

13 July 2022		Item: 15 Decision: 110618
Cabinet		
Integrated Community Equipment Service Reprocurement		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Deborah Huelin – Cabinet Member for Adults and Health		
Accountable Assistant Director: Les Billingham, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care and Community Development		
Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Corporate Director Adults Housing and Health		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report outlines the duty under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 to supply Community Equipment for those with eligible need. It details the current arrangements and the options that have been explored for future procurement.

This report seeks agreement from Cabinet that the procurement for this service should take place under the current arrangements which are a collaborative approach to commission services with the Greater Essex Commissioning Partnership Group. The Commissioning Partnership Group is comprised of Essex County Council, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group, Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group, East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust, Mid Essex Hospital Trust, Castlepoint and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT) and Thurrock Council.

1. Recommendation(s):

- 1.1 That Cabinet agree that the procurement for this service should take place under the current arrangements, which are a collaborative approach to commission services with the Greater Essex Commissioning Partnership Group
- 1.2 That Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Adults, Housing and Health and the Portfolio Holder to award the contract of Community Equipment following completion of the procurement process.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) contract is currently delivered by Essex Cares Limited through a Partnership Agreement with the Great Essex Commissioning Partnership Group. The current contract ends 31 March 2023, and the new contract will start on 1 April 2023.
- 2.2 The Greater Essex Commissioning Partnership took the decision not to extend the current arrangement but to go to the open market. A benchmarking and market engagement exercise has been undertaken and has indicated that there is an opportunity to transform and improve the services from end to end and make efficiencies. This would result in better value to all partners and quality for the end user. Thurrock Council has a duty to provide Community Equipment to support residents who are eligible under the Care Act (2014) and the Children and Families Act (2014). Community Equipment provides functional support to assist with care delivery and promotes independence i.e., grab rails, hoists. Community equipment also supports timely Hospital Discharge and has ensured that Thurrock has remained with very low hospital delays throughout the pandemic and beyond, an excellent outcome for our residents.
- 2.3 Adult Social Care adopts a strength-based approach, focusing on the strengths and abilities of the individual and aims to connect them to support from friends, family and the wider community. By adopting an ethos of providing the right care at the right time in the right place, this equipment services enables individuals to remain at home and part of their local communities.
- 2.4 Once equipment is no longer required, where it is possible to do so, items are collected, cleaned, and re-used for other residents and so this contract aligns itself to the wider greener goals of Thurrock Council.
- 2.5 Thurrock Council currently contribute **£662k** per annum towards the £12 million total budget of the overall contract per annum. This provides items of equipment to approximately 1,900 residents at any one time.
- 2.6 The contract will be in place for 3 year with the option to extend for a further year, the total being £2,648,000 for 4 years. This however is a demand driven service so the total cost can fluctuate if demand increases, this is acknowledged within the budget and managed very closely.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 To ensure value for money Thurrock has previously undertaken options appraisals for alternative commissioning methods to deliver ICES. The options were:
 - Collaboration with other Unitary Authorities
 - Bringing the service in house.
 - A Thurrock only procurement.

- Continue with current partnership.

3.2 This type of service is a specialist service provided by a niche market of three main suppliers. Therefore, limiting collaboration with other Unitary Authorities, or procuring this independently is very unlikely to yield either financial efficiencies or a high quality of service. To bring this service in house would be economically unviable due to the cost of establishing a new service, we would have to purchase equipment, find warehouse space, have high quality cleaning facilities, provide transport to deliver the equipment and employ staff to deliver the overall service. This would not be financially viability given the contract size, and the fragility of the market. It would cost significantly more than £662K a year. The most viable option is to continue the current commissioning partnership.

3.3 The current commissioning partnership provides Thurrock Council with:

- Increased purchasing power.
- Stability of supply.
- Value for money

The economies of scale this Commissioning Partnership provides more than could not be found in any of the highlighted options, especially so in such financially challenging times.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The current contract with the provider, Essex Cares Limited, is coming to an end and a new contract for Integrated Community Equipment Service is required.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 The report was presented to Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7 June 2022.

6. Impact on corporate policies priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The Integrated Community Equipment Service contract impacts on the following Council Priority.

People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**

Strategic Lead Finance

Provision has been made within the 2022/23 Adult Social care budget to fund the service, in line with the amounts detailed within the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**
Senior Contracts Lawyer

I confirm I have considered the legal implications of this report and am satisfied that the commissioning body will be obliged to follow the same national procurement rules as are currently upon the Council.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager - Community Development

The Council has a legal duty to provide community equipment to support residents in line with regulations set out in the Care Act (2014) and the Children and Families Act (2014). Social value has been considered as part of the commissioning process for this service and will be monitored as part of the standard contract review cycle with the agreed supplier.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder and Impact on Looked After Children

N/A

8. Background papers used in preparing this report (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

N/A

9. Appendices to the report

None

Report Author:

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Commissioning Manager

Adults, Housing and Health