

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board Sub Committee  
**DATE:** 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Health & Community  
**SUBJECT:** Request to waive Standing Orders for Visual Impairment Services  
**WARD(S)** Borough-Wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request the suspension of the relevant procurement standing orders 3.1 to 3.9 under the exceptional circumstances set out in this report, which places a requirement on the Council to tender or obtain quotes for contracts set up with external providers in the voluntary and independent sector.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

**It is recommended that:**

- i) **the Operational Director, Health & Partnerships be authorised to award the contract for visual impairment support services to the contractor Vision Support in the sum of £128,094 as outlined in 5.1 below and that in light of the exceptional circumstances, namely that the current contract offers value for money and is performing well in meeting the needs of service users and in accordance with Procurement SO 1.6:-**
- **Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.9 be waived on this occasion because Vision Support are the only established provider in Halton offering such services and in view of compliance with standing orders being inconsistent with partnership funding arrangements.**
  - **The contract will be in the name of Halton Borough Council whilst the service specification will reflect the desired Health and Social Care outcomes of both the local authority and NHS Halton and St Helens.**

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2008 the Healthy Halton Policy & Performance Board reviewed sensory impairment services including those provided by Vision Support. The review concluded that the service offered valuable support to visually impaired people through its base at the Independent Living Centre and through visiting people in their own homes.

3.2 In March 2009 Executive Sub Committee waived standing orders to allow a contract to be awarded to Vision Support for the period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010.

3.3 The 2008 scrutiny review identified that NHS Halton and St Helens also fund Vision Support and recommended that:

“Agreement be sought from NHS Halton and St Helens for the Council to lead on commissioning services from Vision Support and a revised service specification incorporating both funding streams be agreed.”

3.4 The NHS Halton and St Helens has now confirmed its level of funding for Vision Support and is in agreement that one joint contract be put in place and that the Council hold this contract. Some amendments are required to the performance framework within the specification to reflect the desired health improvement outcomes and Vision Support are aware of this. Overall, one contract will be less onerous for the provider.

#### 4.0 **BUSINESS CASE FOR THE CONTRACT EXTENSION**

##### 4.1 **Value for money and Competition**

The Value of the proposed joint contract is small and it would not make commercial sense to invite tenders as the cost would outweigh any potential saving. As discussed in section 3.1 the Policy & Performance Board scrutiny review valued the services offered by Vision Support.

##### 4.2 **Transparency**

In order to ensure transparency it is proposed that the service will submit performance reports in accordance with the desired outcomes set by NHS Halton and St Helens and the Council. The frequency and detail will be agreed by the relevant Commissioning Manager as part of the contract completion process.

##### 4.3 **Propriety and Security**

The extension of this contract complies with Halton Borough Council's standing orders and procurement. Compliance with anti corruption practices will be adhered to and the contract will be terminated if any instances of corruption by any organization or its staff members occur. The cost of entering into these contracts will be contained within existing available budgetary provision.

##### 4.4 **Accountability**

All services will be performance managed through the commissioning managers. Performance will be scrutinised by the Physical and Sensory Disability Local Implementation Team.

#### **4.5 Position of the contract under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006**

As this is for care services, these contracts are largely exempt from the 2006 Regulations so there is no need to advertise for expressions of interest in the official Journal.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The value of the Council element of the contract for 2009/10 is £25,630. NHS Halton and St Helens element is £17,068. Given the projected financial climate in the public sector and the need to ensure maximum flexibility around financial commitments, it is proposed to award a contract from April 2010 with the option to extend this annually for a period up to March 2013. The potential total cost of the contract at April 2009 prices is £128,094 split between the Council £76,890 and NHS Halton & St. Helens £51,204. Any inflationary uplifts awarded will be in line with those agreed by the Council and NHS Halton and St Helens and will be applied to the respective funding elements.

#### **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None at present.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The service support Halton residents of all ages.

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

The range of low level preventative services and support offered by this provider help to enable visually impaired people to access education, training and employment opportunities.

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

These services are expected to clearly demonstrate their impact on the health and well-being of service users in Halton. This includes performance towards healthier lifestyles, better access and improved mental health outcomes.

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

These services will be able to support specific Local Area Agreement targets linked to information provision, satisfaction with services and people's overall perception of the area that they reside. These targets will be agreed as part of any revised contract and will be monitored through the relevant Commissioning Manager.

6.5 **Halton's urban renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Reference to equality and diversity issues will be detailed in any contracts awarded to voluntary agencies.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Healthy Halton Policy & Performance Board Scrutiny report September 2008	Runcorn Town Hall	Operational Director – Adults of Working Age