

22ND NOVEMBER 2023

REPORT TITLE:	OUTCOME OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH RE-COMMISSIONING PROCESS FOR INFORMATION AND ADVICE SERVICES
REPORT OF:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

On 29th November 2022, the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee authorised the Director of Public Health to recommission Information and Advice Services in Wirral. At this Committee, delegated authority was given to the Director of Public Health to award the tender to the successful bidder following the tender process. This report provides an update on the recommissioning process and outcome.

The process has concluded, the tenders received have been fully evaluated according to Council procurement rules and the Director of Public Health will take the decision to award the contract to the successful bidder Wirral Citizen’s Advice Bureau.

Current commissioning arrangements expire at the end of the financial year 2023/24. Good information and advice services are an important component of overall health and wellbeing, and a pillar of wider work to reduce health inequalities in Wirral.

The report supports the implementation of the Wirral Plan 2021 – 26 priorities, Brighter Futures and Active and Healthy Lives and Wirral’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its core purpose to improve equity for people and place through the provision of a Wirral-wide service that directly supports people in need.

The proposed action affects all wards within the borough and is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Director of Public Health is recommended to approve the award of a five-year contract commencing on 1 April 2024 and running until 31 March 2027 (with the option of two one-year extensions) at a total cost of £6,999,925.20 for Information and Advice services to Wirral Citizen Advice Bureau within the approved budget and as the highest scoring tenderer in accordance with the Most Economically Advantageous Tender criteria.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR DECISION

- 1.1 The current contract for the Information and Advice Services delivered by Wirral Citizen Advice Bureau will expire on 31st March 2024. A procurement exercise has been completed in accordance with Council Contract Procedure Rules.
- 1.2 The tender was evaluated against a 25% contract price, 10% Social Value and 65% contract quality ratio. The successful bidder met all the quality requirements within the allocated budget.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The service was assessed as part of the Public Health Grant review process in July 2023. During the review, consideration was given to not re-commissioning the service, however local data and insight continues to demonstrate high levels of need, and therefore continued requirement for the service.
- 2.2 Authorisation was given by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in November 2022 to re-commission the Wirral Information and Advice service totalling up to £7,000,000 (£1,400,000 per annum) for a three-year contract (1st April 2024 – 31st March 2027) with the option of a one year plus further one year extension. Delegated authority was also given to the Director of Public Health to award the tender to the successful bidder following the tender process.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 29th November 2022, the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee authorised the Director of Public Health to re-commission Information and Advice Services in Wirral. At this Committee, delegated authority was given to the Director of Public Health to award the tender to the successful bidder following the tender process.
- 3.2 A series of workshops and mapping was undertaken with local stakeholder in April 2023 and an update report was taken back to the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee on the 18th of July 2023.
- 3.3 Service tender documents were posted onto the Chest (the Council e-procurement portal) on 26th September 2023. The term for the contract is three years with the option for a further two one-year extensions. The budget for the tender was £7,000,000.
- 3.4 The new contract will be operational by 1st April 2024. The current contract for this service will continue during the re-commissioning and mobilisation period so that there is no gap in service for local people.
- 3.5 The re-commission of the service has provided an opportunity to review information and advice requirements to ensure we have the right funding and delivery models in place. An independent evaluation of the service was carried out by Liverpool John

Moore's University and the findings and recommendations were used to shape the service design, to prioritise and identify key areas for development and to ensure that decisions were clearly based on the available evidence.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The original budget allocated for the contract had a maximum total value of £7,000,000. The successful bidder submitted a bid within budget at a value of £6,999,925.20.
- 4.2 This contract is commissioned by Wirral Council with financial contribution from NHS partners of £300,000 per annum. There is confirmation of available funding from the Public Health Grant and partners to support the commissioning of a local information and advice service.
- 4.3 The value and availability of the Public Health grant for 2024/25 onwards is not yet known. The budget for the service has been allocated based on the Public Health Grant funding being consistent with the current financial year. Should the Public Health Grant be reduced, then contract amounts may need to be varied. The tender has included appropriate mitigating measures.
- 4.4 Analysis of social return on investment with the current contract identified that Wirral Citizens Advice generated between £33 and £50 in social value for every £1 invested within the contract. The benefits were seen across the following themes:
- Increased income (£1,800,000)
 - Increased empowerment (£1,200,000)
 - Reduced anxiety (£781,000)
 - Increased employability (£390,000)
 - Increased security of tenancy (£232,000)

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The tender detailed within this report is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Contract Procedure rules, Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.
- 5.2 The proposed award of the contract for information and advice services is made on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) scoring. The meaning of MEAT is currently governed by the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 5.3 The Council has a general duty under Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) does not apply to the new contract as the contract is being awarded to the incumbent provider.

6.2 Anonymised details of staff engaged in the provision of relevant services, who may be subject to TUPE were provided by incumbent providers. This information was shared with the tender documentation.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 There is always a risk of disruption to service provision during service redesign, recommissioning and commencement of new services. To mitigate against this and minimise disruption, adequate time to plan and implement the mobilisation of new services is built into the procurement process between contract award and commencement.

7.2 Risks associated with the service delivery will be managed through regular performance and contract management arrangements, to be agreed during the mobilisation period.

7.3 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.

7.4 In the current challenging financial climate, the impact of any future reduction in budget or policy implications on the amount of funding available for Public Health is unknown. The value and availability of the Public Health grant for 2024/25 onwards is not yet known. However, funding for information and advice services has been committed for the duration of the contract. Should the grant vary considerably then contract amounts may need to be varied over the course of the contract, potentially resulting in service change.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 In order to inform the development and design of the service specification, engagement and consultation has taken place with key partners, stakeholders, and local communities. Ongoing engagement will continue to inform and shape the service. This includes:

- Engagement with local commissioners of health, care and community services to understand the impact of increasing cost of living.
- Engagement sessions with a wide range of stakeholders to understand their current concerns and challenges that are affecting local residents including any key policy changes.
- Working with third sector and community partners to engage with local communities to understand their needs in relation to information and advice services.
- Qualitative insight work with local residents to understand the impact and ways support can be tailored to meet their needs.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Public Health adheres to Wirral Council's legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work do not discriminate against anyone. As part of the recommission an equality impact assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to ensure

all equality impacts are considered and relevant actions are taken to mitigate any potential negative impacts. The Information and Advice EIA is available here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>.

9.2 Within the tender submissions, bidders had to demonstrate how they work to eliminate discrimination and ensure equality rights of people with protected characteristics, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Equality contract clauses are included within the Public Health contract and compliance will be routinely monitored over the lifetime of the contract.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 During the procurement process, bids were evaluated on any social value added to the service which includes potential impact of the contract on Wirral's climate and environment. Social value will be monitored as part of routine contract and performance management arrangements.

10.2 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no significant impact on emissions of greenhouse gases.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Community Wealth Building is a people-centred approach to economic growth which reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of communities, towns, and cities, and instead places control of this wealth into the hands of local people, communities, businesses, and organisations. This commission will support several of the key outcomes within the strategy.

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APPENDICES

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Public Health Grant 2022-23
- Wirral Citizen's Advice Bureau Ltd Wirral Council Public Health Services Contract (DN568876)
- Information and Advice Commission
- <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50080457/PUBLIC%20HEALTH%20INFORMATION%20AND%20ADVICE%20SERVICE%20COMMISSION.pdf>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
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Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee Information and Advice Services Commission	8 th September 2021
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee Information and Advice Services Commission	29 th November 2022
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee Information and Advice Services Commission	18 th July 2023