



**Cabinet**  
**16 November 2015**

## **Report from the Chief Operating Officer**

Wards Affected:  
[ALL]

# **Authority to Tender Contract for Local Advice and Guidance Services**

## **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1. This report concerns commissioning arrangements for local advice and guidance services. Current arrangements for the provision of generalist and specialist legal advice end on 31 March 2016. The report sets out the requirements and options considered in remodelling and commissioning advice and guidance services with the aim of enabling better access, earlier intervention to limit escalation of problems and better outcomes for people requiring advice and guidance.
- 1.2. This report requests approval to invite tenders in respect of local advice and guidance services to be procured as two separate lots as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89.

## **2.0. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The Cabinet to approve inviting tenders for local advice and guidance services in two separate lots on the basis of the pre - tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.28 of the report.
- 2.2. The Cabinet to give approval to officers to evaluate the tenders referred to in 2.1 above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.28 of the report.
- 2.3. The Cabinet grant an exemption from Contract Standing Order 104(b) to permit evaluation of bids on the basis of quality criteria alone, for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.29 of the report.

### **3.0. Detail**

#### ***Approach***

- 3.1. The provision of advice and guidance to local residents is a critical public service. Access to high quality legal and generalist advice is vital to enabling early resolution of potential problems that without intervention can lead to complex and distressing circumstances for residents which could have been prevented. The council currently funds a number of local organisations to provide independent general and legal advice. The service model for the provision of these advice services has remained relatively unchanged for a number of years. With the many changes in entitlement to public services which have taken place in recent years and the increase in population experienced in Brent, demand for advice has continued to increase. However changes in technology and the ways in which people wish to access advice and information have created greater opportunities to engage and support the advice needs of local residents. In considering how local public services should evolve and in supporting resilience building across the borough, there is an opportunity to develop a new model for advice and guidance services that provides support in the right place, at the right time, through a range of channels to meet the needs of different individuals and groups.
- 3.2. Since May 2015 work has been undertaken to develop a model for advice and guidance services, shared across the council, which supports digital access, builds capacity within the community and voluntary sector and promotes resilience. The project has applied a council-wide approach, with input from representatives of Adults, Children and Young People, Customer Services and Employment and Skills
- 3.3. The project considered commissioning arrangements for:
- legal help, legal advice and legal advice related help;
  - advice for particular client groups; and
  - independent / professional advocacy.
- 3.4. In addition to the activity and input within the Council, CVS Brent was commissioned to lead on wider engagement with partners and service users across the sector to ensure their views contributed to the development of the model.
- 3.5. Key benefits to be realised through the new model are as follows:
- A higher proportion of residents being able to access the support they need within the community;
  - A higher proportion of residents seeking information and advice online;
  - Increased resident satisfaction with advice and guidance services;
  - A delivery model that is more closely aligned with Borough Plan priorities;
  - A reduction in duplication and potential cost savings; and
  - A move from core funding to a model which focusses on the delivery of strategic outcomes.

### ***Review of existing arrangements***

- 3.6. A review was carried out to gain an understanding of the contractual arrangements of existing services commissioned by the council. This also highlighted any opportunities for consideration when developing the new model, including identifying possible links with additional, externally funded advice provision.
- 3.7. The council currently commissions a range of services, including generalist legal advice, specialist legal advice and advice for specific client groups (including advice services for disabled and elderly and advice for families delivered in Children's Centres). Due to the alignment of existing contracts the remodelling of services has focused on three core contracts due to expire on 31 March 2016. In total £842,774 of council investment, spread over these three existing contracts, has been considered for the new advice model:

**A. Generalist legal advice** - Brent Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) currently provides generalist legal advice for residents at a cost of £359,428 a year. The generalist legal advice and information service covers the following categories: Consumer; Money Advice; Welfare Benefits; Employment; Housing; Family and Personal Matters; Taxes; Immigration and nationality; Health and Education.

The CAB operates from premises in Willesden High Road, which is where most residents access the service; although a telephone advice line is also provided. The latest demand figures show an estimated<sup>1</sup> 19,232 contacts per year, 85% of which are face to face. Residents generally self-refer to this service either by making an appointment with the CAB or by visiting the CAB as a 'walk-in'. Other than self-referrals, the Council, various housing associations and numerous, smaller local community and voluntary organisations are the main referral pathways to the service.

**B. Specialist legal advice** – Brent Community Law Centre (BCLC) currently provides specialist and legal advice at a cost of £183,346 a year. The specialist legal advice service covers the following categories of law: Consumer Debt; Welfare Benefits; Housing; Immigration; Education; Mental Health; Community Care; Public Law and Education.

The BCLC operates from premises in Willesden High Road; however the initial point of access to the service is through a telephone advice line. The advice line also acts as the gateway for determining which cases require face-to-face appointments, due to their complexity. The most recent data for the service<sup>2</sup> states approximately 8,000 clients are advised per year over these two channels. The majority of referrals to the service are self-referrals or directly from the CAB, with significantly smaller numbers coming from the Council and local community and voluntary organisations.

**C. Advice for disabled and elderly people** – Brent Advice Service for Independent Lives (BAS4IL - a consortium of Brent Mencap and Age UK) currently provides advice for these particular client groups at a cost of £300,000 a year. The service provides advice to people aged over 65, vulnerable people aged over 50 and

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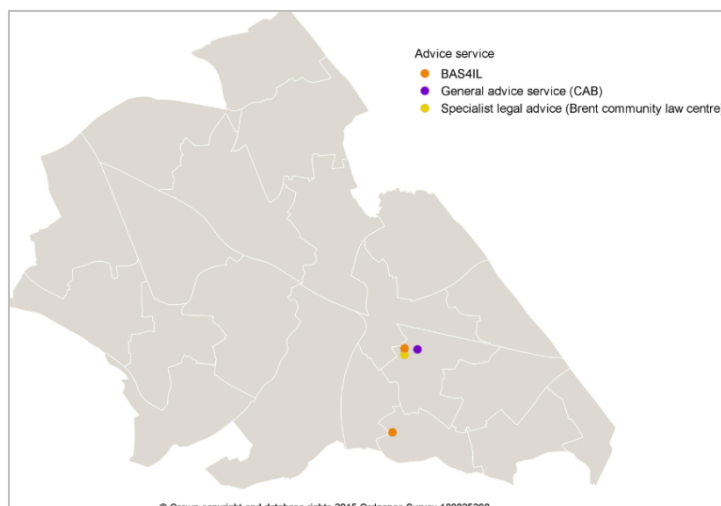
<sup>1</sup> Extrapolated from performance data for quarters 1, 2 and 3, 2014/15

<sup>2</sup> BCLC Work Report Q1 15/16

people with disabilities on the following categories: Welfare; Housing; Health; Employment and Finance.

The advice provisions are primarily delivered from two separate premises in Craven Park and Willesden High Road. Clients can access these services through telephone, face-to-face (at set times) and email. Online information and advice is also provided, with digital inclusion being a key function of the service. The most recent data for this service estimates take-up of 3,800 advice beneficiaries per year<sup>3</sup>.

