

Procurement Title

Employee Screening Services

Procurement Option

Further competition via Crown Commercial Service G-Cloud 13 framework, compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Early market engagement had indicated that the contract value would be below the 'key decision' threshold. As such the procurement process has already commenced, though it has not been awarded, and is effectively 'paused' subject to this approval to proceed. As set out in the "Estimated Annual Contract Value" section, the initial estimate of value has been revised.

New or Existing Provision

Renewal of existing service

Estimated Annual Contract Value and Funding Arrangements

Estimated contract value is now estimated at £2.25m over four years.

Early market engagement had indicated that the contract value would be up to £1.8m over a four-year period. However, a review of the estimated contract volumes, as well as the availability of a wider range of employment checks, has indicated a likely increase in future demand. As such the value of the contract is now expected to exceed the Key Decision threshold.

Contract Duration

The Agreement is intended to be let for an initial period of 36 months from 1st June 2024, with an option to extend for a further 12 months, concluding no later than the 31st May 2028.

Lots

Not applicable, to reduce the disaggregation of spend, maximise our economies of scale, reduce the number of systems and service providers for similar background checks, the market has sufficient competition to support a single service provider in delivering a managed service.

Evaluation

The Contract will be established by evaluating service providers against the following Crown Commercial Services evaluation methodology and criteria:

- Prepare – understand and detail service requirements, conducting soft market testing if required. Define the evaluation criteria and weightings.
- Long list – using the digital marketplace, search for service providers that match the Authority's key requirements.
- Short list – review each service providers system and filter out those that do not match the Authority's specific requirements.
- Evaluation – review each short-listed service providers service documents against the evaluation criteria. The panel will moderate and document decision making.
- Clarifications – issue clarifications to each service provider to clarify their service proposal against the Authority's requirements. Invite for a meeting or system demonstration if required.

- Finalise evaluation – panel members finalise their scores and award to the service provider that offers the most economically advantageous tender proposal.

Tenders will be evaluated on:

- 60% technical, quality, and social value
- 40% whole of life costs

The highest scoring tenderer will be awarded the service contract.

Contract Detail

The Council will utilise the Crown Commercial Service, G-Cloud 13 framework call-off order form to structure the future contract. Additional clauses have been added that are bespoke to the Council and this specific contract. The G Cloud 13 Framework is an appropriate Framework to utilise and Legal will work with Procurement to ensure that appropriate terms are agreed with the successful provider.

The Council is moving to a managed employee screening service via a cloud hosted solution, offering a wider range of digital ID checking functionality (e.g. Digital Identity, social media and adverse media checks). The solution will introduce new ways of working, more efficiently using resources and meeting customer expectations in relation to an easy-to-use managed service. The solution will be based on an efficient workflow structure that allows users to track checks through the process and be kept up to date with how their requests are being progress through a two-way exchange.

The solution will be available to the Council's Recruitment Officers (approximately 20 users) who will undertake this activity on behalf of the Council plus all Lancashire schools (approximately 540 users) who purchase people support services.

The solution will be delivered via a usage charge (per employment check) with no overhead costs for the hosted system or number of users.

Procurement Title

Approval of an Extension to Young People's Supported Accommodation Contracts

Procurement Option

In July 2023 Cabinet gave approval to procure Young People's Supported Accommodation Contracts. However, for the reasons set out in the Contract Detail section the publication of this open tender procedure has been delayed. For completeness, the key information pertaining to the procurement is provided within this report.

An extension of four months (to the end of October 2024) to the existing contracts is requested for the purpose of allowing the procurement exercise and contract mobilisation to be safely completed.

Furthermore, with consideration to the contract mobilisation for these building-based services it is requested that the option for an additional three-month extension be included, only to be utilised where absolutely necessary in the event of the identification of significant risks impacting the safe and successful mobilisation of any individual contract, determined on a case-by-case basis. The decision to initiate this additional extension would be delegated to Directors, requiring the agreement of both the Executive Director of Resources and Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health for any action to be undertaken.

