

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
DECISION**

**DECISION OF: DIRECTOR, PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES
WITH ADVICE FROM: HEAD OF STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT
DIRECTORATE: PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES**



DECISION NO: PC8 (2018-19 SCHEME)

**SUBJECT: COMMISSIONING PLAN FOR NORTH SOMERSET'S
HANDYPERSON SERVICE**

KEY DECISION: YES

BACKGROUND:

Handyperson services provide low-level, low-cost interventions that are considered extremely helpful if not vital by service users. They also contribute to a number of strategic objectives to keep vulnerable people safe and independent in their own home and can be used to facilitate reablement and hospital discharge. The best handyperson services can identify other issues in the client's life or home environment which may be having a detrimental impact on their quality of life, safety or health. Early identification of such issues can reduce the likelihood of future a crisis. As such handyperson services contribute to the wider prevention agenda and aid independence for people in their own homes.

The commissioning of a handyperson service will support the Council in its ambitions to:

- Make healthy choices and promote active lifestyles which reduce ill-health and increase independence
- Commission or provide quality health and care services, which deliver dignity, safety and choice.

REASONS:

Introduction:

The currently handyperson contract is held by WE Care and Repair as part of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service. A decision was made as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan 18/19 to reconfigure how NSC commissions these services to ensure an increased value for money.

The proposal is to commission the handyperson service as a standalone service. The Council has an existing contract for handyperson services which is due to end on the 30th September 2018 and therefore the Council is seeking to find a provider for this service.

The Handyperson service is highlighted in the Care Act as a key early intervention and prevention service it can reduce and delay the need for care. It is anticipated that the investment in this service will be outweighed by the money saved. Also having access to a minor adaptation service will avoid Adult Social Care having to subcontract work which will realise savings.

The provider will undertake a variety of jobs, such as:

- Small building repairs / improvements – minor plumbing / carpentry / electrical work, securing loose carpets, putting up curtain rails, shelves.
- Safety measures – fitting key safes, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, grab rails, clearing and cleaning paths.
- Home security - door and window locks, door chains and door viewers.
- Energy efficiency checks - installing draught excluders, radiator heat reflectors and energy efficient lightbulbs
- Other jobs: Moving furniture, installing standalone telecare, signposting to other care and support services as required

The jobs will be subsidised for up to 3 hours a time and jobs should be completed within 2-3 weeks of initial referral. Work supporting hospital discharges will be required to be completed by the next working day to avoid unnecessary delays in leaving hospital.

The provider will take referrals from the general public and professionals / agencies working with people in the community, as well as receiving referrals directly from the Council. The eligibility for the subsidised service will be as follows:

- home owners, private and social housing tenants (see below) who are
- over 60 years old and/or registered disabled
- would struggle to undertake the works themselves

It is intended that each client can have up to 6 subsidised hours a year. In exceptional circumstances a client may have over the number of subsidised hours but this will have to be agreed by a contract manager by email prior to the job being started. Each job will only be subsidised up to 3 hours.

Service exclusions:

- This service is not available to Social Housing tenants or Private Landlords to complete repairs for which the landlords are liable.
- This service will not complete works that are completed by Medequip Assistive Technology following a Care Act/Health assessment.

The provider will charge a fixed hourly rate for works and will receive a monthly subsidy for from the Council in arrears, for works completed. The subsidy has an estimated value of £100,000 per annum. The provider will receive the remaining cost from the person receiving the service in addition to any material costs.

There may be an exception where a client may receive the full cost of services from the Council resulting from a Care Act assessment, when Medequip are unable to provide a

provision made under Housing Renewals Assistance Policy e.g. services to support hospital discharge will be fully funded.

The provider will need to provide the following performance information at the end of each month prior to the payment of the subsidy:

- Job type
- Total job cost
- Cost to service user
- Cost to the Council
- Time to complete job
- Service user information/demographic

The council will work with the successful bidder to develop added value services; this will include use of "Check & Connect" in conjunction with partners. We will also ensure that the successful bidder has the ability to refer on clients who need work that will take longer than 3 hours by increasing the number of contractors on the 'Buy with Confidence' scheme.

There will be potentially be TUPE transfers from the current provider.

Contract Structure:

- The estimated contract value for the life of the contract is £400k. The term of the proposed contract is 2 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years in 1 year increments.
- The initial term of the contract will be for 24 months.
- There will be two extension periods for a period of 1 year and 1 year = to 24 months.
- There is a 6 month termination period without cause in the contract.
- The estimated contract value per year is £100k although purchasing against these contracts is not guaranteed or committed at this level subject to the annual review, this will be demand led and consideration be given to the Council's medium term financial plan and overall affordability gap.