The locations of each premises is shown in Figure 1 below:



- 3.8. Along with Advice 4 Renters, Ashford Place and CVS Brent, the four agencies detailed at Paragraph 3.7 form the Brent Advice Matters (BAM) consortium. Under the BAM banner these organisations work together to coordinate their services to make it easier for residents to find the right information and advice and, when needed, refer the client to the organisation best placed to help them. This process is facilitated via the BAM website, which guides the user/advice-seeker through a series of gateway questions and leads them to related, useful information. If the information alone can not resolve the issue the user will be asked to submit further details via an online form. The form is received by the BAM coordinator who refers it to the most appropriate partner agency to follow up. The website was launched in May 2015 and currently provides information and referral pathways for work, money, benefits and housing issues – with sections for health and immigration planned for the future. This is currently funded through a Big Lottery grant.
- 3.9. The review of existing arrangements also sought to understand the role Brent Customer Services (BCS) plays in interactions with residents who require information and advice. A range of potential links to the wider Community Access Strategy have been identified and, in particular, there is significant scope to align a new advice model with the future vision for the Customer Service Centre (CSC) in the Civic Centre.

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<sup>3</sup> Annual figure extrapolated from performance data for quarters 1, 2 and 3, 2014/15  
July 2014

## Needs analysis

- 3.10. Brent's population of 319,000<sup>4</sup> is set to continue to grow to 329,000 by 2019 and 339,500 by 2024<sup>5</sup>. Brent as a whole is the 39th most deprived borough in the country, up from 24th in 2010<sup>6</sup>. The 2011 census found that 14% of people in the borough state that their day to day activities are limited by poor health, but this varies from ward to ward ranging from 17% in Stonebridge to 11% in Queens Park. 9% state that they provide unpaid care for someone, with 2% saying they provide more than 50 hours or more unpaid care. In Brent there are 21,600 people aged 16 and over that cannot speak English well. Of those aged 16 to 64 this figure reduces to 17,371.
- 3.11. Since the peak of the financial crisis Brent has experienced a steady decline in the level of unemployment; in March 2015 it was 7% compared to 11% in 2013<sup>7</sup>. These figures are still higher than London and England but the gap has decreased in recent years. The median income in Brent varies by ward from £22,188 in Stonebridge to £41,423 in Queens Park<sup>8</sup>. Only three London boroughs have a lower average weekly income than Brent and 32% of Brent's population are paid less than the London living wage<sup>9</sup>. The ongoing roll-out of Universal Credit (UC) means Brent residents will continue to feel the impact of welfare reforms – in August 2015 there were 650 UC claimants in Brent, leaving over 28,000 working-age Housing Benefit recipients to be migrated onto the new benefit over the next few years. Additionally, the overall benefit cap currently affects 957 Brent households and is expected to affect a further 1,947 if the rules change in Autumn 2016. However, the number of households in receipt of Council Tax Support has steadily reduced from 33,959 in April 2013 to 29,133 in April 2015, primarily due to the increase in employment<sup>10</sup>.
- 3.12. The advice services being considered for inclusion within the new delivery model are currently engaging with approximately 31,000 residents per year based on the available monitoring data. The largest demand is for generalist legal advice, with an estimated number of service users of 19,232 per year<sup>11</sup> (62% of recorded contacts). Based on the comparative figures for the last four years this shows steady year on year decline.

Generalist legal advice	2011	2012	2013	2014
No of clients advised - Telephone/Appointments	1,787	2,096	1,617	2,972
No of clients advised -drop in appointments	8,605	6,677	6,399	5,692
No of clients advised - casework appointments	2,753	2,726	2,973	2,307
No of Clients assisted at reception	11,772	11,587	10,674	8,261
<b>Total demand</b>	<b>24,917</b>	<b>23,086</b>	<b>21,663</b>	<b>19,232</b>

<sup>4</sup> Population projection for 2014

<sup>5</sup> GLA SHLAA based population projections 2013

<sup>6</sup> Indices of multiple deprivation average rank (2015 and 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Annual population survey – model based estimates of unemployment

<sup>8</sup> CACI median household income 2014

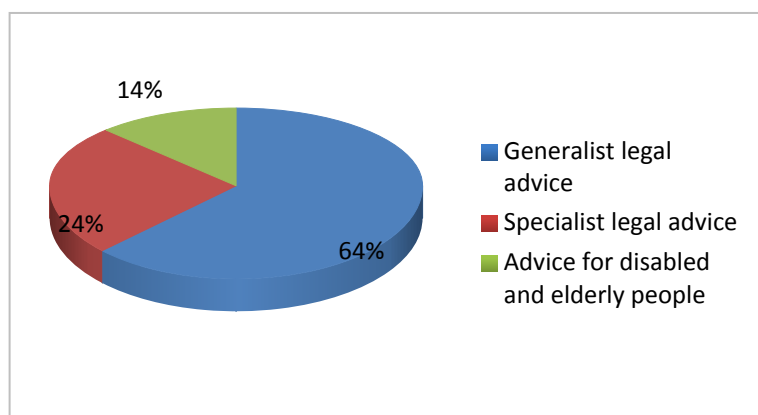
<sup>9</sup> Annual survey of hours and earnings 2013

<sup>10</sup> Brent Benefits data

<sup>11</sup> This annual figure extrapolated from performance data for quarters 1, 2 and 3, 2014/15. Data for Q4 was not available.

However, it is important to note that these headline figures only give a broad view of service demand. The most recent detailed performance data<sup>12</sup> highlights a lack of capacity to assist generalist legal advice seekers, with approximately 57% being turned away from initial gateway interviews and 53% from full advice appointments.

Demand for specialist legal advice represents 24% of the recorded contacts for the last year. Data for the previous four years shows a steady increase in demand for this type of advice in Brent. Advice for disabled and elderly people represents 14% of recorded contacts for the last year<sup>13</sup>, however, data is not available for previous years. The chart below shows an overview of the current demand for the three advice services.



- 3.13. For the last two years approximately 80% of all contacts have consistently been for the top five categories of advice illustrated below, with trends suggesting these will remain the key issues over the next few years in the light of government policy changes related to these services:

Type of advice needed	Generalist legal advice		Specialist legal advice		Advice for disabled and older people <sup>14</sup>
	2013/14	2014/15	2013/14	2014/15	2014/15
Housing	13%	16%	29%	28%	27%
Welfare Benefits	35%	31%	10%	16%	24%
Employment	7%	8%	14%	12%	N/A
Immigration	4%	5%	16%	20%	N/A
Money Advice / Debt <sup>15</sup>	22%	20%	6%	7%	N/A

<sup>12</sup> Covering the period July 2014 to June 2015, provided by BAM

<sup>13</sup> The estimated number of service users for 2014/15 ranges from 3,247 (the headline count of disabled and elderly people advised) to 4,428 (the sum of disabled and elderly people advised across all channels) depending on how the performance data is interpreted. The percentage has been calculated using the higher figure.

<sup>14</sup> Only three types of contact are recorded: Housing, Welfare Benefit and Other. Figures are only available for the 2014/15

<sup>15</sup> Please note that details of the type of advice sought are captured differently across the providers, with the providers for generalist and specialist provision using numerous, broadly comparable categories e.g. 'Money Advice' is the category used for generalist advice, 'Debt' is the nearest equivalent category for specialist provision.

- 3.14. The ethnicity of service users is broadly consistent across the three advice services. However, in comparison to the Brent population as a whole, there is a clear discrepancy of proportionally more Black residents and fewer Asian residents accessing these services. Likewise, the gender of clients across all three services is proportionally higher for female residents in comparison to the wider Brent population. The age of service users for both generalist and specialist advice is most likely to be 26-45, and this cohort is proportionally over represented when compared to the whole Borough. The tables below show an overview of who is accessing the services in relation to ethnicity, gender and age. Analysis of these figures and data for other protected characteristics is included in Appendix 1.

