

## EXECUTIVE

### 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Procurement of a Countywide Carers Support Service</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	David Watts, Executive Director of Adults, Communities & Wellbeing (DASS)
<b>Executive Member</b>	Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	Not applicable

#### List of Appendices

#### Appendix A – Options Appraisal

##### 1. Purpose of Report

---

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Executive to commence re-procurement of a countywide Carers Support Service.

##### 2. Executive Summary

---

- 2.1. North Northamptonshire Council currently hosts the Carers Support Service contract on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire Children's Trust. The contract expires on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- 2.2. The current contract is in the second year of a two-year extension, the value of the contract is £768,900 per annum. The cost to North Northamptonshire Council is £324,450 per annum.

- 2.3. Following completion of an options appraisal exercise, North Northamptonshire Council has agreed to a continuation of the hosting arrangements and to lead the procurement for a countywide Carers Support Service. It was recognised that a countywide service is the most advantageous option for all commissioning partners and individuals using the service.
- 2.4. It was agreed that a two-year block contract is the preferred option for all partners. The shorter contract term will be used to review and explore opportunities for a more collaborative approach to carers services in the future as the Integrated Care System embeds. It also allows for opportunities to work with partners and internal stakeholders to identify the strategic direction for carers support in North Northamptonshire.

### **3. Recommendations**

---

3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Agree to commence an open tender procurement process for a countywide Carers Support Service.
- b) Delegate authority to the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing in consultation with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and actions required to conclude this procurement and award the contract.

3.2. Reason for Recommendations

- a) The recommended approach ensures compliance with the Care Act 2014 and the council's statutory duty to provide assessments for carers and meet their assessed needs.
- b) That a jointly commissioned service supports the provision of an equitable service across the county.
- c) That delegated authority to award will ensure the service start date of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 can be achieved.

### **4. Report Background**

---

- 4.1. The current carers contract commissioned previously by Northamptonshire County Council on behalf of Adult and Children's Services expires on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Since the unitary split on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, North Northamptonshire Council has hosted the contract on behalf of its commissioning partners.
- 4.2. The Care Act 2014 places a statutory duty on local authorities to provide carers assessments and meet the identified needs through the provision of information

and advice, signposting and wellbeing care and support. In the last year, 16,037 carers have benefited from this support.

- 4.3. A multi-disciplinary Project Group was established to review the effectiveness of current delivery, undertaking a range of activities including:
  - a) a review of current provision including capacity and demand mapping
  - b) benchmarking with other Local Authorities (including service model and value)
  - c) engagement with the current provider and statutory partners including Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 4.4 The findings of the review informed an options appraisal exercise which was considered and agreed by all commissioning partners. The process identified that a countywide two-year block contract was the most beneficial option to ensure continuity of service and a uniform approach across the county. The Options Appraisal is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 4.5 The decision to commission on a shorter-term contract allows for the Integrated Care System to develop and subsequently inform the future design of carers support. It also allows the opportunity to work with partners and internal stakeholders to identify the strategic direction for carers support in North Northamptonshire.
- 4.6 To build upon the review findings to date and support the remodelling of future services, the Project Group will remain in place after the contract award. In addition to ensuring the service meets all legislative and policy requirements, the group will explore opportunities for a more collaborative approach to future service provision.

## **5 Issues and Choices**

---

- 5.1 Officers have reviewed the existing contractual arrangements in conjunction with colleagues from both the Legal and Procurement teams. This has confirmed there are no options to flex or extend the existing contract.
- 5.2 The council is required under the Care Act 2014 to provide carers assessments and meet the assessed needs through the provision of care and support. Ceasing the service is therefore not an option as this would place the council and the statutory Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) postholder in breach of the statutory duty.
- 5.3 As part of the options appraisal consideration was given to ending the hosting arrangements and commissioning carers support separately. However, risks were identified that were detrimental to each partner, and the residents of Northamptonshire. In addition, it was agreed that this option did not align with the

ambitions of the future establishment of the Integrated Care System and closer, more integrated commissioning and delivery of services.

