

Divisions Affected –

CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

19 September 2023

Home Improvement Agency Contract for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils.

Report by Corporate Director of Adult Social Care

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) Approve the contract award following the procurement of a new provider for the provision of Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. The service contract is between the Oxfordshire County Council (the council), South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) (as joint purchasers) and the provider.
 - (b) Note that the purchasing obligations and rights in the contract for the new provider of the Home Improvement Agency in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will be novated over to SODC from the council on 01 October 2023 at which point the Grant Funding Agreement (partnership agreement) will cover the council's contributions to fund the service.
 - (c) Approve the council entering the funding and partnership agreement with SODC and VWHDC for the provision of HIA in those district council areas following novation of the service contract.

Executive Summary

2. Disabled Facilities Grants are available for people of all ages who meet the required criteria to help them live in their own home in a safe, secure, in and accessible environment.
3. The local housing authorities in the district councils manage the DFG which are allocated by central government. The delivery of the DFG is via a HIA service which provides the assessment of eligibility and works, the development of plans to implement the works and the implementation in the resident's home.

4. The HIA is provided in-house in CDC, WODC and Oxford City and the funding is provided by the council as part of a partnership agreement.
5. The HIA service for SODC and VWHDC is provided externally, and the council has historically led on the procurement, contract award and management of the service behalf of SODC and VWHDC.
6. The contract for the prior HIA service in SODC/VWHDC had been extended to 31 May 2023 pending the reprovision of the service via an open market tender. Approval to proceed to tender for the provision of HIA service when the previous contract ended was provided in February 2023. The council agreed with SODC and VWHDC to jointly enter into a contractual agreement with the new provider. As part of this the council negotiated that SODC and VWHDC would assume contract responsibility from the 01 October 2023 when the contract is novated over from the council to SODC. This better reflects the management of risks and responsibilities in the provision of the HIA service and reflects the expert role of the district councils in managing “bricks and mortar” providers. It will improve the delivery of the HIA and clarify and strengthen the partnership arrangements between Housing and Social Care authorities.
7. The contract is backed by a partnership agreement between the council and SODC and VWHDC. The contract with the new HIA service provider is for three years with an option to extend up to a further two years.

Exempt Information

8. Not applicable.

Background

9. The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service aims to enable Oxfordshire Residents who meets the required criteria to maintain their independence, health, and wellbeing at home for the foreseeable future. This is achieved through the repair, adaptation, and improvement of Resident’s homes, so that the person can remain in their own home in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.
10. There is a statutory responsibility upon the council to deliver the service. The service enables people to remain safe and independent within their own homes for longer, which in turn reduces demand for more expensive health and social care intervention.
11. The service is delivered as part of broader Health and Social Care and Housing pathways to support people in the community. As such they are governed by a framework of national legislation, policy, and guidance.
12. The HIA service project incorporates areas and objectives alongside those mentioned in paragraph 8 including

- information, advice, and guidance
 - supporting hospital discharges where appropriate
 - preventing or reducing hospital admissions
 - accessing other associated grants available to help maintain people’s health and wellbeing within their own home
13. The council has overseen the contract management for the HIA service on behalf of SODC and VWHDC. The council agreed to procure the HIA service and jointly enter with SODC and VWHDC into a contractual agreement with the new provider. However, agreement between the council, SODC and VWHDC was obtained for the HIA contract to be novated over to SODC on 01 October 2023. This better reflects the management of risks and responsibilities in the provision of the HIA service and reflects the expert role of the district councils in managing “bricks and mortar” providers. It will improve the delivery of the HIA and clarify and strengthen the partnership arrangements between Housing and Social Care authorities.

Contract Award

14. The procurement for the HIA service in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse was approved and completed in April 2023. The contract was awarded to Oxford City Council HIA Service and commenced 01 June 2023. The contract value for the HIA service in year one is £370,745.00; year two is £350,736.00; and year three is £350,758.00.
15. Procurement Process

Activity	Date
Invitation to Tender (ITT) for HIA service went live	10 February 2023
ITT closed	13 March 2023
Agreement for Contract Award from Director Leadership Team (DLT)	17 April 2023
Contract Awarded	05 May 2023
Contract started	01 June 2023