Ethnicity	Generalist legal advice	Specialist legal advice	Advice for disabled and older people	Brent
White	26%	31%	27%	36%
Mixed	6%	8%	1%	5%
Asian	21%	13%	19%	34%
Black	33%	35%	35%	19%
Other	14%	14%	19%	6%

Gender	Generalist legal advice	Specialist legal advice	Advice for disabled and older people	Brent
Male	43%	38%	46%	50%
Female	56%	56%	54%	50%
Unknown	1%	8%	0%	0%

Age <sup>16</sup>	Generalist legal advice	Specialist legal advice	Brent over 16s <sup>17</sup>
U16	0%	0%	N/A
16-25	5%	6%	16%
26-45	57%	60%	45%
46-64	30%	31%	26%
65+	7%	2%	13%

<sup>16</sup> Wide age bracket categories have been used to align with same age ranges used to capture the Brent population as a whole in Brent Data. Figures for advice for disabled and older people have not been included in this table because the service is aimed at particular client groups, the majority of which are older people, and statistics show 92% of these service users are aged over 60

<sup>17</sup> For best like-for-like comparisons only the Brent population aged over 16 has been included. Generalist and Specialist advice is available to Under 16s but service-user statistics for both are in single figures.

### ***Research of other models and arrangements***

- 3.15. Research into advice and guidance arrangements of other local authorities was carried out to identify and learn from best practice. It highlighted a variety of funding arrangements and levels, including contracted and grant funded provision. An analysis of delivery models in eight local authorities identified common themes for consideration in Brent's model. These include community outreach, delivering information and advice in a culturally sensitive way based on detailed knowledge of specific communities and a preventative function to reduce the amount of cases escalated to a severe level of need.
- 3.16. The majority of respondents use delivery models that are broadly comparable to Brent's existing arrangements. However, two models (Islington and Derby City) include stronger elements of colocation with partner agencies. The model in Derby City was also underpinned by a partnership network which included an enhanced focus on local needs and a coordinated approach to empowering the local community and voluntary sector. Key elements of this approach can be adapted in the development of the Brent model to increase the proportion of residents who can access the support they need within the community and help deliver various 'Better Locally' priorities outlined in the Borough Plan 2015-19.

### ***Community engagement – views of local providers and advice beneficiaries***

- 3.17. CVS Brent were commissioned to lead the engagement process over three phases:
- i) **Interviews with advice agencies** – this included engagement with 17 different organisations of varying scale: eight that receive at least £30k funding from Brent Council; six that are not funded by the Council but receive at least £15K funding from other sources; and three that are not funded by the Council and receive less than £15K funding from other sources. Details of the agencies that participated are included at Appendix 2. For each agency a range of staff were interviewed, including service managers, front line advisors and volunteers. All participants were expected to contribute details of their experiences and their views on the challenges and opportunities facing the advice sector.
  - ii) **Interviews with service users** – overall 25 service users participated in phone interviews, lasting approximately 15-20 minutes each. All participants were expected to contribute details of their experiences, what works and does not work in the current model, and what potential improvements could be included in a new model.
  - iii) **Focus groups** – all interviewed providers were invited to take part in focus groups to consider the findings of the engagement process and contribute towards the design principles used for the development of a new delivery model.



3.18. The key findings and recommendations of the engagement process are as follows:

<b>Key Findings</b>	
Technology has a place in reducing advice delivery but cannot replace face-to-face	<p>Face to face advice must not be replaced by telephone, electronic or proxy support. Human touch is always beneficial, particularly in relation to stressful and life changing support needs. It provides a better platform for conveying empathy and emotional support that is often needed by users.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to clients who cannot or do not know how to access online services, as well as those who cannot read or write and those with sight difficulties or language barriers.</p> <p>Online resources do have a place in supporting advice seekers and raising awareness of existing services, but cannot be depended on to resolve complex or severe cases. However, online resources can be designed to deal with low level enquiries.</p> <p>Online resources have the capacity to enable advice seekers to access advice and support beyond the typical 9-5 weekday window available through traditional channels.</p> <p>Video conferencing and online-chat could be developed in the future, and may be used as a possible 'part solution' for the lack of human contact the internet brings.</p>
Advice provision delivered by coordinated providers is generally supported	<p>Providers identified the following advantages to coordinated advice provisions between partner organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better mapping and awareness of different and complementary advice service by the local authority and providers.</li> <li>• Potential for better allocation of funding by ensuring the best equipped providers are financially resourced.</li> <li>• Reducing unnecessary duplication of services.</li> <li>• Ensuring clients with multiple needs are better referred to and supported by partner agencies</li> <li>• Improved tracking of cases and referrals</li> </ul> <p>The challenges identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More partners would need to communicate to get to know each other, which is time consuming.</li> <li>• There would be fewer resources per partner after funding is allocated for a consortium.</li> </ul>
There is a need for a universal referral system	Although there would be challenges to implement it, all organisations interviewed were in favour of a shared referral system and saw it as a tool to help improve quality and reduce the time it takes to resolve cases.
A 'single brand'	Providers were asked their views on a 'single brand' advice

Key Findings	
advice gateway has potential to work	<p>gateway to help unify advice provisions. The potential challenges identified included the time taken to build and market it, its potential to confuse users who are familiar with established advice providers, and the need for partners to adhere to agreed quality systems.</p> <p>The single brand could work well if it were to operate like the post-office model, in the form of advice clinics in accessible locations around the borough.</p> <p>It is recommended that a unified brand is adopted and advertised to all advice seekers, which will help to increase advice and information provision to those who need it.</p>
Advice provision delivered by local independent providers is generally seen as beneficial	<p>The identified benefits of independent advice providers included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased potential for impartial advice that is more customer-focused.</li> <li>• A perception of greater trust, as they are seen to be more separate from the local authority, so are more likely to fight on the clients behalf.</li> <li>• Increased potential for the development of innovative ways of supporting clients: independent providers can create effective delivery models that are not resource intensive.</li> </ul>
There are recurring themes of what frustrates advice seekers.	<p>These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being referred or signposted to organisations that are unable to help.</li> <li>• The length of time it takes for information to be shared between agencies.</li> <li>• Information and literature that is hard to understand either due to its non-simple format or language barriers.</li> <li>• The length of time taken to resolve matters.</li> </ul>
Advice seekers rarely seek help early in their cycle of need	<p>The level of need in terms of perceived urgency of the typical client is usually medium to severe by the time advice is sought.</p> <p>Advice seekers tend to seek advice after issues affecting them have escalated, rather than when they first become aware of the issue affecting them.</p> <p>It is recommended that the model enables behaviour change measures that inform residents about the need to take responsibility for their situation, including seeking advice and information before the need becomes more severe.</p>
There is a need for system that ensures quality assurance	<p>It is recommended that a system of quality assurance for local advice provision is implemented, which includes adequate training and minimum standards for all providers that are connected to an advice network.</p>
There may be different advice	<p>Changing political landscape and policies, for example, less legal aid and ongoing Welfare reform, means people need advice on</p>

Key Findings	
needs in the future	<p>the new contexts and issues they face as a consequence. Particularly in relation to welfare, housing and employment.</p> <p>Gaps in existing advice provision may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the most vulnerable</li> <li>• Support for private renting tenants</li> <li>• Support for those experiencing domestic violence</li> </ul>
There is a need to ensure advice provisions cater for ethnic and cultural diversity	Due to Brent demographics advice providers representing specific ethnic communities will always be of use.

