

Operational Decision Record

Publication Date 17 November 2021	Decision Reference Number 4443
Decision Title Variation to Contract - for Library Needs Assessment	
Total Decision Value £63,093	
Revenue or Capital Spend? Revenue	
Department: Residents Services	
Contact Officer (Name, job title, and contact details) stephen.chartres@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Decision Taken: To approve a variation of contract with Activist, a research organisation currently undertaking work on the Library Needs Assessment.	
Reasons for Decision and Background Information	
<p>In February 2021 Activist were appointed to work with the Council to undertake a Library Needs Assessment. This work is required to underpin the Library Strategic Service Review, which forms part of the 2021/22 budget saving decision and is also an essential piece of work in order to show that the Council is following the correct procedure to re-shape its future library provision and will help mitigate the risk of any challenges we might receive around future potential service review decisions.</p> <p>Activist were appointed following the Council's procurement process. Activist were selected in relation to best value and on quality in terms of their consultation engagement approach, sector knowledge and strategic thinking. The initial value of the contract was £23,000 which was to support undertaking the phase 1 public and stakeholder consultation and engagement which is now complete.</p> <p>Due to a need to ensure that there is robust evidence based rationale to support library proposals being brought forward for further consultation, additional detailed evaluation and analysis work is required. This additional stage is needed to test the proposals against the outcomes from the phase 1 consultation, to ensure that these deliver a future modern library service which meets the needs of our</p>	

residents. This has been fully scoped and the additional cost is £29,616 based on previously agreed hourly rates.

This work was not originally in the contract scope with Activist and was due be undertaken in house. However due the scale of transformation now required, and a very tight decision timetable, this has become a substantial and intensive programme of work which needs to be subjected to independent challenge and so it requires an additional resource commitment from Activist's team.

In July 2021 a request was made to Activist to also complete a separate but related piece of work to support the ongoing strategic review of Central Library. The total cost for this was £10,477. This was required to support a development of the strategic business case to support the investment for the New Central Library. This is included in the total value of the decision outlined above

Other Options Considered and why these were rejected

Undertake- in house.

This work is required urgently to inform option proposals being brought forward on the future provision of the library service. It has been assessed there is not capacity in-house to complete this work with the tight timescale required. In addition Activist would bring an independent review, and thinking to the strategic analysis required

Undertake a new tendering process

Due the tight timescale undertaking a separate tender process would cause delay. The work required is a direct extension and continuation of the work already been undertaken by Activist, where they would be following a similar approach to that outlined in their original brief. They also have the established relationships with stakeholders and access to key documents to support and undertake this work in a timely and efficient way

Reasons why this decision is classified as operational

This is required work to enable delivery of budget savings in the MTFP, approved by Full Council March 2021 and for future option proposals for the Library service to be considered in due course for consultation

Additional Information

Procurement Advice

These additional pieces of work do not require a further separate tendering exercise as they are a direct extension of the work already being undertaken by Activist, where their appointment followed a robust Tender and Evaluation process, showing best value.

Paul Richie, Procurement Manager 15.11.21

Financial Implications

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) approved by Council in March 2021, included savings totalling £0.233m for reduced operations in the Library Service. This decision seeks approval to incur expenditure up to the value of £63,093. Following the outcome of the Library Needs Assessment there may be other changes in operations which could release further savings through efficiencies and new ways of working.

Activist were selected following a procurement process to ensure best value. The work being undertaken by Activist will ensure adherence to the requirements relating to this statutory service, to implement and realise these savings. The cost of the work is affordable and has been factored within the Library service forecast.

Failure to proceed with this work could lead to legal challenge in implementing the MTFP decisions. Any delay in implementation could lead to an overspend in 2022/23 onwards.

Maria Balchin, Senior Commercial Business Partner, 15.11.21

Risks

This additional work is essential to inform proposals for the future of the Library Service. Using an independent strong evidenced based rationale to inform proposals, is an important way to help meet the obligation set out in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. They will be considered carefully by Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), if challenge is made to any future decisions on provision.

Decision Maker (Name and Job Title)

Frank Jordan, Corporate Director, Resident Services

Scheme of Delegation Reference Number

Date Decision Taken: 16 November 2021