

Record of Officer decision

| | |
|--|--|
| Decision title: | Decision to directly award a contract to Attenti Consulting Ltd for the delivery of an adult social care community review project. |
| Date of decision: | TBC |
| Decision maker: | Corporate Director Community Wellbeing |
| Authority for delegated decision: | <p>The Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing is enabled to make decisions regarding adult social care operations, including the provision of assessment and care management under CW-01 of the Chief Executive's scheme of delegation.</p> <p>4.6.32 of the council's contract procedure rules sets-out that where the scheme of delegation provides the authority, service directors and directors within the relevant directorate (as defined by the requisite pay grade) have authority to award and sign a contract, authorise a contract variation/ extension or authorise an early contract termination of a contract value up to £500,000.</p> |
| Ward: | Countywide |
| Consultation: | Not applicable |
| Decision made: | <p>To directly award a contract to Attenti Consulting Ltd for the delivery of an adult social care community review project to provide for the review and/or reassessment of at least 300 adult social care cases with additional work as appropriate in individual cases. The contract will be delivered over a 24-week period from 6 February 2023 to 21 July 2023 with a maximum value of £200k</p> <p>The number of cases assigned will depend on the mix of reviews and reassessments undertaken. Prior to exceeding 300 cases, a checkpoint will be built in to assess the remaining available budget. The contract may be extended in the event that planned work is completed under budget and there are further cases that could be added to the cohort without exceeding the contract price.</p> |
| Reasons for decision: | <p>Section 27 of the Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep care and support plans and carers' support plans under review generally, and to carry out an assessment where they are satisfied that the person's circumstances have changed. The adult can also make a reasonable request to have a review.</p> <p>Keeping plans under review is an essential element of the planning process. Without a system of regular reviews, plans could become quickly out of date meaning that people are not obtaining the care and support required to meet their needs.</p> <p>The review process should be person-centred and outcomes-focused, as well as accessible and proportionate to the needs to be met. The process</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>must involve the person needing care and also the carer where feasible, and consideration must be given whether to involve an independent advocate who local authorities are required to supply in the circumstances specified in the Act.</p> <p>Following the pandemic and with ongoing challenges of recruiting sufficient adult social workers into the council's workforce, the number of people waiting for a review or reassessment of the needs and support package has increased and currently stands at c.900 cases. The council has made, and continues to make, various efforts to attract additional social workers to Herefordshire, either as employees or as agency workers. The challenges to recruiting social workers is a national problem and is well understood. While the council continues to improve its recruitment and retention of staff, an additional approach is now necessary in the short term in order to quickly reduce the number of service users that are waiting for a review of their needs to ensure that their support plan remains fit for purpose.</p> <p>Similar challenges have previously been experienced within children's social care. In response, the council commissioned external providers to undertake defined pieces of work that ensured that individual assessments and plans were completed that, in-turn, relieved some of the workload pressure on the council's own workforce and enabled it to stabilise further. It is proposed to take a similar approach now by commissioning an external provider to deliver temporary capacity to undertake at least 300 reviews and associated works. The number of cases that can be funded within the budget available will depend upon the mix of reviews and reassessments undertaken. The cases to be reviewed through the contract will be of low to medium priority, which will enable the council's established workforce to progress those more complex cases and reduce the overall number waiting.</p> |
| <p>Equality Considerations</p> | <p>The public sector equality duty requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.</p> |
| <p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p> | <p>The contract is based on unit prices, which are commercially sensitive, for different pieces of work. This includes separate prices for case reviews, reassessments, mental capacity assessments, best interest decisions, occupational therapy assessments and continuing health care processes where that is required. There are also further prices for on-site corporate days if required, such as for worker training.</p> <p>As the actual work required will be different in for individual service users, which makes it difficult to predict the final cost of the work delivered. However, a range of assumptions have been made based on experience of the work arising from previous case reviews and it is estimated the work can be completed within a budget of £200k.</p> <p>The cost of work delivered will be closely monitored. In the event of a forecasted underspend against the budget, the contract will have scope to</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>allow for additional cases to be allocated. However, there is a risk that the pieces of work required in individual cases exceeds the assumed demand and increases costs beyond the proposed budget. The mitigation to this is for the contract to be closely monitored to ensure that the demand does not push the costs in excess of the available budget.</p> <p>The urgent service pressure warrants the direct award of a contract outside of the council's standing procurement rules. Commercial and Legal services have been consulted and approved the proposed exemption from the contract procedure rules. However, it has also been advised that a further exemption beyond this contract period would not be supported and a procurement process must be undertaken if there is a need for a continued service. This should be reviewed at the earliest opportunity.</p> |
| <p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek additional capacity through individual agency workers. While agency workers will continue to be recruited to fill individual roles across social care, this approach has not previously secured sufficient capacity to meet demand. A service-level contract approach has been effective in other areas, including in Herefordshire's own children's services. 2. Undertake a competitive procurement exercise to identify a suitable service provider. Although this approach would be desirable, it would take several months to complete a process, in which time the service pressure would continue to grow and mean that some services users may not be receiving the support that they need putting them at risk and mean that the Council could be open to challenge regarding its statutory duties. A direct award for a short term contract is therefore recommended to manage the existing service pressures, whilst a procurement process is undertaken to put in place a longer term agreement if further work is required beyond the scope of this contract. The Council has previously contracted Attenti Consulting Ltd to deliver services in children's social care where the work provided was considered to be timely and of good quality. |
| <p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p> | <p>None made.</p> |

Signed..... Date:

Please ensure that signatures are redacted before publishing.