### **Key findings**

3.19. The combined findings of the project workstreams highlighted the following areas to be considered in the development of a new model:

- A.** The model should ensure service users who require face-to-face assistance, including vulnerable residents and those who have complex advice needs, are able to access advice through this channel. This assistance should be provided by the service provider best placed to meet the individual's need; which could be a generalist or specialist advice provider or a provider in the local community.
- B.** The model should build capacity in the community and voluntary sector to provide residents greater access to high quality, personalised and trusted specialist advice services in their local community. It should enable a network of local providers that complement the core services provided by the contracted generalist and specialist providers.
- C.** The model should ensure that the limited funding available is distributed to a range of organisations to deliver services that reflect the needs and priorities of Brent's diverse community. The current £300,000 expenditure on advice for particular client groups (older people and disabled people) represents 40% of available funding but only 14% of total current demand<sup>18</sup>. This shows a proportionally low take-up of these two services and indicates that a level of funding could be used to build the capacity of multiple local organisations to provide tailored advice to a range of client groups, which would include older people and disabled people, as well as individuals, groups and communities with needs that may not addressed in the current model.
- D.** The model should maximise coordination between advice providers, including larger organisations and more localised providers in the wider community, and enable the development of a formal network of interlinked information and advice services:
  - The network should introduce universal/standardised referral protocols between organisations to ensure that service users access the right service for them at the earliest possible point in their advice journey, reducing fragmented journeys, advice-hopping and failure demand.

<sup>18</sup> Percentage calculated using the higher demand figure of 4,428 explained at Paragraph 3.12  
July 2014

- The network should promote and enforce universal standards to guarantee that consistent, high quality advice is available across the sector.
  - The network should be managed by a single performance framework to ensure all organisations are working to deliver aligned outcomes, reduce duplication of provision and address the gaps in future and current advice provision identified in the consultation phase of the project.
- E.** The model should utilise an effective digital gateway to ensure that those who can access support through online channels are encouraged to do so. There should be a single, easily accessible and simple to use digital gateway that provides a range of high quality information in one location. The gateway should serve to triage advice seekers so that those whose advice needs cannot be fully met by the available information are seamlessly referred to the organisation best placed to meet their need.
- F.** The model should encourage colocation and outreach of partner agency advisors to form accessible, coordinated advice hubs and clinics. The development of a hub(s) within the model should simplify and streamline advice journeys for service users who require face to face support.
- G.** The model should support the proposed future vision for face to face provisions at the Brent Civic Centre set out in the Community Access Strategy, which will be developed and implemented over the next three years. This vision includes proposals to work more closely with organisations including Job Centre Plus and partners in the community and voluntary sector. It will involve an enhanced role for partner organisations and is expected to include the colocation and integration of a variety of advice-related providers within the Civic Centre. This will provide customers with a holistic and joined-up service at an easily accessible and familiar location. The service specifications for the new model should include requirements for all funded organisations to commit to support this vision and resource it as required whilst it is incrementally delivered.
- H.** The model should align with Brent's Community Access Strategy, a key objective of which is to increase the availability and use of digital channels for Council delivered and commissioned services. The model should learn from and build on behaviour-change work already progressed by Brent Council and Job Centre Plus, by promoting and enabling self-service over digital channels and providing assisted-self-serve to those who need it:
- The Civic Centre Customer Services Centre (CSC) and The Library at Willesden Green have both recently been remodelled to increase digital capacity, with 28 and six self-serve terminals now available at the two locations respectively. The proposed digital gateway (point E above) should be included as a key option on a redesigned home-screen of the terminals and promoted as the single point of digital access for the information and advice provisions available in the wider community.
  - The CSC has an annual foot-fall of approximately 42,000 residents - who are predominantly there to access council services for Benefits, Housing and Council Tax. These residents have experience of successfully accessing services through the self-serve route. The digital advice gateway should be promoted within the CSC to assist in changing behaviour so that information and advice provisions are accessed early in the cycle of need, increasing the chance of presenting issues being addressed at the preventative stage.

- The Library at Willesden Green has just opened in recent weeks. It is located within close reach of the established advice providers identified in Figure 1 at Paragraph 3.7. If correctly promoted the self-serve terminals located at The Library could act as an initial gateway for many users of these advice services and the wider advice network.
- I. The new model should include a requirement to collect standardised performance data that enables the development of business intelligence. This should provide a clear understanding of end to end customer journeys (including multiple and repeat contacts within a single organisation and referrals between organisations within the wider network) and capture where there is more than one presenting issue for individual service users. Customer insight gained from this intelligence should be used to inform further development of the new model, including improved preventative measures. It should also inform the allocation of future funding to ensure that the needs of all Brent residents are provided for within the model.
  - J. The delivery model in place from 01/04/2016 should be the first stage in the development of a complete information, advice and advocacy model for Brent. As the model matures it should be refined and incrementally built upon, including links between advice and advocacy and further digital enhancements, including video conferencing and online chat, as per findings of the consultation.

### ***Developing a new model***

- 3.20. The findings of the project and outputs from consultation with service users and providers enabled the development of the following core and design principles. As a result of feedback at the focus group stage of the engagement process, the design principles were refined to ensure clarity of what 'digital by design' would mean within the model.

These principles should underpin the new model for advice and guidance:

<b>Core principles</b>
<b>Free</b> – the service is offered to residents free of charge.
<b>Independent</b> – it must be a free-standing body which is respected for its independence and trusted by residents and stakeholders.
<b>Impartial</b> – the service is impartial and open to all.
<b>Confidential</b> – confidentiality is provided and client details are not passed on to any other agency without their permission.
<b>Accessible</b> – residents are able to seek and access the support they need through a range of channels, including face-to-face, telephone and online services.
<b>Design principles</b>
<b>Consider individual needs</b> – the ways local residents are expected to access the service are appropriate to their individual needs.
<b>Digital by design</b> – digital channels are maximised, enabling more local residents to access and choose online services and ensure traditional channels are more available for those with the greatest need.
<b>Tailored community-based service</b> - the local community are empowered to support residents and provide access to the advice and guidance they need within the community.
<b>Co-ordinated and well connected</b> – through access to an established network

organisations are able to provide, signpost and refer residents to good quality information and advice services to help them make informed choices.