Corporate Policies and Priorities

16. The partnership agreement with SODC and VWHDC for the provision of HIA service and the HIA Contract with the new provider aligns with the following local priorities
- a. Oxfordshire County Council’s Corporate Plan 2023-2025 includes prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents, support carers and social care system, and partnership working.
 - b. The Oxfordshire Way.
 - c. Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023
 - d. Better Care Fund (BCF)

Financial Implications

17. The partnership agreement for provision of HIA service with SODC and VWHDC aligns alongside the new contract value for the HIA service provider. It should be noted that the funding for the three-year period from 2023 to 2026 is in line with the new contract tender price.
18. It should be noted that the funding from the council to SODC and VWHDC may be subject to an annual inflationary uplift as specified within the partnership agreement.
19. The below table sets out the financial details for the council’s contributions in relation to recommendation 1b. The council’s contribution will subsequently be transferred over to the partnership agreement in recommendation 1a when the contract is novated over 01 October 2023.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
HIA service provider for SODC and VWHDC: Oxford City HIA Service	£273,446.00	£258,688.20	£258,704.43

20. The maximum funding allocated for the provision of HIA services was agreed following a paper submitted by the Interim Deputy Director for Housing on 24 January 2021. The tender price submitted during the procurement of the HIA service and the subsequent contributions towards the contract value has been agreed by the council, SODC and VWHDC.
21. It should be noted that funding is allocated for all aspects of the project within the HIA service specification.

Comments checked by:

Thomas James, Finance Business Partner (Adults & Public Health),
 Thomas.James@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

22. The service contract was procured competitively in accordance with the Oxfordshire County Council’s Contract Procedure Rules (“CPRs”) as a joint procurement with SODC and VWHDC. The council led on the procurement process. The CPRs themselves ensure compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended).
23. Providers were made aware at the tender stage of the procurement of the intention to novate the purchasing obligations and rights of the council under the service contract to SODC and VWHDC.
24. The competitive and transparent nature of the procurement arrangements mean that the award of the service contract, intended novation of the service contract

and grant funding agreement to deal with the council's continuing contribution to the service is therefore compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended).

Comments checked by:

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor, Jonathan.Pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

25. The funding and partnership agreements are with SODC and VWHDC for the provision of HIA services. Therefore, there is no impact on the council's workforce as a result of the recommendation.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

26. The equality and inclusion implications have been considered. The partnership agreements for the provision of HIA services supports all people with protected characteristics who meet the required criteria.

Sustainability Implications

27. The partnership agreements have no direct impact on sustainability. However, the provision of HIA services aligns with Oxfordshire County Council strategic plan 2022 – 2025. This sets out the vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county
28. As part of the tender for the HIA service provision providers were asked to submit information for their commitment to delivering social value over the initial term of the contract. The successful provider has committed to delivering additional social value over the initial term of the contract. The Social Value Portal will work with SODC and VWHDC following novation of the contract to monitor and report on the delivery of this social value.

Risk Management

29. The partnership agreement includes an agreed specification for the delivery and expectations of the HIA Services which includes statutory requirements. Any changes to the service delivery within the specification would need to be agreed between the individual partner and the council.
30. There are minimal risks to recommendation 1a which are mitigated through business continuity plans and partnership working.

31. The agreement of contract award for the new HIA service for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will enable Residents who meet the criteria to access DFG, repairs, adaptations, and improvements to help them to live in their own home in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.
32. Not agreeing to the recommendation 1a and 1b may have a negative impact on the provision and delivery of services which are a statutory requirement. There is a risk of people who may be vulnerable not being able to access appropriate services to help repair, adapt or improve their homes. Therefore, impacting on them being able to live in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.

Consultations

33. In relation to the maximum funding allocated for the provision of HIA services, the council previously consulted with the district councils following a report to DLT on 20 December 2021.
34. The new funding allocation for the contract and subsequent partnership agreement following the procurement of the HIA service was consulted and agreed by the council, SODC and VWHDC.
35. Prior to the commencement of the tender, 500 Residents who had accessed the HIA services delivered in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse were invited to share their experiences of the service. 126 responses were received, and information provided was used to develop the service specification for the new contract.

NAME

Karen Fuller, Interim Corporate Director for Adult Social Care

Annex: Nil.

Background papers: Nil.

Contact Officer: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Contact
ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk
07532 132975

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