

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** September 2021

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Director of Public Health

**PORTFOLIO:** Health & Wellbeing

**SUBJECT:** Substance Misuse Service Waiver Request

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Executive Board of the Chief Executive's use of emergency powers, in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.2, to make a direct award for the Substance Misuse Service contract to cover the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive Board notes the contents of the report.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Halton Borough Council is responsible for commissioning services to support local people with substance (drugs and alcohol) misuse problems. The overall aim of this service is to improve health and social care outcomes, reduce the harm from addiction to legal and illicit substances and reduce health inequalities for local people.
- 3.2 The provision of an effective specialist community substance misuse service contributes towards the aim of the Safer Halton Partnership to ensure Halton is a pleasant, safe and secure place to live and work with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities and the ability of people to enjoy life where they live. The service also contributes towards the aim of the Halton Health and Wellbeing Board by promoting the health and wellbeing of all service users and their families and reducing alcohol-related harm locally.
- 3.3 In September 2015, the Executive Board granted authority to the Director of Public Health to carry out all necessary steps in relation to the open tendering and commissioning of Specialist Community Substance Misuse services. The contract was awarded in line with the Council's Procurement Policy to the provider 'Change, Grow, Live' (CGL) for a fixed period of five years expiring 31 March 2021. No contractual arrangement was provided for any extension to the contract.
- 3.4 It had been anticipated that a full procurement exercise would have taken place during 2020 to enable a new contract to be in place. However, the impact of the covid pandemic has placed a significant strain on the capacity of both providers and the wider public health including the Council workforce.

- 3.5 In addition, the Council has not sought to destabilise the current provision of essential services to some of the borough's most vulnerable clients during this difficult time.
- 3.6 An initial waiver was granted in December 2020 to allow continued provision by the incumbent provider for the period up to 30 September 2021 in the anticipation that the procurement exercise would be completed by this time. Unfortunately, whilst the procurement exercise is presently underway, it will not be completed within this timeframe.
- 3.7 The Chief Executive has therefore used emergency powers, in compliance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.2, to make another direct award to the incumbent provider for a further six month period to 31 March 2022. This will facilitate continued delivery of the specialist substance misuse service pending the completion of the current procurement process.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 These services are commissioned in pursuance of the local authority's statutory responsibility to improve the health and well-being of the local population through the delivery of specialist Public Health advice and the continued access to health improvement services for residents in Halton. The method of procurement complies with the Council's Procurement Standing Orders and Public Contract Regulations 2015. The service objectives are in line with the Health and Wellbeing and Clinical Commissioning Group Priorities.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL/RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The provision of substance misuse services and functions is an essential element of the Public Health Grant and the resources are included in the ring fenced budget. It is anticipated that the budget will not exceed £650,000 for the six month period.

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

- 6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The proposal supports the delivery of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and elements of the Children's Plan.

- 6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Employment, Learning and Skills is a key determinant of health and wellbeing and is therefore a key consideration when developing strategies to address health inequalities.

- 6.3 A Healthy Halton

The proposal supports the council's delivery of the Health and Wellbeing strategy and contributes to the achievement of the council's outcomes,

including population health and reducing health inequalities as outlined in the priorities contained in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

6.4 A Safer Halton

The service contributes to a Safer Halton by supporting local people in reducing risk taking behaviour, such as alcohol, drugs, etc. Community services also play an important role in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The service will be monitored by means of regular contract meeting. Contract monitoring meetings will consider both overall activity and financial management alongside a review of key quality and performance indicators which will be agreed jointly with the provider. This will assist commissioners in establishing whether the service performing against intended outcomes and represents value for money.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for this report.

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

9.1 None.