

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>CONTRACT AWARD: CONTROLLED DRINKING ENVIRONMENTS</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CONSULTANT IN PUBLIC HEALTH</b>

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on the recommissioning process and outcome to award a contract for Controlled Drinking Environments. A tender was undertaken during December 2022 – January 2023, in conjunction with the Council’s Housing Services team for the provision of Accommodation-Based Housing Related Support Services (Hostel) (Lot 1) and Controlled Drinking Environments Service (Lot 2). The process has concluded, the tenders received have been fully evaluated according to Council procurement rules and the Director of Public Health is requested to award the Controlled Drinking Environments contract (Lot 2) to the preferred bidder, Birkenhead Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA).

The activity outlined in this report supports the vision of the Wirral Plan 2021-2026, to ‘create equity for people and place’ and opportunities for all to secure the best possible future for resident, communities and businesses. It contributes directly or indirectly to delivering the following themes of the plan:

- Safe and Pleasant Communities
- Active and Healthy Lives

The proposed actions do have any significant Ward implications.

This is not a Key Decision.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Director of Public Health is recommended to approve the award of a contract for a 12 month term with two 12-month extension options, to Birkenhead Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) for the Controlled Drinking Environments Service.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The current contract for the Controlled Drinking Environments Service ended on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023. A procurement exercise has been completed in accordance with Council Contract Procedure Rules. The new contract will be in place on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 The time spent in a Controlled Drinking Environment is a positive alternative to street drinking. In 2022 the Controlled Drinking Environment was used on 2,008 occasions and provided 1,035 meals and 6,195 non-alcoholic or hot drinks to the people using the facility. This contact leads to referrals into specialist treatment and other positive outcomes. If this service was not provided, the level of engagement with a vulnerable and often hard to engage group would be greatly reduced and the levels of harm they experience from their drinking is likely to be greater. The presence of people drinking on the streets in Birkenhead is also likely to increase. For these reasons the continuation of this service, and the benefits it provides is seen to be valuable. Therefore, not recommissioning the service was not considered as a viable option.
- 2.2 It is necessary to recommission the service highlighted in order to comply with Public Contract Regulations and the Council's Contract Procedure rules. Other options related to contract length and contract value have been considered.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Wirral Controlled Drinking Environment service operates within a framework of harm reduction for dependent drinkers. It allows residents from a homeless hostel, from the Night Provision Services, and other Rough Sleepers and street drinkers to consume their alcohol in a supervised, controlled and safe area. Anyone using the facility is asked to hand their alcohol over to staff who then return it in a more controlled and rationed way, with the added encouragement for the person to eat and drink hot and other non-alcoholic drinks in between. In this way it establishes a far less harmful drinking behaviour, as opposed to the consequences of an alternative of drinking on the street.
- 3.2 The Controlled Drinking Environment offers refuge and a safe environment for those that would normally be excluded from mainstream services. It provides a base from which many of those using the facility start along a pathway to treatment and recovery, through Wirral Ways to Recovery, Mental health services, primary health care and/or other external service providers. It provides an effective point of engagement with dependant drinkers, and through this it offers a gateway to both residential detoxification and rehabilitation. As well as that, it takes people away from street drinking in Birkenhead town centre and so reduces the quantity of noticeable street drinking litter and linked anti-social and criminal behaviour in that area.
- 3.3 Service tender documents were posted onto the Chest (the council e-procurement portal) on the 21st December 2022. The closing date for tender submissions was the

27<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The recommended contract term is for one year initially with the option for a further two one-year extensions.

- 3.4 A pre-requisite of the Controlled Drinking Environments service is that it is delivered in a local hostel. A tender was therefore undertaken in conjunction with Housing Services for the provision of Accommodation-Based Housing Related Support Services (Hostel) (Lot 1) and Controlled Drinking environments (Lot 2). Prospective providers were advised that in order to be awarded with the contract for Lot 2 they must have been successful with their submission for provision of Lot 1. The contract will be awarded to the successful provider for both:

- (1) Accommodation-Based Housing Related Support; and
- (2) Controlled Drinking Environments

under the standard terms and conditions of Wirral Councils' Supported Housing Contract.

