

Options analysis

1. The following options are theoretical but have not been considered as they are not realistic:
 - Bring service in-house – discarded as an option as considered impractical and even if practical timescales would be unrealistic
 - Do nothing and allow the contract to end on 31 March 2024 – discarded as an option due to certainty of the loss of a key service, removing support for a key group and risk of significant reputational harm to the Council
2. Options Considered
3. NOTE: the options set out below relate to the Carers service contract. There will be a further options appraisal in respect to Carers Personal Budgets.

Option 1: Retender. Prepare and undertake a procurement exercise to transition to a new contract from 1 April 2024.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Offers the potential to immediately review the service specification and consider different delivery models.	<p>Would necessitate a time consuming and resource-heavy process to prepare and undertake the procurement process at a time when it is not necessary.</p> <p>All indications are that the current service is meeting targets or improvements are in place to ensure this happens. There is no indication that there would be any benefits to a further immediate procurement.</p> <p>Inflationary pressures mean that it is not guaranteed the Council would realise any savings through a new tender.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
Potential to revise the scope and design of the service immediately.	<p>Unnecessary creation of uncertainty and instability during the remaining contract period and in any transition between services.</p> <p>Potential loss of a well-recognised, networked and trusted current provider.</p> <p>Potential disruption of planned service innovation and potential external funds leveraged by current provider</p>

Option 2A: Extend the contract for one year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>The Council would retain the existing Carer Support Service which has delivered very successfully to date, and which will continue to operate, supporting carers to continue in their caring role and to live their lives as independently, successfully and safely as possible within the community and enhancing wellbeing.</p> <p>Allows the Council and partners to reconsider approach to supporting unpaid carers in the near future.</p>	<p>Would necessitate a time consuming and resource-heavy process to prepare and undertake the procurement process at a time when it is not necessary.</p> <p>All indications are that the current service is meeting targets or improvements are in place to ensure this happens. There is no indication that there would be any benefits to a further immediate procurement.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>To take a partial benefit from service innovations and potential external funding leveraged by the current provider.</p> <p>Develop the pathways into community capacity and the alignment with social prescribing that are under way elsewhere in the Oxfordshire place</p> <p>Review the requirements in terms of commitments by the service to the action plan in the Carer Strategy</p>	<p>May deter the provider from continued investment in the contract if it is only for one year</p>

Option 2B: Extend the contract for two years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 (preferred option)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>The Council would retain the existing Carer Support Service which has delivered very successfully to date, and which will continue to operate, supporting carers to continue in their caring role and to live their lives as independently, successfully and safely as possible within the community and enhancing wellbeing.</p>	<p>Reduces opportunities to explore the market.</p>

<p>Maximises the allowable extension in the contract and therefore delays the need to deploy Council resources to time-consuming and resource-intensive procurement activity.</p>	
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<p>To fully benefit from service innovations, allowing commissioners to make informed decisions from data collected in strategy action plan and potential external funding leveraged by the current provider.</p>	<p>Future changes e.g. Care Reforms may require development of the model.</p>