

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	10 March 2022
Subject:	Careers, Information, Advice, Guidance and Support Services to Young People in Harrow
Key Decision:	Yes – decision sought will incur expenditure in excess of £500k and have an impact on all wards.
Responsible Officer:	Paul Hewitt - Corporate Director People Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Christine Robson - Portfolio Holder for Education and Social Services for Children and Young People
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All Wards
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the background, the present position and the case for the proposed recommendation of re-tendering the contract for Careers Information, Advice, Guidance (CIAG) and Support Services to Young People in Harrow.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve the commencement of a competitive procurement process to re-render the contract for Careers, Information, Advice, Guidance and Support Services to young people in Harrow for 5+2 year term, valued £2,8million; and
2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director, People Services, following consultation with Portfolio Holder for Education and Social Services for Children and Young People, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Social Care, and the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources, to award the contract, following the competitive procurement process.

Reason:

To enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties to encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training and to assist the most vulnerable and risk of disengaging with education or work.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

1. The Education Act 2011 places the duty for local authorities to encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training and to assist the most vulnerable and risk of disengaging with education or work.
2. In addition, Local Authorities are expected to have arrangements in place to ensure that 16- and 17-year-olds (Yr12 – Yr13) have received an offer of a suitable place in post-16 education or training and that they are assisted to take up a place.
3. Prospects Services is commissioned to fulfil the Council's statutory duties in relation to the above and to provide impartial careers information, advice and guidance to young people targeted as those most in need. Their contract ends on 31st October 2022.

Options considered

4. The following options have been considered:
 - 1) Secure delegations from cabinet to re-tender the statutory service through a competitive procurement process.
 - 2) To bring the service into the council and be managed by the Peoples Directorate. This option would result in the council incurring additional costs relating to workforce and specialist training and development.
 - 3) Do not re-tender and allow the statutory service to come to an end on 31 October 2022, creating a gap in provision for vulnerable young people.

Recommendation: Option 1- to commence a competitive tendering exercise to ensure a high-quality service is procured which will meet the needs of young people and fulfil the council's statutory responsibilities.

Background

5. The Local Authority's duties in relation to encouraging, enabling and assisting young people to participate in education, employment or training are:
 - To secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-19 (or aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment) in their area (Sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 [as inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009]).
 - To make available to young people aged 13-19 (or aged 20-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment or Education Health & Care Plan), support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training (Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008).
 - To promote the effective participation in education or training of 16- and 17-year-olds in their area with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training (Section 10 of the Education and Skills Act).
 - To make arrangements to identify 16- and 17-year-olds who are not participating

Additional provision includes:

- Support to parents/carers of the young people in the above categories
- Provision of information and support to young people on benefits, allowances and regulations concerning work
- Work with local employers to identify and match young people to local opportunities

- Provision of Youth Stop, a multi-agency drop-in centre for young people
- Services and support to the September Guarantee
- Provision of careers IAG support for NEET young people working with the Youth offending and CLA/Leaving Care Teams.

Current situation

6. Prospects Services has been commissioned to fulfil the council's statutory duties since April 2016. Their contract was due to come to an end in March 2021, however due to the impact of the covid pandemic, it was essential to support and encourage existing providers to transition their delivery model to more safe and appropriate alternatives ways in order to meet the needs of young people.
7. To ensure there was a continuity of service and allow an analysis of how the pandemic has impacted education, employment and training opportunities and because the covid pandemic had restricted the ability to co-produce and co-design new services, a direct award was approved at Cabinet in November 2020 for an 18-month period. The contract comes to an end on 31st October 2022.
8. Cabinet is requested to approve the commencement of a competitive procurement process to re-render the contract for Careers, Information, Advice, Guidance and Support Services to young people in Harrow.
9. The new contract would commence 1st November for a 5 year + 2 years extension period.

Financial Implications

10. The current annual contract value is £400k. It is anticipated the annual contract value will remain the same as whilst there has been an increase in activity targets, the statutory reporting for 16-18 year olds has changed to 16-17 years.

Performance Issues

11. Harrow historically has maintained a low number of young people that are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in comparison to other London boroughs. The robust tracking and support offered to young people who are NEET has supported this ongoing low figure to be maintained and is evident in the NEET to EET movement for the 16-18 cohort.
12. Harrow has remained in quintile 1 for the DfE annual scorecard for the last 5 years that Prospects Services has been delivering in the borough. Harrow has maintained continuous low levels of NEET and Not Known and presents much lower levels than the London and National average.

