

Operational Executive Decision-Making Form

Guidance

This form should be used to record operational decisions taken by officers.

Operational decisions are defined as those which:

- have a value below £150,000
- are taken within agreed policies and budgets.

When defining the financial value of a decision the following principles apply:

- the financial value of a decision should reflect the total committed financial impact of that decision to the Council, for example, the full cost of a contract over its lifespan rather than the cost per year
- decisions incurring savings, income (including income from grants), loss of income and expenditure all fall within the definition of financial impact.

Governance Services can provide advice if you are unsure whether your decision is operational.

Please refer to Decision Making Guidance, available on the intranet, for information on how to fill out this form.

Signatures should not be added to this form but it is your responsibility to obtain explicit approval for the decision from the decision maker (usually your Corporate Director).

Publication and Implementation of the Decision

Once complete you must send a copy of this form to constitutional.services@nottinghamcity.gov.uk for publication on the Council's website. If there is a valid reason why any of the information cannot be published please attach it as an exempt appendix. In exceptional circumstances, the whole decision may be exempt from publication. If this is the case, please make this clear on the form. The title of the decision will still be published.

Operational officer decisions are not subject to call-in. Therefore, decisions should be completed and submitted to Governance Services before they are implemented but do not have to be published before implementation.

Operational decisions with a value below £25,000 do not require this form to be completed.

Decisions usually taken by Portfolio Holders

Where specifically delegated, officers can take decisions that would usually be taken by Portfolio Holders, Executive Committees or the Leader. These decisions cannot be recorded on this form. They should be recorded on the electronic Delegated Decisions System and are subject to publication and call-in.

Procurement

Where the decision involves the procurement of goods or services from a third party you must follow the Council's agreed procurement procedures, including arrangements for exemptions from those procedures. Please contact the procurement team for advice.

Operational Decision Record

Publication Date (to be added by Governance Services)	Decision Reference Number (to be added by Governance Services)
03/04/2022	4618
Decision Title	
Befriending and Hosting Service	
Decision Value	
£63,000	
Revenue or Capital Spend?	
Revenue Spend	
Department	
Finance and Resources	
Contact Officer (Name, job title, and contact details)	
Charlotte Dodds (Job title: Commissioning Officer Email: Charlotte.Dodds@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Phone: 0115 876 4460)	
Nicole Harris (Job Title: Head of Service- Children’s Social Care)	
Decision Taken	
Approve the expenditure of £63,000 to continue the Befriending and Hosting service provided by Safer Families for Children for up to one year from the 16 of July 2022	
Reasons for Decision and Background Information	
Reasons for Decision	
<p>1: Safe Families for Children (SFFC) Befriending and Hosting Service key outcomes are around prevention of escalation of need and diversion of children from care, reducing numbers of children requiring statutory intervention or accommodation with the local authority. These outcomes relieve pressure on Nottingham City Council budgets as children in care placement costs are significantly more expensive than this service intervention and avoid the trauma impact and ongoing social and emotional consequences of separating children from their families. SFFC empower parents and children and give them increased resilience enabling families to better meet their own needs with less reliance on our statutory services after closure to this service. Their volunteers establishing a sustainable, positive support network around the family is a significant factor in this.</p>	
<p>2: Operational colleagues have advised SFFC Befriending and Hosting service has been of real benefit to many families with cost savings being made through the service with</p>	

conservative estimates indicated in SFFC reports. Examples have been provided by social care of a snapshot of cases where their view is that without this SFFC service intervention children would have been placed into care. Placements are challenging to source in the current market and there are long waiting lists for alternative edge of care services. The Edge of Care Hub is oversubscribed and is a time limited service which does not continue after social care end their involvement, therefore it is not sustainable. Alternative edge of care services are perceived as another 'arm' of social care. Parents engage more readily with the SFFC service because it is volunteer led with their volunteers 'be-friending' families therefore the service is seen as more 'neutral'.

Background Information

The Be-friending and Hosting service provided by Safer Families for Children (SFFC) is an edge of care service which trains and enables volunteers to support children and families going through a crisis or experiencing social isolation.

Currently the service is contracted to provide support to 64 families at a rate of £1,000 per family until 15 July 2022. SFFC increased their service support rate up to £1,500 per family from April 2022, citing cost of living and fuel increases. The Nottingham City agreed budget available to commission this service for 2022-2023 remains the same at £64,000. Therefore, with the family support rate having increased by £500 up to £1,500 per family this means 42 families can be supported within budget for up to a year from July 2022 costing £63,000.

This report seeks approval to award a new contract directly to Safer Families for Children to continue to run the Befriending and Hosting Service for one year because extending the service gives the opportunity for a full commissioning review to be undertaken. This would ensure that a full procurement exercise for a new service identifies exactly what is needed operationally for children and families, achieving the best value for money, and assessing who could best offer the service we need in the market. Currently SFFC are the only provider we are aware of that provides a be-friending and hosting service. There would not be enough time to complete a full procurement exercise with the end date for this service being in July 2022; resulting in a gap in service delivery for children and families.

Derbyshire County Council and Nottinghamshire County Council are both awarding contracts directly with the Safer Families for Children for their Befriending and Hosting Services for a year until 2023. If Nottingham City Council also extends until 2023 we can share the learning and review of the service with colleagues and potentially explore procuring a service via joint commissioning, which due to economies of scale would achieve better value for money.

Procurement and legal have been consulted, this decision is compliant with procurement legislation and contract procedure rules.

Other Options Considered and why these were rejected

Option 1) Complete a full procurement exercise for a new service to commence on 16 July 2022 when the current service with SFFC has ended. There is not enough time between March and July 2022 to complete a full procurement process for service delivery to commence on 16 July; if a different provider was successful there would potentially then be further delays to allow the provider time to recruit adequate staff/ volunteer capacity . This would result in a gap in service delivery where no befriending and hosting service would be available for families and

children for at least several months. This would impact negatively on families and children in crisis. With no befriending and hosting support available this would increase the likelihood of statutory intervention and trauma with some children being separated from their families and placed into costly care placements resulting in higher budget pressures. Therefore this option is not recommended.

Option 2) Do nothing. Allow the contract to terminate on its end date of 15 July 2022 without continuing or re-procuring a new service. As explained within option 1 this would impact negatively on families and children in crisis. With no befriending and hosting support available this would increase the likelihood of statutory intervention and trauma with some children being separated from their families and placed into costly care placements resulting in higher budget pressures. Therefore this option is not recommended.

Reasons why this decision is classified as operational

The contract value at £63,000 is below £150,000 and is within an agreed budget.

Additional Information

You should consider:

- obtaining and recording advice if necessary from legal, finance or other colleagues
- informing relevant ward councillors if a decision particularly affects their ward
- whether an EIA, DPIA, Cabon Impact assessment or consultation exercise is required for this decision
- for capital spend, confirmation that the decision has been through the appropriate capital approval processes
- referring to any related previous decisions
- risks of the decision and any mitigation of those risks
- if the decision is approving capital spend, please include confirmation that the Chief Finance Officer has agreed to it.

Decision Maker (Name and Job Title)

Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People

Scheme of Delegation Reference Number

1

Date Decision Taken

21/04/2022