**Outcome focused** – supports joint delivery of a shared outcomes framework across partner organisations.

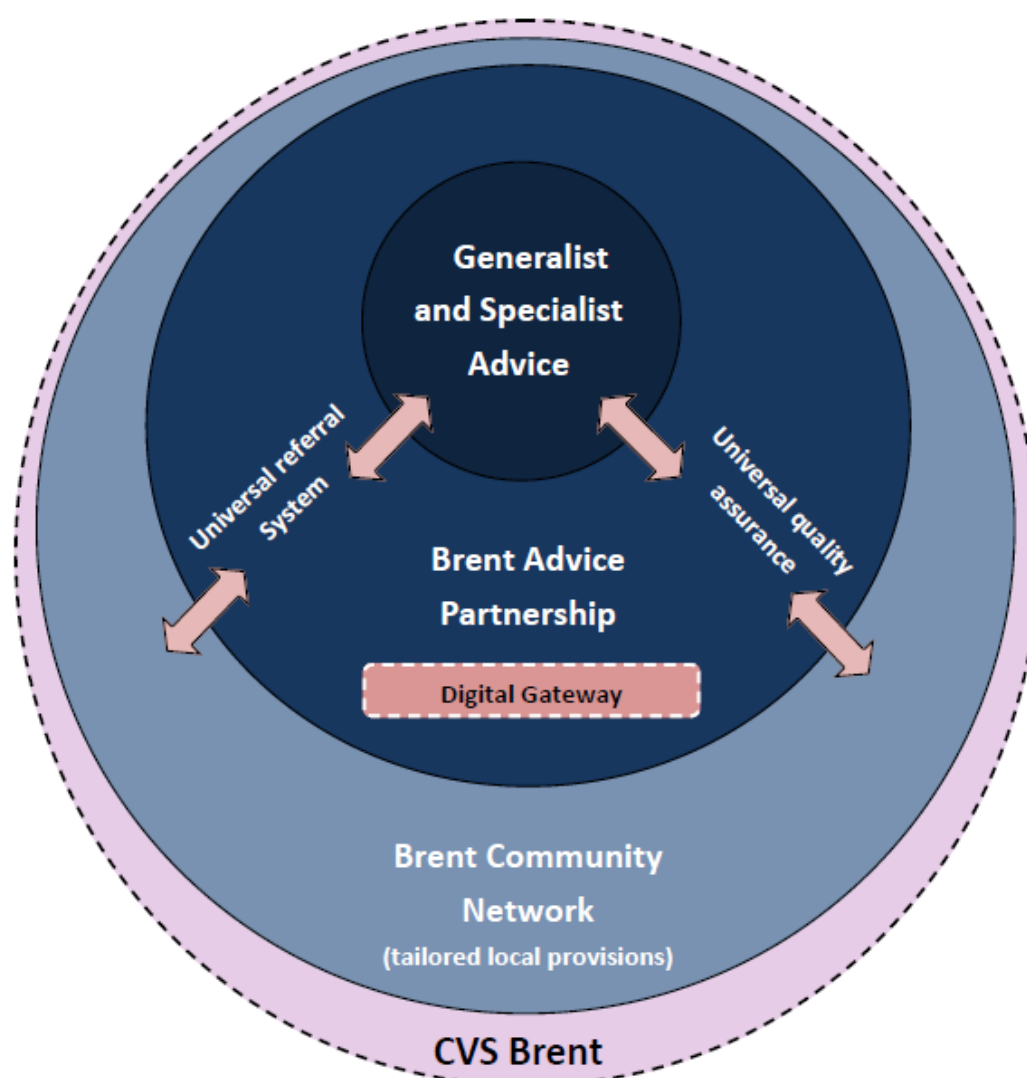
- 3.21. Three possible delivery models were identified and considered. These included:
- continuing to commission advice and guidance services as per current arrangements, detailed at paragraph 3.7;
  - a new three-tiered model, detailed from paragraph 3.22; or
  - allocating the full available budget to a single contract for advice and guidance services in Brent. Tenders would be invited from organisations that can design and deliver a model that aligns with the core and design principles.

- 3.22. The three tier model was agreed as the preferred model.

***‘Three tiers of advice’ Model***

- 3.23. The three tiers of advice model has been developed based on the principles set out at paragraph 3.20 and aims to realise the key benefits for the new model outlined at paragraph 3.5. The diagram below gives a high level overview of this model:

3.24.



3.25. Funding would be distributed as per the table below. In line with council budgetary reductions funding for each tier of the model will reduce by 5% year on year.

Type of Service	Value (p.a)		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Generalist and specialist legal advice (Contract)	£400K	£380K	£361K
Brent Advice Partnership (Contract)	£200K	£190K	£181K
Brent Community Network (Grant)	£242K	£230K	£218K
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£842K</b>	<b>£800K</b>	<b>£760K</b>

**Generalist and specialist legal advice** – This contract is for the delivery of both generalist and specialist legal advice delivered through a single service.

**Brent Advice Partnership** – This contract is for a borough-wide advice partnership. The partnership will be responsible for the provision of a digital information and advice gateway, additional face-to-face provision and coordinating the wider advice network. The organisation that is successful following a tender process would be

expected to include other organisations which provide generalist and specialist legal advice and advice for key groups, including disabled and elderly people.

**Brent Community Network** – The community network will connect local community and voluntary organisations which offer information, advice or guidance for the residents of Brent and provide an opportunity to coordinate provision across the borough. The organisations in this network are eligible to apply for grant funding of a total £242,000 grant funding available in Year 1, which will be administered by the Brent Advice Partnership. Small grants (up to the value of £10,000 per annum) will be awarded to successful applicants to provide tailored information, advice and guidance in the local community.

3.26. The broad contractual and grant arrangements for the three tier model are as follows:

Tier of advice	Arrangements and considerations
Generalist and specialist legal advice	<p>One contract for the delivery of generalist and specialist advice for Brent residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service specifications will include a comprehensive performance management and outcomes framework.</li> <li>• The service specifications will include arrangements for colocation of key outreach workers within Brent offices that align with future vision for the Civic Centre CSC.</li> </ul>
Brent Advice Partnership	<p>One contract for a borough-wide advice partnership including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a digital information and advice gateway</li> <li>• Partnership with the Council through colocation arrangements that align with the future vision for the Civic Centre CSC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The service specifications will include arrangement for integration and colocation at the Civic Centre CSC.</li> <li>- Access to the service will include offering the client both face-to-face advice and a self-serve digital information and advice gateway from the Civic Centre CSC.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ongoing development of new and innovative ways for Brent residents to access digital advice and guidance</li> <li>• Responsibility for managing the Brent Community Network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing the community network, including terms of reference, outcomes framework and standardised referral pathways</li> <li>- Administering a community grant for local advice and guidance services</li> <li>- Developing and maintaining a quality assurance scheme, including peer review</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Brent Community Network	<p>The network will provide a tailored local offer, supported by an annual grant funding cycle administered by Brent Advice Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small grants (up to the value of £10,000 per annum) will be awarded to local community and voluntary organisations to deliver advice and guidance services.</li> <li>• To be eligible for a grant an organisation must meet the</li> </ul>



	<p>network membership criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sign-up to agreed client referral pathways</li> <li>- Commitment to joint working with other members</li> <li>- Engagement with the quality assurance scheme</li> <li>- Delivery against a shared outcomes framework</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full details of the service and requirements will be outlined in the Brent Advice Partnership specification. The criteria will reflect community and local needs including: employment, welfare, housing, legal, money, debt, immigration, health and social care advice.</li> </ul>
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3.27. Organisations would not necessarily need to be funded by the arrangements detailed above to be included in and benefit from the new model. The longer term ambition is to engage more organisations to join the wider network and work in partnership to provide a fully rounded and coordinated service to residents. It is anticipated that over time this will include further integration of established organisations already commissioned by Brent, as well as numerous smaller provisions that, through membership to the network, are supported to provide better tailored services in their local communities.