13. NEET Comparison - 2021 Scorecard

	Combined NEET/ NK	NEET	Not Known
Harrow	2.6%	1.2%	1.4%
London Average	4.0%	1.8%	2.2%
National Average	5.5%	2.8%	2.7%

14. The low level of NEET has been maintained alongside there being a low percentage of young people whose destination is not known. The 1.4% of not known means there are very low numbers of potential hidden NEET.

15. In the period between April 2021 and August 2021 there has been a 0.1% (2) rise in NEET 16-17-year-olds (academic age). This rise during these months has been mainly due to the 6 monthly employment destination tracking which has identified young people who were in employment 6 month previously now NEET, some of these 16 would have been as a direct result of the covid pandemic.

16. The increase in NEET will be more evident in the next two years with leavers from Years 11, 12 and 13 who do not want to stay in education find looking for employment or apprenticeships more challenging. The Provider has secured additional European Social Funding (ESF) to add capacity to support young people at risk of disengaging. The ESF project Spark Change will be transferrable to the successful Provider.

Environmental Implications

17. There are no environmental factors identified from this report

Data Protection Implications

18. The incumbent provider currently has in place an active signed data protection agreement with the council. This agreement is refreshed yearly and applies to data collected when tracking and recording of 16-18 NEET and vulnerable age groups.

19. The appointed provider will be asked to submit their GDPR policy and data protection agreement which will be included and referenced in the contract.

Risk Management Implications

20. Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **Yes** - Directorate Risk Register

21. Separate risk register in place? **No**

22. The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below. **Yes**

23. The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
The Council may breach public procurement regulations/Contract Procedure Rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The procurement process will be conducted in accordance with Public Contracts Regulations (amended) 2015 and the Councils Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and Legal will be supporting and providing advice. 	Green
The Council will not meet its statutory responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If following the procurement process a provider is not identified and awarded, the Council will re-tender whilst continuing with the incumbent provider. 	Green
Procurement cost is not contained within available budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bids which exceed the available budget will not be accepted and there would need to be a re-tender the contract to remain within budget ▪ It is anticipated the annual contract value will remain the same as whilst there has been an increase in activity targets, the statutory reporting for 16-18 year olds has changed to 16-17 years. 	Green

Procurement Implications

24. The Council will follow a competitive tender exercise using the OPEN Procedure in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (amended) and the CPRs to identify a contractor.

Legal Implications

25. The value of this contracts falls above the procurement threshold for the services being tendered therefore the procurement will be subjected to and conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and the Council's Contract Procurement Rules.
26. Legal services will advise and assist on the procurement process and the proposed contract will be in the form approved by Legal Services.

Financial Implications

27. The current annual value of the contract is £400,000. The funding for this service comes from general fund budget of £400,000.
28. There are currently no future savings proposed against this budget.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

29. Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the initial co-production processes.
30. The conclusions of this assessment undertaken in June 2020 was that the implications are either positive or neutral in that the service will provide support to those young people that are in risk of disengaging or not in education, employment or training.
31. The assessment did not identify any potential for unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and conclude that all opportunities to advance equality are being addressed.
32. During the monitoring of the contracts, data on the ethnic profile of the service users has been gathered and shows:
- June 2021 shows a NEET in Harrow of 73 young people. 26 Female and 47 Male. There are 31 young people recorded with their ethnicity as White British/White Other.
 - December 2021 shows with 242 young people, resident and with SEND in Year 12 and 13, of which there are 5 young people that are NEET.
 - December 2021 (Year 12 and 13) - other vulnerable groups: 30 Looked After Children (LAC) of which 6 are NEET, 14 Youth Offending Teams (YOT) of which 4 are NEET
33. During the consultation process officers will collate up to date data and refresh the EqlAs to reflect the current local community demographics.

Council Priorities

34. The recommendations in this report will contribute to the following council priorities by supporting young people to engage in education, employment and training:

1. Tackling poverty and inequality
2. Thriving economy

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Jo Frost

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 14 February 2022

Statutory Officer: Blessing Enejo

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 11 February 2022

Chief Officer: Paul Hewitt

Signed off by the Corporate Director

Date: 15 February 2022

Head of Procurement: Lisa Taylor

Signed on behalf of the Head of Procurement

Date: 10 February 2022

Head of Internal Audit: Susan Dixon

Signed by the Head of Internal Audit

Date: 24 February 2022

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards

EqlA carried out: YES

The EqlA will be carried out as part of the consultation process and development of the service specification.

EqlA cleared by: N/A

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Priya Ganatra, Strategic Commissioning Manager

priya.ganatra@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

**Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

NO