

Title: Homecare Services Extension to Contract 2024

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 14 March 2024

Classification: Part 1 (unrestricted)

Policy Context:

Key Decision: Yes

Report Author: Nicola Mickleburgh

Executive Director: Mark Harvey

Executive Councillor: Councillor Nelson

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The proposed decision is to seek agreement to further extend the Care and Support in Home, homecare contract. This contract has utilised some of the built in extension period, being extended in 2022 until 31st March 2024. There is the ability within the contract to extend until March 2027.
- 1.2 Work has begun by the Strategic Commissioning team to bring the current Homecare service to a framework contract which we anticipate going to competitive tender during 2024.
- 1.3 Therefore, we are asking for an extension of the current Homecare Contract until 31st March 2025, in order to give the Strategic Commissioning team time to deliver and implement the tender for this service.

2. Recommendation.

- 2.1 **To extend the contract of the Homecare Services until 31st March 2025.**

3. Background.

- 3.1 On 1st May 2017, The Council entered into a 5-year Homecare services contract with the option to extend for a further 5 years up to 2027. In 2022, the Council extended the contract until March 2024.

- 3.2 The Care Act 2014 places responsibility on all local authorities to promote individual well-being, prevent needs for care and support whilst placing a responsibility on all local to delay and reduce the need for care and support. Through reablement, prevention and enablement Southend-on-Sea City Council are adhering to these responsibilities.
- 3.3 In the city of Southend-on-Sea we have a growing ageing population and an increasing demand on our care and support at home and our reablement services.
- 3.4 Throughout its tenure the Home Care Contract has enabled the Council to accomplish its responsibilities to provide care to individuals in their own home in an efficient, structured, and timely way.
- 3.6 The new Homecare model and re-procurement will seek to maximise benefits to the Adult Social Care Homecare workforce in order to both to recognise their value and also provide real career opportunities and embrace them within our City. It is also essential that the new Homecare framework is embedding the voices of people with lived experience and unpaid carers in the service delivery. This will help to develop and deliver a person centred, outcome focused support.

4. Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 Work has begun to ensure that a new homecare framework is in place towards the end of the 2024/25 financial year. Extending the Homecare contract will enable the service to continue under the current contract during this time.
- 4.2 This work will incorporate engagement and co-production with customers, care workers, and Homecare providers. The Strategic Commissioning Team will continue the commissioning and procurement process.
- 4.3 The new procurement process is anticipated to take a total of 12 months to complete. This includes
 - Pretender market analysis and engagement
 - Preparation of a revised tender framework documentation
 - Procurement activity
 - Transition and contract mobilisation
- 4.4 The Council is committed to protecting the most vulnerable people in the city and in this case has a legal duty to do so. The extension of the existing contracts is necessary to ensure that there is seamless continuity of care services to those people who are reliant on them.

5. Other Options

- 5.1 It would be technically and legally possible to spot-purchase any number of providers to deliver Homecare in the City as an alternative to a framework contract. This would present an increased risk to the effective oversight of the quality and safety of Homecare provision to vulnerable residents in need of care and support living across the city. In addition, each package of care would be subject to the Council's procurement procedures and therefore some form of quotation process with competition would be required each time. This could significantly delay provision of care in many cases and would be clearly not desirable.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The expenditure proposed through the contract extension will be contained within existing budget resources.
- 6.3 The Homecare budget for 2024/25 is currently £13.14M however this is subject to change as it is not yet approved.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council has a legal duty to provide this care to people who need it. The Council also has a legal duty to ensure that the way in which its legal functions are delivered represent Best Value. Acquiring these services following a tender process where bids are subjected to evaluation based on pre-advertised evaluation criteria will meet both these legal imperatives.
- 7.2 The Council's legal duty to provide this care means that the Council is not allowed to have a break in the provision of the services by law. Therefore, the Council needs to extend the existing contracts to ensure that the care duty continues to be met. This also demonstrates that the extensions are out of necessity rather than to act anticompetitively.
- 7.3 Many of the stakeholders in these services are people who have a protected characteristic for the purposes of the Equality Act. Therefore, any changes will be subject to appropriate measures such as an equality assessment so that the Council can determine the impact of any changes with people who have protected characteristics prior to implementing the changes in a new specification or procurement methodology.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 None

9. Appendices

- 9.1.1 Appendix 1 – Equality and Analysis Screening Sheet

10. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	8/2/24
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer	9/2/24
Executive Director(s)	Mark Harvey	19/2/24
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Nelson	27/2/24