3.28. This delivery model aligns with the design principles set out at paragraph 3.20 and aims to realise the desired benefits as follows:

- A.** A higher proportion of residents will be able to access the support they need within the community by accessing tailored local provisions within the Brent Community Network.
- B.** A higher proportion of residents will seek information and advice online using the digital gateway provided by the Brent Advice Partnership.
- C.** The satisfaction of residents with advice and guidance services should increase as the model has been designed in consultation with service users to reflect their priorities. Additionally, the Brent Advice Partnership is responsible for implementing and maintaining a quality assurance scheme that will be applicable to all organisations within the model.
- D.** The delivery model is more closely aligned with Borough plan priorities including:
  - Making sure that inequalities in the quality of life in different parts of the borough are tackled by a stronger focus on local needs; and
  - Building partnership – between local service providers and between local services and residents – to find new ways of providing services that are more finely tailored to individual, community and local needs.
- E.** The delivery model will help to identify and reduce duplication of provision through increased levels of coordination across the Advice Partnership and wider Community Network.
- F.** The model introduces grant-funding arrangements that move away from the existing core funded provisions. It focusses on delivering strategic outcomes through application of a common outcomes framework across the sector.

### ***Procuring a new model***

- 3.29. In accordance with Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89, pre-tender considerations relating to 2 separate lots have been set out below for the approval of the Cabinet.

#### **Lot 1 - Generalist and specialist legal advice**

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Response</b>	
(i)	The nature of the service.	The provision of generalist and specialist legal advice	
(ii)	The value.	£400,000 per annum, reducing by 5% year on year. Total value of £1,141,000 over the initial 3 year term, and £1,809,753 if both extensions are utilised.	
(iii)	The contract term.	Three years with options to extend for further two single-years (3+1+1).	
(iv)	The tender procedure to be adopted.	The Open Procedure	
v)	The procurement timetable.	<b>Indicative dates are:</b>	
		Adverts placed	18-Nov-15
		Deadline for tender submissions	18-Dec-15
		Report recommending Contract award circulated internally for comment	12-Jan-16
		Cabinet approval	08-Feb-16
		10 day voluntary standstill period.	<b>Ends midnight 22 Feb 2016</b>
		Contract Mobilisation	23 Feb16
		Contract start date	01-Apr-16
(vi)	The evaluation criteria and process.	<p>1. At selection (qualification stage) shortlists are to be drawn up in accordance with the Council's Contract Procurement and Management Guidelines using a qualification questionnaire to ensure organisations meet the Council's minimum financial standing requirements, technical capacity and technical</p>	

Ref.	Requirement	Response																
		<p>expertise. The tenders of the organisations that meet the Council's minimum standards will proceed to the tender evaluation stage.</p> <p>2. Tenderers will be given the annual budget as a fixed price, and therefore at tender evaluation stage, the panel will evaluate the tenders based on quality only, against the following criteria:</p> <table><tr><td>Approach to delivering generalist legal advice</td><td>27%</td></tr><tr><td>Approach to delivering specialist legal advice</td><td>27%</td></tr><tr><td>Inclusive access to services</td><td>7%</td></tr><tr><td>Core principles</td><td>5%</td></tr><tr><td>Communication / promotion</td><td>7%</td></tr><tr><td>Current context awareness and expertise</td><td>12%</td></tr><tr><td>Data protection</td><td>5%</td></tr><tr><td>Social Value:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People (50%)</li><li>• Business (30%)</li><li>• Environment (20%)</li></ul></td><td>10%</td></tr></table>	Approach to delivering generalist legal advice	27%	Approach to delivering specialist legal advice	27%	Inclusive access to services	7%	Core principles	5%	Communication / promotion	7%	Current context awareness and expertise	12%	Data protection	5%	Social Value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People (50%)</li><li>• Business (30%)</li><li>• Environment (20%)</li></ul>	10%
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Communication / promotion	7%																	
Current context awareness and expertise	12%																	
Data protection	5%																	
Social Value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People (50%)</li><li>• Business (30%)</li><li>• Environment (20%)</li></ul>	10%																	
(vii)	Any business risks associated with entering the contract.	Financial Services and Legal Services have been consulted concerning this contract and have identified the risks associated with entering into this contract set out sections 4 and 5 of the report.																
(viii)	The Council's Best Value duties.	The procurement process and on-going contractual monitoring arrangements will ensure the Council's Best Value obligations are met.																
(ix)	Consideration of Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012	See section 7 below. Social value considerations will form part of the tender evaluation process.																
(x)	Any staffing implications, including TUPE and pensions.	See section 8below.																
(xi)	The relevant financial, legal and other considerations.	See sections 4 and 5 below.																

## Lot 2 – Brent Advice Partnership

Ref.	Requirement	Response	
(i)	The nature of the service.	A borough-wide advice partnership, including the provision of a digital information and advice gateway.	
(ii)	The estimated value.	£200,000 per annum, reducing by 5% year on year. Total value of £570,500 over the initial 3 year term, and £904,876 if both extensions are utilised.	
(iii)	The contract term.	Three years with options to extend for further two single-years (3+1+1).	
(iv)	The tender procedure to be adopted.	The Open Procedure	
v)	The procurement timetable.	Indicative dates are:	
		Adverts placed	18-Nov-15
		Deadline for tender submissions	18-Dec-15
		Report recommending Contract award circulated internally for comment	12-Jan-16
		Cabinet approval	08-Feb-16
		10 day voluntary standstill period.	Ends midnight 22 Feb 2016
		Contract Mobilisation	23 Feb 2016
		Contract start date	01-Apr-16
(vi)	The evaluation criteria and process.	<div>1. At selection (qualification stage) shortlists are to be drawn up in accordance with the Council's Contract Procurement and Management Guidelines using a qualification questionnaire to ensure organisations meet the Council's minimum financial standing requirements, technical capacity and technical expertise. The tenders of the organisations that meet the Council's minimum standards will proceed to the tender evaluation stage.</div> <div>2. Tenderers will be given the annual budget as a fixed price, and therefore at tender evaluation stage, the</div>	

Ref.	Requirement	Response																				
		<div>panel will evaluate the tenders based on quality only, against the following criteria:</div> <table><tr><td>Establishment and delivery of a digital information and advice gateway</td><td>20%</td></tr><tr><td>Approach to face-to-face advice</td><td>12%</td></tr><tr><td>Development and management of a community network</td><td>15%</td></tr><tr><td>Innovation and efficiencies</td><td>7%</td></tr><tr><td>Inclusive access to services</td><td>7%</td></tr><tr><td>Design principles</td><td>5%</td></tr><tr><td>Communication / promotion</td><td>10%</td></tr><tr><td>Current context awareness and expertise</td><td>9%</td></tr><tr><td>Data protection</td><td>5%</td></tr><tr><td>Social Value:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People (50%)</li><li>• Business (30%)</li><li>• Environment (20%)</li></ul></td><td>10%</td></tr></table>	Establishment and delivery of a digital information and advice gateway	20%	Approach to face-to-face advice	12%	Development and management of a community network	15%	Innovation and efficiencies	7%	Inclusive access to services	7%	Design principles	5%	Communication / promotion	10%	Current context awareness and expertise	9%	Data protection	5%	Social Value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People (50%)</li><li>• Business (30%)</li><li>• Environment (20%)</li></ul>	10%
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(x)	Any staffing implications, including TUPE and pensions.	See section 8 below.																				
(xi)	The relevant financial, legal and other considerations.	See sections 4 and 5 below.																				

