

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

1983

Author:

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Department:

Children and Families

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Subject:

Variation of existing contract with 'Advice Nottingham' to provide additional capacity to Nottingham City Council Welfare Rights

Total Value:

£35,000 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

1. Approval to allocate monies for the provision of additional capacity for the Nottingham City Council Welfare Rights Service through services provided by Advice Nottingham, equating to 2.5 full time equivalent Adviser posts, for a fixed period up until 31st September 2015. These posts already exist within the Advice Nottingham consortium and will work solely on NCC WRS referrals with no recruitment necessary by either Advice Nottingham or NCC. Monies will be allocated from budget N-R-5025-510-475-0.
2. Approval to dispense with Contract Procedure Rule 5.1.1 in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29 (Operational Issues) to vary the existing contract with Advice Nottingham to provide additional resource on the WRS referrals for a fixed term up to 31st September 2015.

Reasons for the Decision(s)

The NCC Welfare Rights Service had a number of temporary posts in the service up to end of March 2015. A new model of advice services is now in the process of being commissioned following the Financial Vulnerability Advice & Assistance Strategic Commissioning Review. These new services will commence in October 2015 and will include a reconfiguration of services across the city, including the NCC WRS.

Savings have been required from all contracts under the new model of services and NCC WRS will contribute to this and still provide a quality service by reducing its geographic coverage in the city to focus on activity in Committee Areas 1 and 3.

During the interim period up to the commencement of new advice services, NCC WRS requires additional capacity to maintain its current service coverage and manage service demand following the withdrawal of the temporary posts that expired on 31st March 2015.

The Advice Nottingham consortium has 2.5 FTE posts awaiting funding from the East Midlands Money Advice project and has agreed to allocate the full capacity of these posts to NCC WRS until 31st September 2015, subject to NCC funding the posts until then. The £35,000 expenditure in this decision will be used only to cover the salary costs of these 2.5 FTE posts up to 31st September 2015.

The consortium member organisations hold the appropriate quality marks / standards for advice provision and the Advisers provided to deliver this additional capacity to NCC WRS will have appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to give welfare and debt advice to citizens.

Other Options Considered:

1. Reduce the service provided by NCC WRS immediately: This would leave a gap in provision of welfare and debt advice in the city. The waiting time for advice appointments with the service has already increased since the removal of the temporary posts. To further reduce capacity would create longer waiting times for appointments and have a detrimental effect on the financial stability of our most vulnerable citizens and households.
2. Recruit additional posts directly to the service on fixed term contracts: The capacity is needed immediately and only until 31st September 2015 so a recruitment process, or even engagement of a temporary employment agency would be unnecessarily time consuming in contrast to making use of available capacity with our Voluntary and Community Sector partners.

Background Papers:

None

Published Works:

None

Affected Wards:

Citywide

**Colleague / Councillor
Interests:**

**Dispensation from Financial
Regulations:**

Yes

Consultations:

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

**Crime and Disorder
Implications:**

None

Equality:

EIA not required. Reasons: no change to existing services or service users, the decision relates only to the provision of additional resource for an existing service, for a fixed period.

**Social Value
Considerations:**

This action will bring social value to the city through improving the financial situation and wellbeing of people at experiencing or at risk of financial difficulty.

Decision Type:

Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In:

Yes

Call In Expiry date:

18/05/2015

Advice Sought:

Legal, Finance, Procurement

Legal Advice:

The proposals in this report raise no significant legal issues and are supported.

The temporary posts providing welfare advice have terminated, leaving a gap in the current service provision to vulnerable citizens. An extension of the existing contract will be a short term arrangement enabling a continuation of service until the new model of service commences in October 2015.

For the above reasons, the recommendation in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29 from CPR 5.1.1 is supported.

Legal services will assist the report author as and when required with respect to the variation and extension to the existing contract to capture to additional service requirement. Advice provided by Dionne Claire Screatton (Solicitor) on 10/04/2015.

Finance Advice:

The decision is to approve funding for the provision of additional capacity for the Nottingham City Council Welfare Rights Service in the form of 2.5 full time equivalent Adviser posts, for a fixed period up until 31st September 2015 at a cost of £35k.

As part of the commissioning review there has been a strategic choice approved of £0.200m to be achieved from a new model of Welfare Right provision through the recommissioning of external welfare rights contracts and a reduction in geographic coverage in the city of the internal welfare rights service to committee areas 1 and 3. This new model commences 1st October 2015 and the contribution required from the internal Welfare Right Service to this strategic choice is £0.049m.

To move to this model additional capacity is required until the commencement of this new model to maintain service levels currently provided by the internal Welfare Rights service and to reduce waiting lists that have grown as service capacity has reduced due to the loss of temporary posts.

The forecast outturn for the service for 2014/15 indicates that there will be an underspend of £35k available for carry forward to fund these posts and it is proposed that this be requested as a carry forward as part of the year end process. Should the request for carry forward not be approved the service will have to deliver the saving by reducing expenditure across the range of strategic finance services.

This proposal will enable the internal Welfare Rights service to manage the reduction of the service provision and therefore enable it to achieve its proportion of the strategic choice saving. Advice provided by Steve Hales (Finance Analyst) on 23/04/2015. Advice provided by Steve Hales (Finance Analyst) on 23/04/2015.

Procurement Advice:

The proposal to allocate monies for the provision of additional capacity for the Nottingham City Council Welfare Rights Service will enable the staffing of 2.5 full time equivalent Adviser posts, for a fixed period up until 31st September 2015. This will ensure that the waiting time for appointments is reduced, and that there is no gap in provision. Therefore, dispensation from the provisions of the Contract Procedure Rules (5.1.2) in accordance with Financial Regulation (3.29) (Operational Issues) to vary the existing contract with Advice Nottingham to provide additional resource on the WRS referrals for a fixed term up to 31st September 2015 is supported from a procurement perspective.

Advice provided by Julie Herrod (Procurement Officer) on 14/04/2015.

Signatures

Alex Norris (PH Adults, Commissioning and Health)
SIGNED and Dated: 11/05/2015
Glen O'Connell (Acting Corporate Director of Resources)
SIGNED and Dated: 05/05/2015
Theresa Channell (Head of Corporate and Strategic Finance) - Dispensation from Financial Regulations
SIGNED and Dated: 27/04/2015
Chief Financial Officer's Comments: