



Wyre Forest District Council

Record of a Council Decision delegated to be made by an Officer

This includes a record of an Executive Decision made by an officer under Regulation 13, Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Item decided: Agree the process, timetable and evaluation model for procuring the Promoting Independent Living services (Disabled Facilities Grant)	
Officer who has taken the decision	Mike Parker, Corporate Director; Economic Prosperity and Place
Date of the decision	01/10/2019
Reason for the decision/alternatives considered	This decision follows the report to Cabinet for the procurement of a new service to deliver promoting independent services including the Disabled Facilities Grants. The procurement has been led by Worcester City Council.
Date and source of Delegated Decision (if appropriate)	Cabinet report 26/03/2019
Council/Cabinet member consulted – if applicable	Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic Services. Solicitor to the Council. Corporate Director: Resources
Any interest declared by the Consultee or officer	N/A

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET****26 March 2019****Recommissioning the Home Improvement Agency Service**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Ian Hardiman - Cabinet Member for Housing, Health & Wellbeing
DIRECTOR:	Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey, Ext.2560 Kate.bailey@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to recommission of the Home Improvement Agency service.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 **Approval is given to recommission the Home Improvement Agency service**
- 2.2. **Authority is delegated to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place, in consultation with the Corporate Director: Resources and Solicitor to the Council and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health & Wellbeing to agree the process, timetable and evaluation model for the appointment of a new contractor to deliver the Home Improvement Agency service and to award the contract to the successful provider(s).**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In March 2009 Cabinet agreed to commission a Countywide Home Improvement Agency Service. This brought together two existing Agencies, one provided by Redditch BC in the North and one provided by Festival Housing in the south. The service was recommissioned again in 2013/14 with Fortis Living (previously known as Festival Housing) winning the contract which commenced in April 2015 for a period of five years. The current service provision will end in March 2020
- 3.2. The Home Improvement Agency, known as Worcestershire Care and Repair (WCR) works closely with the seven Councils to provide a range of services including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), Home Repairs Assistance, Dementia Dwelling Grants, handyman services and minor adaptations.

- 3.3 The service within Wyre Forest provides advice and information to approximately 1500 households. It also delivers Disabled Facilities Grants to around 130 cases and nearly 800 minor adaptations a year.
- 3.4 The Council has a mandatory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants to eligible residents and may provide other discretionary assistance through its Housing Assistance Policy. Funding is received from the Government via the Better Care Fund (BCF), which is passported through to the Local Housing Authorities (LHA) from the County Council annually.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The current revenue funding for WCR is made up of a number of different sources including the LHAs and County Council. Previously the County Council funding came from both Public Health and Adult Social Care but the Public Health funding is being cut in 2019/20 by 50% and there may be no further Public Health funding available for the new service from 2020 onwards. The current revenue cost for the Council of delivering this service is £133k although additional money is also passported through to WCR for a Wyre Forest specific Occupational Therapy service.
- 4.2 Whilst the identification of suitable levels of revenue funding remains an issue, the capital funding (from the BCF) has increased each year since 2016 and currently stands at £1.19m for Wyre Forest. It is anticipated that the amount received will continue at similar levels.
- 4.3 A “Promoting Independent Living” project team of Officers from across the Local Housing Authorities, Adult Social Care and Health has been established to agree what services are within scope of the recommissioning and to develop an appropriate specification. New services, not previously in the contract, could be included such as the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) and Assistive Technology services.
- 4.4 The Promoting Independent Living project team are overseen by a Project Board and this Board has links into the Worcestershire Alliance Board, Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership and Integrated Commissioning Officers Executive Group to ensure appropriate governance and co-design of services happens.
- 4.5 The project group has engaged the services of a consultant to support the recommissioning process. The consultant works for Foundations, which is the national body for Home Improvement Agencies. This consultant will work with partners to identify an appropriate procurement lead.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The current service is funded through a revenue contribution of £133k which comes from a combination of existing revenue budget and the capitalisation of the BCF capital grant.

- 5.2 The amount of capital passported through to WCR is approximately £820k in 2019/2020 and this will be reviewed once the grant allocation for 2019/20 is announced.
- 5.3 The remainder of the BCF capital is retained by the Council and committed to projects delivered by the Private Sector Housing team.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide DFGs and must have a Housing Assistance Policy in place to utilise the BCF funding flexibly. This Housing Assistance Policy was reviewed by Cabinet in 2018.
- 6.2 The procurement process is likely to follow either the Competitive Dialogue procedure or the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation and will be fully compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. As a member of the Promoting Independent Living Project Team, the Council's officers will be able to input into the process and shall ensure that the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules are also complied with. The Council will enter into a contractual arrangement with the selected provider(s) commencing in April 2020.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2014 and is still relevant as the service itself hasn't changed. The provision of this service has a positive impact for those households with a long term health condition or disability.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 It will be critical to identify an appropriate service provider to deliver this service at the same cost whilst still maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction. This risk will need to be managed through the specification and contract. Not entering into a new contract would mean that the delivery of the services within statutory timescales would be at risk.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Home Improvement Agency is an essential service that is well utilised by residents in Wyre Forest and enables the Council to discharge its mandatory function with regards to Disabled Facilities Grants so recommissioning the service is essential.
- 9.2 A project group has been established which includes representatives from Health and Adult Social Care to ensure co-design opportunities are not missed and expand the range of services that can be considered in scope, thereby improving the service delivery for the customer.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 All relevant stakeholders will be consulted at an event currently planned for spring 2019

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Recommissioning the Home Improvement Agency 26/3/2013

11.2 Housing Assistance Policy 20/11/2018

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Cabinet
Tuesday 26th March 2019**

**Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 7th March 2019**

Recommissioning the Home Improvement Agency

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Strategic Growth which outlined the recommissioning of the Home Improvement Agency, which is the organisation that delivers the Disabled Facilities Grants and other related services on behalf of the Council.

Members welcomed information on savings to the Health Service and the number of people supported by the organisation so far, as well as the reductions in hospital admissions and the numbers of patients whose timely discharge from hospital had been supported.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

1. that approval is given to recommission the Home Improvement Agency

Background papers:

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Thursday 7th March 2019

<http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/meetings/com193.htm#mt7616>