

**Meeting:** Cabinet  
**Date:**  
**Classification:** Part 1  
**Key Decision:** Yes  
**Title of Report:** **Extension of the contact for the provision of Southend Sexual Health Services**

**Executive Director:** Mark Harvey Executive Director Adults & Communities  
**Report Author:** Sharna Allen, Lead Commissioner for Prevention  
**Executive Councillor:** Councillor Maxine Sadza Portfolio Holder Social Care and Healthier Communities

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility for the commissioning of comprehensive, open access sexual health services.
- 1.2. The current contracts for the delivery of these services commenced on 17 March 2021 and are due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- 1.3. The contracts can be extended by the Council serving notice on the Provider to extend the term 6 months before the end date of both contracts, with the Parties agreeing the period of extension and the contract price, taking into account the Council's Best Value duties.
- 1.4. The commissioning team have undertaken a review to inform the commissioning recommendation for the delivery of this service from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.
- 1.5. Review of current performance and activity data and feedback has highlighted positive performance across most service performance indicators, with evidence of positive action being taken towards areas for improvement.
- 1.6. Although areas of improvement remain, the approach to working with commissioners and ability to work responsively, adapting to changing system needs, provides a good rationale for continuing to work with the current Provider to further improve the services in Southend.

## **2. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that Cabinet:**

- 2.1. Agrees that the current contracts (for Lot 1 and Lot 2) are extended for a period of 12 months until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, subject to all necessary steps being undertaken to negotiate and finalise the extension of these contracts.
- 2.2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Adults and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Social Care and Healthier Communities, to take all necessary steps to put into effect a further extension of the contracts (for Lot 1 and Lot 2), such authority to include finalising any negotiations and entering into legal agreements from 1 April 2026 (if necessary) until a new contract has been procured and awarded for the future provision of sexual health services.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to commission comprehensive, open access sexual health services. This includes the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and unplanned pregnancy; the provision of rapid and easy to access testing for STIs and blood born viruses; diagnosis, treatment and management of STIs; access to the full range of contraception; supporting pregnancy planning; reducing the late diagnosis of HIV; some vaccinations and information and advice on all the above.
- 3.2. The provision of these services is an important area for public health. Many of our adult population are sexually active, so access to a quality sexual health service is key to promoting and improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and the wider population.
- 3.3. The contracts held for the delivery of these services is comprised of two lots:
  - Lot 1 – Delivery of an integrated sexual and reproductive health service, offering levels 1, 2 and 3 services for the management of Sexually Transmitted Infections and Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare [See appendix A for a summary of service levels].
  - Lot 2 – Sexual Health Promotion and Community HIV prevention service.
- 3.4. Together, the delivery of these contracts via lots enables the council to fulfil its statutory requirements.
- 3.5. The current contract commenced on 17 March 2021 and was awarded to Brook Young People (for the delivery of both Lots). Brook Young People is a charity specialising in the provision of holistic sexual health and wellbeing services that include frontline provision as well as education, training and advocacy. Originally known for their work with children and young people, tackling stigma and education around sexual health, they have more recently taken on contracts across several areas in the UK for the delivery of all age level 1 to 3 specialist sexual health services.
- 3.6. The service is funded via the ring-fenced Public Health Grant, with a total contract value not exceeding £1,363, 291.00 (plus VAT) per annum for Lot 1, and

year 1 £51,982.25 pa  
year 2 £50,656.50 pa  
year 3 £51,084.93 pa  
year 4 £51,517.64 pa  
year 5 £51,954.69 pa  
year 6 £51,381.10 pa for Lot 2.

#### **4. Reasons for Decisions**

- 4.1. Following review of service activity and performance and feedback, the commissioning team are satisfied that for both Lot 1 and Lot 2, delivery against the service KPIs and broader service performance and quality indicators is positive.
- 4.2. Engagement with and access to the service has significantly increased throughout the contract lifetime and the provider has demonstrated the ability to adapt delivery to meet service needs and respond proactively to areas requiring improvement.
- 4.3. Individual feedback is also positive. Brook Young People has received 574 reviews since operating in Southend and is rated 5 stars across several domains.

#### **5. Other Options**

- 5.1. **Decommission** - This is not recommended as this is a statutory service which will need to be replaced with some level of provision to meet minimum requirements for meeting nationally defined sexual and reproductive health outcomes.
- 5.2. **Go out to tender for a new/ revised service specification** - This is not recommended as the current provider is performing well and going out to tender risks destabilising service delivery with no evidence of any benefits.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. The service is funded via the ring-fenced Public Health Grant, with a total contract value not exceeding £1,363, 291.00 (plus VAT) per annum for Lot 1, and  
year 1 £51,982.25 pa  
year 2 £50,656.50 pa  
year 3 £51,084.93 pa  
year 4 £51,517.64 pa  
year 5 £51,954.69 pa  
year 6 £51,381.10 pa for Lot 2.

#### **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1. The Local Authority must exercise a number of health service functions set out in section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 and the Local

Authority (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013.

- 7.2. Existing contracts for Lots 1 and 2 will require extensions to enable the Council to deliver its statutory functions. Notice will need to be served by the Council (*Director of Public Health or his nominee, in accordance with these contracts*) on the Provider and agreement reached by both Parties to agree to extend both contracts on Best Value payment terms.

## 8. Policy Context

[A framework for sexual health improvement in England](#) Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) 2013

[Commissioning sexual health services and interventions: best practice guidance for local authorities](#) DHSC 2013

[Making it Work – a guide to whole system commissioning for sexual health, reproductive health and HIV](#) Public Health England (PHE) 2015

## 9. Carbon Impact

- 9.1. No changes are proposed to the current contract so there will be no implications in relation to carbon impact. Commissioners will continue to work with the provider to identify opportunities for greener resourcing and operations.

## 10. Equalities

- 10.1. An equality impact assessment was conducted in 2020 (See Appendix 2) when this service was originally procured. Monitoring of impact on equalities, informed by this analysis, is built into contract management and will continue to be used to adapt and shape service delivery moving forwards.

## 11. Consultation

- 11.1. Feedback acquired through the service user feedback portal “I want great Care” was analysed.

## 12. Appendices

- 12.1. Appendix 1: Sexual Health Services, Service Levels  
12.2. Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

## 13. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
Executive Director(s)	Michael Marks Mark Harvey	24/09/2024
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	24/09/2024
Monitoring Officer	Susan Zeiss	04/10/2024

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr M Sadza	04/10/2024
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