3.30. There is a specific budget in place for the provision of the services, and therefore the tenderers will be given the price the Council will pay to provide the service in each lot. As the tender price will therefore be the same for all tenderers, the evaluation of their submissions will be based solely on quality.

- 3.31. The Cabinet is asked to give its approval to these proposals as set out in the recommendations and in accordance with Standing Order 89.

#### 4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The estimated value of the two contracts is £1,711,500 over three years (£2,714,629 if all extension options are applied).

	Generalist and specialist legal advice	Brent Advice Partnership	Total
Year 1	£400,000	£200,000	£600,000
Year 2	£380,000	£190,000	£570,000
Year 3	£361,000	£180,500	£541,500
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£1,141,000</b>	<b>£570,500</b>	<b>£1,711,500</b>
Extension 1 (optional)	£342,950	£171,475	£514,425
Extension 2 (optional)	£325,803	£162,901	£488,704
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,809,753</b>	<b>£904,876</b>	<b>£2,714,629</b>

- 4.2 The model also includes the delivery of a small grants programme at an additional cost of £242,000 in the first year. This will be funded from the grants element of the Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund (VSIF).
- 4.3 All tiers of the model will be funded from the VSIF. There is a £410,000 saving requirement from this fund to be implemented from April 2016. This saving was agreed as part of the Council's wider budget savings in February 2015. The new contracts will deliver £242,000 of this saving against current advice contracts arrangements. The remaining £168,000 will be realised from the grants element of the VSIF in 2016/17, outside of these contract arrangements.
- 4.4 In addition to the savings delivered above, efficiency savings of 5 per cent will be applied to both the Generalist and Specialist Legal Advice contract and Brent Advice Partnership contract in the second and subsequent years. This will deliver annual savings of £30,000 in year two and £58,500 in year three against 2016/17 contracts expenditure. A 5 per cent reduction in the grant allocation will also be applied in the second and subsequent years as capacity is built. This will deliver annual savings of £12,100 in year two and £23,595 in year three against 2016/17 grants expenditure.

#### 5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Local authorities are required to provide information and advice to their local residents where necessary, under the legislation and such duty are contained in the Health & Social Care Act 2012, Care Act 2014, Childcare Act 2006, Housing Act 1977, Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002, and other statutory provisions. They are required to provide information and advice service that is accessible to everyone in the local population and the information and advice provided must be

proportionate to the needs of those for whom it is being provided. They are to provide independent financial advice where required.

- 5.2 Under the EU procurement rules, the provision of advice services fall within Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and in procuring such services, where the value is above the EU threshold for Schedule 3 services (currently 750,000 Euros (£625,050)), contracting authorities are required to publish a contract notice or PIN as a call for competition in the Official Journal of the European Union and a contract award notice once the contract has been awarded. The procurement procedure can be determined by the contracting authority and must comply with the EU Treaty principles of equal treatment and transparency and provide reasonable and proportionate timescales. As mentioned in paragraph 3.28 of this report, the Council intends to undertake an open or single stage procurement process.
- 5.3 Based on the estimated value of the two contracts over their lifetime as set out in paragraph 3.28 of this report, they are deemed High Value Contract as defined by the Council's Contract Standing Orders ("CSO"). Cabinet approval of the pre-tender considerations (which are set out in paragraph 3.28 of this report) and Cabinet approval to inviting tenders must be obtained for High Value Contracts
- 5.4. Contract Standing Order 104(b) requires tenders for Services to be evaluated and awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous offer to the council which is a combination of price and quality criteria. As detailed at paragraph 3.29 however, Officers are of the view that rather than seeking bids which may prove unaffordable to the council, it is better for the council to indicate its budget for the service (a price envelope) and to ask organisations to propose how they would deliver the service against such a budget. Members are therefore requested to grant an exemption from Contract Standing Order 104 (b) to allow a quality led evaluation. The Council is permitted by Regulation 67(3)(b) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to evaluate on the basis of quality/experience of the staff assigned to performance of the contract, where staff quality is likely to have significant impact on performance levels.
- 5.5 Once the tendering process is undertaken Officers will report back to the Cabinet in accordance with Contract Standing Orders, explaining the process undertaken in tendering the contracts and recommending award.
- 5.6. The advice services provided to Brent residents are currently provided by external service providers and there are no implications for Council staff arising from the new tender process.
- 5.7 However, there may be staffing implications under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 ("TUPE") from the award of the contracts to service providers other than the current providers. On the assumption that TUPE may apply to those staff currently engaged in the provision of the services, the impact will be taken into account/included in the tender process. Appropriate consultation will be undertaken with the current providers and TUPE information will be made available to tenderers if appropriate, to enable tender prices to be compiled should such staff be required to transfer to a new employer/successful tender under TUPE as a result of the proposed tendering process.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

- 6.1. The proposal has been subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The EIA concludes that the new model for the delivery of advice and guidance services will enhance the positive outcomes for existing and new service users across all protected characteristics, particularly for under-represented service user groups. The EIA acknowledges, however, that current service users aged 60 and over and/or with disabilities could be impacted by some of the changes that will be introduced by the proposed model such as the removal of funding for BAS4IL and the stronger focus on digital services. The Council must therefore ensure that traditional channels of face-to-face contact remain open to older residents and those who cannot access digital services due to disability, language barriers, or socio-economic disadvantage.
- 6.2. The service providers will be required to comply with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and to adhere to the Council's Equality policies. The service specifications will also incorporate relevant Equality and Diversity requirements such as (non exhaustive list): service user monitoring by protected characteristics, tailored local provision (including for vulnerable and seldom heard groups), targeted communication and provision of translation / interpreting and alternative format services, responsive design of web platforms and service user forms that are also compatible with assistive technology, etc. Equality and Diversity matters, reporting on service user take-up and satisfaction by protected characteristics, will be a permanent item on the agenda of contract monitoring meetings and these arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that everyone can access the advice services they need and that any additional provisions that may be required are put in place.

## **7.0 Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**

- 7.1. The Council has a duty pursuant to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (the "Social Value Act") to consider how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area and, in conducting the process of procurement, how it might act with a view to securing that improvement." It must also "consider whether to undertake any consultations as to matters to be considered. The Social Value Act applies to the procurement of the advice and guidance service.
- 7.2. The service being procured is aimed at improving the social and economic well being of the residents of Brent and their quality of life in that they will have access to advice and guidance proportionate to their needs.
- 7.3. Although the Social Value Act only requires the Council to consider whether to consult but does not impose any duty to consult or who to consult, the contents of the report provide that the Council, by way of consultation carried out a community engagement process over three phases – interviewing advice agencies to obtain details of their experiences and their views on the challenges and opportunities facing the advice sector; the service users to contribute details of their experiences, what works and does not work in the current model, and what potential improvements could be included in a new model; and focus groups consider the



findings of the engagement process and contribute towards the design principles used for the development of a new delivery model.

- 7.4 Officers will throughout the procurement exercise take account of the provisions of the Social Value Act and seek to implement them as appropriate.

## **8.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

- 8.1 This service is currently provided by external contractors and there are no implications for Council staff arising from retendering the contract.
- 8.2 New working arrangements resulting from colocation of providers and Council services will have implications for accommodation. The arrangements are expected to be contained within Brent Customer Service Centre. Appropriate property arrangements will be put in place regarding occupation of Brent Customer Service Centre.