Outline timetable:

- The preparation of the specification and ITT documents will be completed by the 15th May 2018
- The procurement process commences through advertising the opportunity on the 16th May 2018
- The successful supplier will be notified on the 15th July 2018.
- The service will start on the 1st October 2018

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

North Somerset Council could decommission the current Home Improvement Agency contract and not recommission a handyperson service and if this happened North Somerset Council would lose out on the benefit of having a handyperson to support its early, intervention and prevention offer. Area of early intervention and prevention include:

- Small repairs and minor adaptations that reduce the risk of falls and enable independent living;
- Home security measures that prevent burglaries and maintain independent living;
- Hospital discharge schemes (where they include hazard management and equipment installation) that reduce the risk of falls, maintain independent living and reduce length of hospital stays;
- Fire safety checks and installation of alarms and smoke detectors that reduce death and injury caused by fires;
- Energy efficiency checks that reduce excess winter deaths and expenditure on fuel, where a check leads to an intervention to improve heating or warmth in a home.
- Installation of standalone telecare to support independent living.
- Wider signposting for additional needs via check and connect

An option could be to retender the contract in its current form. This would then be part of a larger Home Improvement Agency and therefore would not meet the aims of the MTFP savings proposals for 18/19.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs

The current HIA contract value with Care and Repair is Current contract for 2017/18 is £275,268 following an in-year reduction in contract value of £40,000 applied to the WE Care and Repair contract in 17/18. The aim of the contract is to support older and disabled people to remain living in their own home for longer, by assisting them to maintain the safety and suitability of the home environment. This contract was tendered with Bristol City Council and BANES who are also currently scoping the future of the services they require.

The HIA contract covers several elements including the Handyperson service which is being recommissioned within this tender. The technical support, case work and information and advice elements of the service are ceasing and the Equipment and Demonstration centre transferring back to the council. The overall saving in changing the way that we commission this contract is £130,000 per annum. The decision to change the way we commission this service has been approved by full council as part of the MTFP decision making process for 18/19.

The Handyperson contract is worth £100,000 per annum with the total value being up to £400,000 and it will subsidise services to the most vulnerable residents in the county. After feedback from the initial prior information notice (PIN) it is hoped to provide the 4000 hours at a flat rate of £10 an hour. This is a better rate than people are currently paying with the incumbent provider which is between £15 - £35 depending on the works requested.

If the service volume is greater than predicted, the Council will manage and restrict the service during the term of the contract, also re-directing other funds (if available), applying some means testing.

The current provider is offering a salary and pension package which would be considered above market rate for handypersons staff. As TUPE applies the provider will be asked to present these costs separately rather than build these additional costs into the lifetime of the contract. The costs will be paid for as long as the staff remain with the Handypersons services and this will form part of the £400,000 of funding. This will enable the contract to get a low labour rate which will in turn support provision of a low-cost service.

Funding

Funding for the subsidy of this service is from the Adult Social Care budget. The current budget for the wider Care and Repair contract is £282,583. The 2018/19 MTFP approved savings of £130,000 over two years, which will leave a budget of £217,583 in 2018/19 and £152,583 in 2019/20.

£100,000 pa will fund the subsidy of the handypersons service and the remaining £52,000 pa will cover the staffing costs for the Equipment and Demonstration Centre.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

Government legislation has highlighted the need for local authorities to provide services for home owners including handypersons services:

- The Care Act 2014 highlights the need for home improvement agencies, handyman or maintenance services as information and advice providers to help in preventing reducing or delaying care needs.
- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 states a local authority may provide assistance to adapt or repair accommodation.

CONSULTATION

- We have completed a Survey Monkey questionnaire about people's views on current HIA services in conjunction with Bristol CC and BANES.
- Held meetings with current contractor WE Care and Repair to discuss changes.
- Consulted with North Somerset Council services leads about future of services.
- Informed North Somerset staff about proposed changes
- The proposals have been shared with the Equalities Stakeholder Group on the 5th January 2018
- PIN raised 22 expressions of interest and we met with 11 local providers in April 2018

Work to date has informed our position on recommissioning of the Handyperson service. The Survey Monkey data showed that the services provided by Care and Repair were well received with the handyperson service and the Equipment and Demonstration centre being highlighted as particularly valuable.

Meetings with WE Care and Repair (the current HIA provider) revealed that the organisation was struggling to provide all the services needed within the current funding envelope and the way services were provided needed to be reconsidered to protect essential home improvement services.

Consulting with service leaders gave a better understanding of the vision for the Peoples and Communities Directorate and allowed proposals to be tailored to meet future need. This consultation identified a need to keep the Handyperson Service to support the early intervention and prevention pathway, enable private sector housing renewal and support hospital discharges.

Further engagement with the Older People's Forum and the Disability Action Group is ongoing to inform the Invitation To Tender document.

Engagement with the market revealed that there are a number of local providers that could tender for the service and that the Council, through procurement, can secure a competitive rate for services.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk of decommissioning current contract will be managed by the contract officer with a robust decommissioning plan put together in conjunction with the current provider.

The population of North Somerset is growing, and in 2015 was estimated to be 209,944 people. This is predicated to grow over the next two decades, reaching 256,120 by 2039. The current demand on the handypersons service is 1700 jobs a year but this is suspected to increase year on year.

If this contract is not awarded in September 2018 the Council will be without a Handyperson service. This could mean delays in hospital discharges and an increase in preventable injury or illness due to properties being in poor repair. There will also be some operational delays as staff may struggle to find people to undertake small adaptations needed for people to remain independent.

If a contract was delayed NSC would need to spot purchase urgent work with a trusted local provider in the community, registered with a trusted government scheme. However, this approach will have significant cost and resource implications and will be able to support the early intervention and prevention agenda.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/People-and-Communities-adult-care-and-public-health-January-2018.pdf> Pg 47 onwards.

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed: Sheila Hill

Title: Director, People and Communities

Date: 7.6.18

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed: [Signature]

Title: Head of Strategic Procurement

Date: 7.6.18

Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable:

