

Notice of KEY Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Contracts Extension
Decision Maker:	Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Oscar Ford, Cabinet Member for Children Social Care
Report Author and contact details:	Clare Jackson, Commissioner clare.jackson@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	At a local level, this contract supports Havering Council to meet its People Theme priorities in its Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27. This plan sets out how the Council intends to invest and transform the borough with an emphasis on improving the lives of vulnerable children, adults and families.
Financial summary:	The one-year extension of the targeted information advice and guidance service contract will cost £580k.
Reason decision is Key	In excess of £500,000.00
Date notice given of intended decision:	6 March 2025

Relevant OSC:	People
Is it an urgent decision?	No
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	No

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

People - Things that matter for residents X

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - A well run Council that delivers for People and Place.

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

For the reasons set out in this report, the Strategic Director of People is recommended to agree to the one-year extension of the Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance contract with Prospects Services from 1st September 2025 to 31st August 2026.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

Scheme 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

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. This delegation shall include the ability to extend or vary a contract up to and including a value of £1,000,000 (provided that the extension is in line with the existing contractual provisions.)

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1.1 Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) assist young individuals in developing resilience and managing life's challenges. It shapes their career choices and aspirations, focusing on reintegrating NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) youth into meaningful learning, boosting their skills and benefiting their families and communities. This support guarantees access to unbiased, high-quality advice for advancing in education and employment, thereby enhancing their prospects.

1.2 In 2019, the Council awarded a seven-year contract (5 + 1 + 1 year) to Prospects Services for the provision of a Targeted Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) service. The contract commenced on 1st September 2019 and run until August 2024. The first one years of the two-year contract extension is expiring in August 2025. This decision to extend the contract for a further one will take it to August 2026, utilising the maximum permissible extension within the original contract terms.

1.3 The IAG service has a specific remit to work with all Havering residents aged 16-18 and up to 25 with a special educational need, to support students who are identified as high risk of becoming NEET. This includes working with young people leaving care, teenage mothers and young offenders who require additional and more intensive support to access education and training opportunities.

1.3 Performance Monitoring

In terms of performance, the contract has continued to deliver performance which maintains the London Borough of Havering's position in Quintile 1 in England. The Targeted IAG service has delivered high levels of participation amongst young Havering residents and maintained low levels of NEET young people. Data published by the Department for Education's annual NEET and Not Known performance for Havering is 2.8% for 2024 with a participation rate of 94.6% placing Havering in Quintile 1 for this area of performance with 98% of learners having a September Guarantee and offer of education in place prior to leaving school at the end of year 11.

The DfE monitors the three-month average figures for performance purposes. These figures are published by the DfE and form part of the Annual NEET Scorecard.

The tables below show the comparison between the final 2024/25 Dec -Feb data and the final monthly and average performance figures and quintiles for 2023/25 in comparison to 2018/20

NEET & NOT KNOWN - Academic age 16 & 17 (2023/2025)

Year	December	January	February	Dec - Feb Average
2024/25	3.6%	2.7%	2.1%	2.8% Q1
2023/24	3.3%	3.1%	2.2%	2.8% Q1

NEET & NOT KNOWN - Academic age 16 & 17 (2018/20)

Year	December	January	February	Dec - Feb Average
2019/20	3.5%	2.7%	2.5%	2.9%
2018/19	3.7%	3.1%	2.6%	3.1%

The spend data indicate that the one-year extension will cost a total of £580,000. The cost for the service remains the same as the original bid for the contract and no uplift request has been received. On this basis, the total value of the contract will remain the same. Once this extension decision has been formally agreed, the Lead Commissioner will write to the supplier and inform them of the extension. The management of the contract will therefore continue with regular quarterly reporting and contract meetings between the Council and supplier.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

1. Do nothing:

Not securing the extension will significantly impact the maintenance of the current service, requiring the Council to re-commission the service. However, this has been rejected because the current contract holders are delivering services effectively and the extension will provide sufficient time to undertake a robust commissioning and procurement process.

2. Retender:

Retendering the contract is not an option in this instance, due to the amount of time and resources required. A previous benchmarking exercise indicated that the market was limited. In addition to this, the current provider has the advantage of insight into the local area i.e. schools and education providers, which is essential to ensuring the best support is delivered.

Given the length of time the contract has been in place, the Council needs assurance that it is still meeting the needs of young people, while gaining value for money. To ensure this is the case, a full recommissioning and procurement exercise will be explored during the extension period.

3. Extend for One Year:

Enacting the provision of extension as set out in the current contract by 12 months gives the Council sufficient time to undertake a detailed analysis and develop a commissioning strategy, looking at funding, service requirements, benchmarking and market testing, to ensure a robust strategy is developed going forward.

This is the recommended option.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

N/A

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

Name: Clare Jackson

Designation: Havering Integrated Team At Place

Signature: *C Jackson*

Date: 2 June 2025

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has the power to extend the contract 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 Council also 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 constraints on the Council's powers. None of the constraints on the Council's s.1 power are engaged by this decision.

The original value of the contract with Prospect Services is above the applicable public procurement threshold for services contracts for the purposes of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR), and as such, the contract is caught by the full PCR regime.

As set out in the contract particulars, the Council has the option to extend the term until the 31st August 2026. The extension of time is therefore permitted under Regulation 72(1)(a) of the PCR, as it was provided for in the initial procurement documents. This also complies with paragraph 19.4 of the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules (CPR).

In line with CPR 19.8, the reasons and authority to vary, modify or extend the contracts must be recorded in writing and loaded onto the Council's preferred e-tendering suite.

For the reasons set out above, the Council may extend the contract.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This decision seeks approval for a 1 year extension to the following existing contract relating to the provision of targeted information, advice and guidance services for young people.

Contract	Provider	Annual cost
Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance	Prospects	£580,000

There is a full provision for the current contracts within the Education Services budget in Starting Well, and the cost of the extension remains unchanged from the original contract price. The service is performing well and meeting the Council's statutory obligations in the area.

The extension is required to ensure continuity of service. However, there is a need for assurance work to be completed to ensure the services being provided are being done so at the best value for money. This is the second year that we are granting a one year extension whilst we await this review, which has been delayed due to staff turnover. The service is currently working with procurement to conduct this review ahead of recommissioning in September 2026.

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

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any 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;
- (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 action undertaken will include monitoring how the service meets the needs of all eligible users, including those from ethnic minority communities and the disabled. The Council will also ensure that potential providers have undertaken equality training and adhere to the Council's Fair to All Policy or their own equivalent.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 the Council is responsible for improving and protecting the health and wellbeing of local residents. Havering Council is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all residents.

There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from the proposed decision to extend the contract for Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Service.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The supplier will minimise its impact on the environment by:

- a) Eliminating the need for one use plastics
- b) Ensuring that all waste is correctly recycled
- c) Utilising public transport when this fits with Infection Protection Control measures
- d) Employing locally wherever possible to reduce the environmental impact of travelling to work
- e) Employing digital solutions to reduce the need for manual recording and disposable materials.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

None

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, Strategic Director of People

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other Manager title:

Date: 3 July 2025

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 _____