

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16 January 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director, Adults Services

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Wellbeing and Engagement Services in Halton
– Age UK Mid Mersey

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Executive Board Member of the intention to make a Direct Award of contract for the period 12th February 2025 to 11th February 2028 (three years) to Age UK Mid Mersey to deliver Wellbeing and Engagement Services in Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

2.1 **Executive Board approve a VEAT (voluntary ex-ante transparency) notice to enable the Council to directly award a three year contract to the incumbent provider for re-settlement support to ensure continuity of care in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.5.8.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Halton Borough Council Adults Directorate has contracted with Age UK Mid Mersey over a number of years to provide a range of service for residents of the borough over 50 years of age.

3.1.2 Age UK Mid Mersey covers services across Halton, St Helens, Warrington and Knowsley. The Halton services has a 'shop front' presence in Runcorn Old Town and additionally conducts a range of outreach work across the borough to reach target audiences. The service, as a registered charity, receives funding from different sources and is a local branch of the national charity, Age UK. It is therefore linked-in to the wider campaigns and activity offered by the national organisation.

3.1.3 The service in Halton is supported by a Council contract and has evolved over time with a consistent offer of information and advice, social inclusion, personal independence, health and wellness and

campaigns which reflect key issues affecting the representative cohort, for example, veterans support, digital inclusion and affordable warmth.

- 3.1.4 In-line with their current strategic plan the service is working to four core pillars of intervention: Health and Wellbeing, Social Inclusion, Personal Independence and Staying Connected. These reflect the Council's objectives for supporting people who may wish to access low level, community-based services as part of prevention and delay of greater needs. This further represents the intentions of the Care Act 2014, to which the Council is bound.
- 3.1.5 The current contract with Halton Borough Council Adults Directorate equates to £118,724 per annum. This was reduced from £168, 724 in March 2024, whereupon the service was given a 10-month extension in consideration of the Council's finance position.
- 3.1.6 Performance monitoring is undertaken on a regular basis, and the service is delivered to contract specification standards.

3.2 **Service Continuity**

- 3.2.1 Following a review of the service it has been deemed that the contribution to 'prevention and delay' of needs, as part of our Care Act duties, is of benefit to the Directorate. The engagement and early intervention aspect of the service, in its work with older adults, connects people with their community, ensuring they retain their independence for longer.
- 3.2.2 This compliments the Directorate's position on prevention as set out in the [Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy 2023-2027](#).
- 3.2.3 It is believed that the service, in its current form, could not be replicated by another provider within the borough, and to assure continuity of provision a Direct Award has been made.
- 3.2.4 Due to the contract being extended previously this Award has been made via a VEAT Notice, in compliance with procurement standing orders.
- 3.2.5 The new contract period will run from 12th February 2025 to 11th February 2028. The total contract value for the three years of service will be £356,172.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The service form part of the Adult Social Care offer of provision and meets statutory requirements in relation to the Care Act 2014. Age UK Mid Mersey have a long-standing relationship with the Council, offering added-value in relation to their association with the national

Age UK campaigns.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 VEAT notice in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.5.8.
- 5.2 Awarding a contract to the existing provider would sustain the current structure and operations of the services which providers support, including preventative intervention, to vulnerable adults.
- 5.3 The new contract will run from 12th February 2025 to 11th February 2028.
- 5.4 The cost to the Adult Social Care budget on an annual basis will be £118,724, equating to £ £356,172 over the three years.

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

6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

- 6.1.1 Age UK Mid Mersey works with older people to support and promote their health and wellbeing.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

- 6.2.1 The service prevents and delays the need for social care support, reducing the reliance on public services.

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

- 6.3.1 No direct impact.

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

- 6.4.1 This service makes an important contribution to the health and social care system in Halton, supporting older people to understand their individual situations, where to access support to meet their requirement and what contributions they can make to others in their community.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

- 6.5.1 No direct impact.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

- 6.6.1 The information and advice offered through the service incorporates signposting to other provision throughout the community.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The Executive Board call off and VEAT standstill periods mean that the contract cannot be issued in time for service continuity. As such a waiver has been submitted to bridge the gap between the period 1st to 11th February 2025.

7.2 Should the VEAT notice be challenged another arrangement would need to be considered to assure continuity whilst a full procurement exercise took place.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The service is focussed on residents of the borough over the age of 50 years, representing a significant proportion of the population of Halton who may require low level support to prevent and delay the need to access social service care.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no environmental or climate implications as a result of this report.

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

10.1 'None under the meaning of the Act.'