

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE – 12 AUGUST 2014

PROVISION OF A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT SERVICE

REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

ABSTRACT

This report advises committee of the proposal to vary the existing contract with North East Sensory Services (NESS) to include the provision of a visual impairment service. This report also sets out the proposed procurement strategy for this service.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:

- (i) authorises the Head of Quality and Performance to procure a visual impairment service on the basis set out in this report, namely an exemption from tendering. In doing so it also approves negotiation with North East Sensory Services to establish a contract for the provision of a visual impairment service; and
- (ii) permits North East Sensory Services' staff will be located in office accommodation at Kinloch Care Centre, Carnoustie provided on an 'in kind' basis.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- 1 We have a sustainable economy with good employment opportunities.
- 8 We have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced.
- 9 Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Reference is made to Item 9 of the minute of meeting of the Social Work and Health Committee of 12 November 2009 which notes approval of Committee Report No 807/09.

3.2 Angus Council commissioned a visual impairment service in the past by way of a Service Level Agreement with Forfarshire Society for the Blind. The Society approached the Council in 2009 to discuss transferring the statutory services back to the Council. This was agreed and from 1 April 2010 Angus Council's Social Work and Health service provided the statutory elements of the service directly and 4 staff employed by Forfarshire Society for the Blind were transferred to the employment of Angus Council under TUPE Regulations. Two of these staff were dedicated to the visual impairment service and have now left Angus Council.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The Angus Council Visual Impairment service has been reviewed and certain elements of the service are being undertaken by First Contact and occupational therapists. However, the rehabilitation work is not being progressed as the service does not have a Rehabilitation Worker.

- 4.2 Angus Council and North East Sensory Services have now completed their discussions regarding the potential for a visual impairment service to be provided in Angus and it is now proposed that such a service is commissioned by Angus Council at an estimated cost of £66,145 per annum. Start-up costs are estimated at £10,250.
- 4.3 North East Sensory Services' staff will be located in office accommodation at Kinloch Care Centre to allow staff to work alongside Angus Council care management team. This arrangement is on an 'in kind' basis and the costs incurred to the Council amount to £2,428 *per annum* however it should be acknowledged that part of these costs are in effect already being paid by the Council, ie rent. The benefits to be gained from this arrangement are as follows:
- 4.3.1 Accommodating North East Sensory Services' staff at Kinloch will allow them to work alongside their colleagues in the Council and help build working relationships and aid communication. This will improve effectiveness in dealing with vulnerable members of the public.
- 4.3.2 The Team Manager of Angus Council's care management team is based in Kinloch Care Centre and she has knowledge of visual impairment and will assist North East Sensory Services in establishing the Angus service.
- 4.3.3 As the staff will be based in Angus and not within North East Sensory Services' office accommodation in Dundee, there will be a reduction in additional costs associated with time and mileage.
- 4.3.4 The value to the provider of the use of Council premises to deliver the service is taken account of in assessing the overall contract value which is addressed in "Financial Implications" below

4.4 Procurement Options

4.4.1 Competitive Tendering

Competitive tendering was considered as an option, however the reason for not undertaking a competitive tendering exercise for the visual impairment service at this time would be an unnecessary use of resources. NESS currently provide services to deaf people in Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross and it is envisaged that both services (visual and deaf) will be subject to competitive tendering process during 2015. The aim of the tender will be to commission a joint sensory service from a single provider.

4.4.2 Collaboration

Local collaboration with Dundee City Council and Perth & Kinross Council has not been possible at this time as Dundee City Council currently commission this service from Dundee Blind and Partially Sighted Society and Perth & Kinross Council commission their service from Perth Society for the Blind. However as part of the procurement strategy for the joint sensory service referred to the scope for agreement on a common requirement with Tayside partners will be explored and determined. The scope for such an agreement will also be explored with Aberdeenshire Council.

4.4.3 Exemption from Tendering – Negotiate with North East Sensory Services

An exemption from Financial Regulations Section 16 was agreed by the Exemption Co-ordinator. Exemption criteria were met on the following grounds. The service has been subject to adequate market testing current to within the last 3 months. Continuity with the existing provider will be demonstrably advantageous to the Council in that the provider has specialist knowledge and equipment specific in the area of visual impairment. North East Sensory Services is also in the position of being able to allocate a Rehabilitation Worker from their Aberdeen service to Angus. The Exemptions Co-ordinator's approval is based on the following conditions:

1. The request was approved for consultation purposes only and will not come into effect unless and until approved by Committee in terms of this report.
2. This exemption is recommended for approval by Committee for the period from 1 September 2014 until 31 March 2016.