- 3.5 Only one bid was submitted for the provision of Lot 2: Controlled Drinking Environments. This was Birkenhead Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) which is also the incumbent provider. Their submission met all quality and pricing criteria and it is therefore recommended that Birkenhead Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) be awarded with the contract.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The contract is due to commence with effect from 1 May 2023 with a potential total contract value of £145,813 (£48,604 per annum).
- 4.2 The ringfenced Public Health grant currently funds the services highlighted. The value and availability of the Public Health grant for 2024//25 onwards is not yet known. However indicative allocations for 2024-25, have been published by Government with a further 1.3% cash uplift to take place in 2024-25. Should the Public Health grant vary and be reduced then contract amounts may need to be reduced or the contract terminated.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Since April 2013 the Health and Social Care Act 2012 has given local authorities the power to perform public health functions. Local authorities have a duty to protect and improve the health of the population they serve. They are required to commission and manage public health services for their population, preventing and reducing harm from alcohol misuse in adults is a non prescribed function within the ring-fenced Public Health grant.
- 5.2 The recommissioning of the service detailed within this report are compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Wirral Council Contract Procedure rules.
- 5.3 One contract will be awarded to the successful provider for (Lot 1) Accommodation-Based Housing Related Support and (Lot 2) Controlled Drinking Environments under the standard terms and conditions of Wirral Councils' Supported Housing Contract.

5.4 The formal contract in this matter will be prepared by legal services.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 There is no significant resource implication. The relevant Council Officer will work jointly with Housing colleagues to support contract management processes during the lifetime of the contract.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 The procurement process is also subject to scrutiny and at risk of legal challenge. Particular regard has been given to contract procedure rules and relevant legislation at all stages of the process and the Public Health team works closely with the Procurement team to ensure compliance.

7.2 The Council will need to review all financial allocations to achieve a balanced budget over the next few years. The Public Health department has and maintains a five-year financial plan to provide assurance that the projected funding is in place for the commissions that it makes. This contract variation period is within this timeframe.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 A number of service user consultation events were carried out in December 2022, to gather views on the current delivery of drug and alcohol services and on where they might be strengthened and improved in the future. One of these consultations took place with residents at the YMCA. Feedback on services was constructive and generally positive, with a number of useful observations and suggestions offered. These will be factored into future service development.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone.

9.2 Equality contract clauses are to be included within the contract and compliance will be routinely monitored over its lifetime.

9.3 The commissioned service is compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty as contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The Controlled Drinking Environment redirects street drinkers to an indoor space to consume either alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks and food, and in turn dispose of food waste and glass bottles responsibly and safely. Most litter from street drinking are broken glass bottles and sharp cans, which not only reduce the overall appearance of the area but prove a danger to those in the area and local wildlife in Birkenhead Park and nearby areas.

10.2 The Controlled Drinking Environment encourages attendees to engage in various activities, including tending to an on-site garden with trees, shrubs, and flowers. This not only helps the mental wellbeing of service users but helps to offset carbon emissions by planting, and positively impacts on the local ecosystem.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The award of the contract will continue to support the employment of local staff providing the service and contribute to community wealth building in Birkenhead & Tranmere ward. The service provides street drinkers with non-alcoholic drinks and hot food in a positive space. This contributes to the overall well being of the Birkenhead Town Centre area. This is in the context that the town centre is impacted disproportionately by street drinking and associated anti-social behaviour, both of which can deter visitors and local residents from the area. The service is also part of Birkenhead Young Men's Christian Association ambition to build service users' personal and social capital to sustain long-term change. The staff lead local community-based activities to help service users find a new focus and build a foundation to progress into recovery, independent living, and career building.

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## APPENDICES

None

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Invitation to Tender (ITT) Scope and Contract Specification for the supply of Lot 1: Accommodation-Based Support Services for Homeless People Aged 18+ (hostel) and Lot 2: Controlled Drinking Environment. Contract Reference: DN628631 (exempt from publication)

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	N/A