The legal advice is in Part II and is set out at Appendix 'B'.

New or Existing Provision

Existing provision. Support is also commissioned through spot arrangements via the regional Northwest Flexible Purchasing System which is set to continue.

Estimated Annual Contract Value and Funding Arrangements

The procured block contract arrangements set up for these services is anticipated to have a value in the order of £5.0m per annum. This is within the indicative range set out in the previous report. The total potential value of the contracts is up to £37.0m.

Any gap in funding will be met through the New Burdens Funding and a reduction in spot commissioned services.

The four-month extension requested has an estimated value of £1,290,000.

There are no additional cost implications assumed in the extension of the existing agreements.

Contract Duration

New service contracts will be up to 7 years in length, with break points and potential extensions built in. The existing Contracts commenced on 6 January 2022 and cease on 16 June 2024. The extension to the current contracts proposed will set contract expiry to 30 October 2024.

Lotting

New service contracts concerning the delivery of supported accommodation services will be separated into 4 main lots (contract categories) to enable commissioning arrangements to be established on a district, a locality or a countywide footprint dependent upon various factors including the type of service, anticipated demand, efficiency of service delivery and value for money. Each of the 4 contract categories may be further subdivided on a geographical basis, and in total approximately 25-30 contracts may be let.

Lot 1: a) Core: multi-occupancy (6+ units) accommodation-based support service with 24-hour staffing on site; b) Visiting support: accommodation-based and/or dispersed, which can provide either a stepped down level of support from the core or can be accessed directly by young people whose needs can be best met in this service; c) Emergency accommodation.

Lot 2: Teenage Parents: visiting or on-site accommodation-based support.

Lot 3: Supported Lodgings: Support provided in a home environment by a host householder(s).

Lot 4: Short term supported accommodation services for people who are homeless which accepts families, single people and young people.

Evaluation

Tenders will be evaluated on:

- 60% Quality Criteria, including social value
- 40% Financial Criteria

Contract Detail

Young People's Supported Accommodation services provide support to Children Looked After, Care Leavers and vulnerable young people including those who are homeless, primarily aged 16 to 21.

The key objectives are to ensure that young people have a safe place to live and have access to the appropriate support to acquire the necessary skills to move on successfully to more independent living and to develop the responsibilities associated with adulthood. The services support the council to fulfil its sufficiency duty in relation to accommodation and improved outcomes for Children Looked After.

Services are currently commissioned under block arrangements for 378 young people, across 13 provider organisations. The needs of young people are wide-ranging and various types of supported accommodation services are commissioned including core 24/7-staffed services, visiting support arrangements, supported lodgings and emergency accommodation.

At the meeting held on 2 February 2023 Cabinet were informed that from April 2023 supported accommodation services for 16- and 17- year-old children looked after and care leavers would become regulated and overseen by an Ofsted-led

registration and inspection regime. The report highlighted the impact that slippages in the timeline for the changes were having on the ability to reprocur the services under a competitive tender process. At the meeting, Cabinet approved a waiver of the procurement rules to allow the extension to the block contracts for a 12-month period so that continuity of services could be maintained.

There has subsequently been a considerable delay with Ofsted registering providers. It was anticipated that providers in this market who would bid for these services would be registered with Ofsted when the tender was published. Registration of bidders would have been a requirement of the successful tender ensuring that appropriate legal service provision from the commencement of the services.

It is not currently known how long the delay in Ofsted registering providers will be, therefore a decision has been made to progress with the procurement without a resolution to these issues. Unfortunately, given the delays encountered it will be necessary to extend contracts beyond June 2024. Providers bidding for the Services will now be required to have submitted a complete registration application to Ofsted at the point of tendering, though the full outcome of the application may not be known at the point of contract award.

This is a complex procurement exercise consisting of 24 Lots for services to be provided throughout the county and includes support provided in buildings already identified and in buildings yet to be identified by bidders.

The tender opportunity is expected to close in May 2024 providing scope for evaluation and contract award to take place, followed by contract mobilisation, as required.