- 5.4 The recommendation to procure via the open market will maximise competition and ensure the contract delivers best value for all stakeholders.
- 5.5 The proposed service will be advertised to market on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 to ensure continuity of service on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

## **6 Next Steps**

---

- 6.1 Following approval from the Executive, the procurement will be delivered as per the key timelines below.

Executive Committee	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
Tender Published	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Evaluation	6 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
Contract Award	11 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
Contract Start Date	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2022

## **7 Implications (including financial implications)**

---

### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

- 7.1.1. The total contract value for the two-year contract is £1,537,800, of which North Northamptonshire Council's commitment is £648,900.
- 7.1.2 North Northamptonshire Council's contribution to the contract will be funded via the Better Care Fund pooled budget, as per the existing arrangements.

### **7.2 Legal and Governance**

- 7.2.1. Local Authorities in England have a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to provide carers assessments and meet the assessed needs through the provision of care and support. The commissioning authorities have chosen to delegate these functions to the commissioned service under Section 79 of the Act.
- 7.2.2. To comply with the Public Contract Regulations (2015) and North Northamptonshire Council's Contract Procedure Rules, the contract will be advertised to the market via an open tender.

7.2.3 The Legal team have been engaged throughout the procurement to ensure a full and appropriate contract is prepared to meet the requirement.

### **7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans**

7.3.1 The proposed service supports North Northamptonshire's Corporate Vision of being: "A place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life". In addition, one of North Northamptonshire Council's Key Commitments is to ensure individuals have "Active fulfilled lives" and that as an organisation we "Value and support our carers and volunteers".

7.3.2. The service also aligns to Northamptonshire's Health and Care Partnerships vision of "a positive lifetime of health, wellbeing and care in our community". One of their six Engagement Principles also includes the requirement that "carers are identified, supported and involved".

### **7.4 Risk**

7.4.1. There is a risk to the timely conclusion of the procurement and start of the service if delegated authority is not authorised, to enable further decisions and/or actions, without the need to return to the Executive.

7.4.2. The Council faces significant reputational risk if there is a delay to the procurement process, which additionally could result in there being no provider in place to provide the service.

7.4.3 As no further investment has been made into the service, there is a risk that the services specified can no longer be delivered within the financial envelope. However, the benchmarking and engagement undertaken to date has not identified this as a threat to the successful completion of the procurement and as such the commissioning partners are happy to proceed with the proposed approach.

### **7.5 Consultation**

7.5.1. Engagement with the current provider and other commissioning partners has identified there are no immediate gaps in provision or development requirements but recognised the opportunities presented by the establishment of the Integrated Care System in April 2022.

7.5.2. Dates for face-to-face engagement with service users and the public are scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022. This engagement will be evaluated and will contribute to the contract specification.

7.5.3. On 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 the national 2021-22 Survey of Adult Carers in England was sent by post to residents of Northamptonshire. The deadline for return of the surveys was 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021. The analysed results of this survey will be considered when developing the contract specification.

## **7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

- 7.6.1 Following discussion with the Chair of the Health, Wellbeing and Vulnerable People EAP by the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, it was not felt necessary for this proposal to be considered by the panel as the proposal is not of a contentious nature and is cognisant of the council's priorities.
- 7.6.2 Of more interest to the EAP will be the council's strategic approach to supporting informal carer and the EAP would want to consider appropriate proposals such as the Market Position Statement and Commissioning Intentions and a refreshed Carer's Strategy when these are due to be reviewed.

## **7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny**

- 7.7.1. The procurement process and/or any part of the requirement may be selected for consideration by Scrutiny.

## **7.8 Equality Implications**

- 7.8.1. An Equality Impact Screening has been undertaken in line with the Equality Act (2010) and identified that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this procurement will not adversely impact individuals with protected characteristics.

## **7.9 Climate Impact**

- 7.9.1. The successful provider will support North Northamptonshire Council's key commitment of a greener more sustainable environment.
- 7.9.2 The Council will work continuously with the provider to ensure the service maximises the use of technology and service delivery models that minimises the impact on the environment.

## **7.10 Community Impact**

- 7.10.1 Research by the University of Sheffield placed the value of unpaid care in Northamptonshire at £1,333 million in 2015. As such it is recognised that carers provide a vitally important contribution to the health and social care economy.
- 7.10.2 This service will improve the wellbeing of carers in the community by ensuring they are correctly and adequately supported to remain in their caring role.
- 7.10.3 The providers of Carers Support Services are traditionally charities and volunteer organisations who are key partners in delivering community service and understanding community needs.

