts covered by Contract Procedure Rule 16.3

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This paper is seeking permission to extend the current Autism Hub contract for a period of 3 months from 1st August 2024 to 31st October 2024 at a total value of £20,000. This is to enable to the panel to be convened to evaluate and moderate the bids.

Background

Having currently commissions the Sycamore Trust to deliver a preventative offer for Adults with Autism and related conditions only, at a cost of £80,000 per annum. The current contract ends on the 31st July 2024 and has been delivered by the current provider since 2018.

Recommissioning

To help develop a further understanding of what the current support gaps are for people with autism in Havering, a survey was co-designed with people with autism and their parents and carers to gather feedback. Two surveys, one for those with autism and one for parents and carers were published in February 2024 for 4 weeks, resulting in a combined 149 responses. The main focus of both surveys was to establish the top 3 priorities to help us design a service that meets the current and future needs of our autistic community.

The findings and feedback from the surveys have been used to design a new All Age Autism service specification. The service will be community based, providing information and advice, peer support and activity groups to meet the needs of local people of all ages on the Autistic Spectrum. The service will also include supporting individuals and their families through the diagnosis process in the form of pre diagnostic support.

Non-key Executive Decision

The Council is out to tender for this service and it is recommended the current contract is extended for an additional 3 months to enable the Council to conduct its evaluation and moderation process with whilst ensuring continuity of service for users. Panel members have been identified and a new timetable has been established with procurement to ensure a decision is reached by early August 2024. This follows regrettably capacity issues in the service to meet the deadlines required for the current contract end date of 31st July 2024. This revised timeline will also provide a longer mobilisation period to support the new service structure which will require the winning provider to collaborate with community centres to set up their service.

3-month service proposal

A meeting has been held with the Sycamore Trust who has agreed to this short extension on the provision of receiving continuation of funding under their current contractual agreement. They have submitted a 3-month proposal detailing how the service will operate. Additionally, the provider has already secured another venue in Romford to host some of their existing groups, ensuring no interruption in service from the 31st July 2024.

Service offer is as follows:

Face to Face service

The face to face element of the service will be delivered by 2 staff members and reduced to one day a week from 9am-4pm. This will include scheduled appointments, peer groups, steering group committee and parent support groups. This element of the service will be run from a venue in Romford on Fridays to provide service users some continuity of service.

Autism Ambassadors

The delivery of this service will remain unchanged and will continue to raise awareness of autism in schools and businesses.

Outreach, Information, Support and Advice

The remaining hours of the contract would be delivered from their Dagenham office or via outreach opportunities. Pre-arranged appointments would take place either from their Dagenham or new Romford base or remotely via Zoom. Outreach will take place in community hubs in Rainham & Harold Hill libraries on their community hub days. This will include attending parent coffee mornings, community events and professional meetings to promote the service and raise awareness.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – Do nothing

This option has been rejected as the Council needs to ensure service continuity while it completes the tender evaluation.

Option 2 – Abandon the procurement process and do not award

This option has been rejected as would leave a gap in service offer for Havering's autistic community. As identified in a previous EHIA that was completed on the initial recommendation to let the contract lapse last year, this could result in an increase for statutory services. There would also be reputational risk to the Council as we have recently consulted with the autistic community on the design of a new service offer that aligns with our All Age Autism Strategy.

Non-key Executive Decision

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Two surveys, one for those with autism and one for parents and carers were published in February 2024. The findings and feedback from the surveys have been used to design a new All Age Autism service specification.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Sophie Barron

Designation: Senior Commissioner

Signature:



Date: 25/07/2024

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual may generally do, subject to any statutory limitations. The Council has the power under this section to agree to the proposals in the recommendations.

Further, the Council has the power to commence a procurement process for these services under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which allows the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

The value of the proposed extension is £20,000 for 3 months. When procured, the value of the contract was below the light touch regime threshold under Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR). The contract extension is therefore not caught under the full PCR regime and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) must be followed.

Officers have obtained the relevant waiver from the lead member as per the Contract Procedure Rules. This waiver is made on the basis that it is in the best interest of the Council that the contract is extended to allow enough time for the tender arrangements to conclude and the winning bidder to then mobilise.

For the reasons set out above, the Council may extend the contract for another 3 months with Sycamore Trust.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This decision paper is seeking approval to extend the Autism Hub peer support and social inclusion contract with the Sycamore Trust for a period of 3 months and waive contract procedure rules to ensure continuity of the service. This contract extension will run from 1st August 2024 to 31st October 2024.

The total cost of the extension is £20,000, the cost of this extension is at the current contract rate. The annual cost of the current contract is £80,000 per annum and this is fully funded from the Better Care Fund.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The recommendations made in this report do not appear to give rise to any immediate identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

Non-key Executive Decision

- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

The Council seeks to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all in all situations.

There are no equalities and social inclusion implications and risks associated with this decision.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no Environmental and climate change implications and risks.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

None

Non-key Executive Decision

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Barbara Nicholls

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title: Strategic Director of People

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date: 25/07/2024

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____