3. The exemption is not approved to the extent requested but limited to a value of £114,980 for the duration of the exemption..
 4. The exemption is not approved on the ground requested (16,24.10 (g) that the appropriate committee is satisfied that the exemption is justified for some other exceptional reason not referred to above and where approval of the exemption offers overriding demonstrable benefit to the Council.) but rather on the grounds that the supply has been subject to adequate market testing current to within the last 3 months and continuity with the existing supplier (or completion supplier in the case of a prematurely terminated contract) will be demonstrably advantageous to the Council (FR 16.24.10(c)).
 5. The negotiated contract(s) must be entered onto the Council's Contracts Register within 1 month of the contract(s) being entered into with the identified supplier(s).
- 4.5 Angus Council commissions a specialist social work service for people who are deaf from North East Sensory Services. This is an inter-agency contract with Dundee City Council and Perth & Kinross Council. The contract ends on 31 March 2016. During 2015 a competitive tender will be undertaken to commission a joint sensory service. Negotiating a contract with North East Sensory Services for the visual impairment service will enable Angus Council to commission the service which will run alongside the specialist social work service for people who are deaf until the tender exercise is complete.
- 4.6 Committee approval is sought in that the exemption is justified and will allow awarding of a contract to North East Sensory Service which will offer demonstrable benefits to the Council.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Two options for providing a visual impairment service were identified:
- 1 Angus Council recruits 2 Rehabilitation Workers; or
 - 2 Angus Council commissions the service from North East Sensory Services.
- 5.2 During the process of preparing the Procurement Strategy option 2 was identified as the preferred option, as from past experience recruitment of qualified Rehabilitation Workers proved difficult due to the low number of qualified Rehabilitation Workers in the job market. North East Sensory Services is in a position to allocate one of their Rehabilitation Workers to work for the Angus Service. North East Sensory Services will undertake a recruitment exercise to recruit 2 part time Fieldwork Assistants to complete the staffing structure for the Angus service.
- 5.3 The Rehabilitation Worker will provide a specialist service for people with a visual impairment including outdoor mobility work and long cane training, orientation within the home or other environments and support with communication aids and equipment. The Fieldwork Assistants support the service user with the plan put in place by the Rehabilitation Worker and helps access local and national resources.

6. PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY / STRATEGIES / PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

6.1 Procurement Authority

The procurement is not considered to be a 'major procurement' in terms of Financial Regulation 16.8.4. Approval of this report would mean that Angus Council can enter into a contractual arrangement by way of a variation to the existing contract with North East Sensory Services to include the provision of a visual impairment service without the need for further approval by the relevant committee. The contract award will be reported to the Corporate Services Committee for noting only.

6.2 Procurement Strategy

After consideration of the procurement options the following procurement strategy is recommended:

6.2.1 Negotiate with North East Sensory Services

The added benefits to be gained by commissioning the service from North East Sensory Services are as follows:

- 1 By negotiating with North East Sensory Services the Council will benefit from a highly specialist team providing the service. Currently North East Sensory Services has a locally-based Rehabilitation Worker who will be allocated to the Angus service. Rehabilitation workers are difficult to employ due to the low number in the job market.
- 2 NESS has IT equipment which is specific to the needs of people with a visual impairment.
- 3 Service users in Angus will benefit from the range of valuable resources and groups which NESS has to offer.

6.3 Procurement Proposals

The preferred procurement procedure is to vary the existing contract for the Provision of Specialist Social Work Services for People who are Deaf with North East Sensory Services to include this service and without carrying out a competitive tender exercise. A contract will be put in place for the period 1 September 2014 until 31 March 2016, with no option to extend. This timescale is in line with the Contract for the Provision of a Specialist Social Work Service for People who are Deaf and will allow both services to be competitively tendered during 2015 to commission a joint sensory service from one provider.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The total annual cost of providing the service is £68,573. This includes costs incurred by Angus Council in relation to the provision of office accommodation on an 'in kind' basis to North East Sensory Services. The total annual amount to be paid to North East Sensory Services by Angus Council is £66,145 with one off start up costs of £10,250.
- 7.2 The total life of contract value (for the period 1 September 2014 to 31 March 2016) is £118,824.

North East Sensory Services

Start Up Costs	£10,250
Total Contract Value	£104,730

Angus Council

Total life of contract value	£118,824
------------------------------	----------

- 7.3 The funding for this service has been identified from the 2 full time vacant posts within Angus Council's care management team. These posts were dedicated to undertake visual impairment work.
- 7.4 The budget for this contract will be met from the Adult Care Services budget.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Risk identified as part of the Procurement Strategy process were assessed and mitigating actions noted as below:

- 8.1 Continuity of service: contingency plan to be put in place. Appropriate terms and conditions will be included in the contract in terms of business continuity / contingency;
- 8.2 Supplier dominance in the market: .The service will be tendered for in 2015 so any dominance will be of short duration.
- 8.3 Quality of Service: the service specification will contain key performance indicators which will be used to monitor the quality of the service;
- 8.4 Provider Failure due to bankruptcy: a business continuity plan to be put in place;

- 8.5 Uncontrolled increase in cost of service: Fixed cost for the duration of the contract;
- 8.6 Service does not meet the outcomes in relation to consumption / price: appropriate key performance indicators will be in place to monitor this service; and
- 8.7 Confidentiality – ensure that the provider handles confidential data appropriately: terms and conditions contained within the contract to address this.
- 8.8 TUPE transfer of NESS staff to Angus Council's employment on termination of the contract. Budgetary provision to be made for this eventuality.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

Social Work and Health Committee Report No 807/09

CONTACT: Les Hutchinson, Head of Quality and Performance
EMAIL DETAILS: PEOPLE@angus.gov.uk