7.10.4 North Northamptonshire Council will also work with the provider to maximise local employment

## **7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1 No implications identified.

## **8 Background Papers**

---

8.1 Appendix A - Options Appraisal

## Appendix A

Options	Risks	Benefits	Recommendation
1. Do Nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The service will expire</li> <li>-NNC will be in breach of their requirements under the Care Act 2014</li> <li>-The wellbeing of residents requiring these services will be impacted</li> </ul>	None identified	Not recommended
2. Each Authority commissions their own service to start 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Potential lack of consistency for residents already using services</li> <li>-Providers will have limited time to adapt to the change</li> <li>-Providers may not be individually active in the West/North areas</li> <li>-The services are not commissioned as part of the Northamptonshire integrated care system</li> </ul>	None Identified due to lack of time for quality commissioning to take place	Not recommended
3. Issue a 2-year contract countywide, based on current service provision in 2 Lots, Lot 1 North, and Lot 2 West. This allows for either Authority to serve notice after one year to commission their own service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-If the service is not commissioned through the correct process it could result in delivering poor value for money and impact on the levels of efficiency that can be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Enables a full review of the effectiveness of the services through additional time to collect and analyse data</li> <li>-Allows time to develop and consult on new models and ideas</li> <li>-Provides time for service user engagement</li> <li>-Enables time for benchmarking exercises</li> <li>-Provides greater opportunity to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to develop a long-term model</li> <li>-Allows either Authority to serve notice after one year to commission their own service if they wish.</li> <li>-Provides consistency for people already using the services</li> <li>-Gives the Provider Market time to adapt</li> </ul>	<p>The identified risk can be mitigated by following the full tender process. A 2-year contract allows for quality commissioning time to complete all tasks as outlined.</p> <p>This option allows either Authority to serve notice after one year to recommission as they wish.</p> <p>Not recommended</p>
4. Commission a countywide service to support integration on a 5-year contract to enable the ICS to embed. (The Monitoring Officer will need to approve the contract length prior to procurement).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The service commissioned does not meet the local need of each authority</li> <li>-The recommissioning timescales may mean the service specified does not reflect the needs of the integrated system</li> <li>-5-year contract length does not give flexibility to change models, repeated variations is not considered ideal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Carers continue to receive uniform service regardless of where they live</li> <li>-The service supports an integrated approach in line with system priorities</li> <li>-Provides consistency for people already using the services</li> <li>-Enables a full review of the effectiveness of the services through additional time to collect and analyse data</li> </ul>	<p>Whilst there are many benefits, the potential need to vary the contract on a regular basis to support ICS and redesign is not attractive. This will require resources that are not always readily available. It may also cause confusion for the Provider, and for customers having services potentially changed, or even removed.</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Allows time to develop and consult on new models and ideas</li> <li>-Provides time for service user engagement</li> <li>-Provides greater opportunity to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to develop a long-term model</li> <li>-Gives the Provider Market time to adapt</li> </ul>	Not recommended
Commission a 2-year countywide service to start 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2022	-If the service is not commissioned through the correct process it could result in delivering poor value for money and impact on the levels of efficiency that can be achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Carers continue to receive uniform service regardless of where they live</li> <li>-The service supports an integrated approach in line with system priorities</li> <li>-Provides consistency for people already using the services</li> <li>-Enables a full review of the effectiveness of the services through additional time to collect and analyse data</li> <li>-Allows time to develop and consult on new models and ideas</li> <li>-Provides time for service user engagement</li> <li>-Provides greater opportunity to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to develop a long-term model</li> <li>-Gives the Provider Market option to be involved in consultation and model/redesign</li> </ul>	<p>The identified risk can be mitigated by following the full tender process. A 2-year contract allows for quality commissioning time to complete all tasks as outlined. The current provider sees the benefit of this approach and is their preferred option. A 2-year contract allows for the ICS to bed in and shows the landscape for future commissioning.</p> <p>This is the recommended option.</p>