## **9.0 Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 - List of service providers from consultation

### **Contact Officer(s)**

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**LORRAINE LANGHAM**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

## Appendix 1

### Equalities Impact Assessment

#### Advice and Guidance Services

**Department**

Chief Operating Officer's

**Person Responsible**

James Curtis

**Created**

09 September, 2015

**Last Review**

2 November, 2015

**Status**

Submitted

**Next Review**

TBC

#### Introduction

The provision of advice and guidance to local residents is a critical public service. Access to high quality legal and generalist advice is vital to enabling early resolution of potential problems that without intervention can lead to complex and distressing circumstances for residents which could have been prevented. The council currently funds a number of local organisations to provide independent general and legal advice. The service model for the provision of these advice services has remained relatively unchanged for a number of years. However, changes in technology and the ways in which people wish to access advice and information have created greater opportunities to engage and support the advice needs of local residents.

In considering how local public services should evolve and in supporting resilience building across the borough, a new model for advice and guidance services has been developed, which aims to provide support in the right place, at the right time, through a range of channels to meet the needs of different individuals and groups.

This equalities impact assessment details the effect the new model will have on different groups of Brent residents. It compares the current delivery model with the new one to predict whether it will have a negative, neutral or positive impact in relation to the nine protected characteristics.

The current model (Model one) is delivered through the three contracts outlined below<sup>19</sup>:

- Generalist legal advice (£359,428);
- Specialist legal advice (£183,346);
- Advice for Disabled and Older People (£300,000);
- Total (£842,774).

The new model (Model two) will be delivered through the two contracts and grant funding stream outlined below<sup>20</sup>:

- Generalist and Specialist legal advice (£400,000);
- Brent Advice Partnership (£200,000)

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<sup>19</sup> Full details of these provisions can be found at paragraph 3.7 of the attached Cabinet report

<sup>20</sup> Full details of these provisions can be found from paragraph 3.23 of the attached Cabinet report

- Brent Community Network (Grant stream - £242,000)
- Total (£842,000)

No previous Equality Impact Analysis has been completed for the current model however, it is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty and therefore must have due regard for all groups protected by the Equality Act 2010. Performance data for model one shows that women and Black communities consistently access the provisions currently available more frequently than other groups, in proportion to Brent as a whole. It is also important to note that model one includes dedicated advice provisions for particular client groups; disabled people and elderly people - which is currently delivered by the BAS4IL consortium (comprising of Age UK Brent and Brent Mencap).

### **Impact Assessment Data**

#### **What effects could your policy have on different equality groups and on cohesion and good relations?**

Based on the models outlined above, a desktop equalities impact assessment has been carried out to analyse the potential impact for groups protected by the Equalities Act 2010. This has included a review of data from a full needs analysis undertaken by Brent's Business Intelligence Team as part of the review.

#### **Age – impact: positive**

The needs analysis shows that for 2013-14 the majority of advice service users for both specialist (31.2%) and generalist (37.3%) provisions are concentrated in the 36-45 age cohort. Further analysis of the data reveals that the majority of demand comes from middle aged residents (26-55 years old): this being 82.3% for specialist legal advice and 80.8% for generalist advice services.

According to the ONS mid-year population projections cross referenced with data from the Labour force survey, people aged 60 and over in the borough make up 70% (17,453 people) of those who have never used the internet. Therefore, some elderly residents may need support to use the enhanced digital channels that will be more readily available in model two. This is of particular importance given that the 65 and over age cohort is projected to increase significantly from 2,233 overall in 2015 to 2,521 overall by 2020.

### **Model one**

The current model includes a dedicated advice and guidance provision for older people aged over 65 and those who are aged over 50 who are particularly vulnerable. This service aims to achieve a number of outcomes including: ensuring that these groups have access to relevant advice and information when they need it, increasing their independence, helping them make informed choices and being more accurately referred to and between services.

The service can be accessed by website, face-to-face, phone advice-line and e-mail. There is also an additional function of outreach and home visits.

The table below shows that those aged 65 and over are less likely than the Brent populace as a whole to access the generalist and specialist advice provisions also available in model one.

Age <sup>21</sup>	Generalist legal advice	Specialist legal advice	Brent over 16s <sup>22</sup>
U16	0%	0%	N/A
16-25	5%	6%	16%
26-45	57%	60%	45%
46-64	30%	31%	26%
65+	7%	2%	13%

The lower percentage of generalist advice seekers in the 65+ group may be partially explained by some of this demand being channelled through the dedicated older person's advice provision (BAS4IL). However, this does not necessarily account for only 2% of specialist legal advice service users being aged over 65 - as the second-tier legal advice provided by this contract is not duplicated elsewhere in the model. This suggests that, in general, elderly Brent residents either have less need for specialist advice of this nature, or are less sure of how to access it.

Other comparisons of note show that 26-45 year olds are far more likely to use these provisions than the wider population. This is perhaps reflected in the main types of advice sought (including Housing, Welfare Benefits, Employment and money Advice). However, it would be expected that these categories are also of interest to the 16-25 group, which is noticeably less likely to access either service. One reason for this could be a preference for the younger group to access advice and information online, rather than through the more traditional channels offered by the generalist and specialist providers in model one.

### Model two

A key outcome that model two has been designed to realise is a higher proportion of residents being able to access the support they need within the community. This will be achieved through the Brent Advice Partnership (BAP). The service specifications for BAP includes a requirement to develop a grants programme that funds local community organisations that wish to develop or expand their information, advice and guidance

<sup>21</sup> Wide age bracket categories have been used to align with same age ranges used to capture the Brent population as a whole in Brent Data. Figures for advice for disabled and older people have not been included in this table because the service is aimed at particular client groups, the majority of which are older people, and statistics show 92% of these service users are aged over 60

<sup>22</sup> For best like-for-like comparisons only the Brent population aged over 16 has been included. Generalist and Specialist advice is available to Under 16s but service-user statistics for both are in single figures.

provisions where there is an identified need within Brent. This methodology will increase the capacity of multiple local advice and guidance providers and is flexible enough to allow the model to respond to the needs of particular client groups, including those of different ages.

In model two the BAS4IL consortium (the provider of the existing Advice for Disabled and Older people contract) will cease to be funded. In 2013-14 BAS4IL provided services to 1,319 older residents. Of these, 28% were in the 60-74 year old age cohort and 64% were in the 75-84 age cohort. As such, the removal of funding for BAS4IL may mean that alternative forms of service have to be provided for these residents. The Brent Community Network (BCN), which will include organisations funded by the BAP grant programme, is expected to deliver a range of alternative services in the form of tailored local provisions, which will cater to the needs of particular groups, including older people.

The service specifications for the BAP contract also include additional face-to-face provisions in accessible local offices and an element of community outreach to vulnerable clients who are unable to access the core service. This will include home visits for the most vulnerable and access to advice services in community locations such as local GP surgeries, hospitals, community centres and mobile services. This will ensure the provisions can be accessed by all age groups.

To ensure continuity of service the BAP provider is required to advertise and undertake promotional campaigns and ongoing activities to ensure people living in Brent, in particular vulnerable and hard to reach groups, are aware of BAP, the services offered and how to access it and the increased number of tailored advice providers within it's network.

Model two includes an enhanced digital offer and the provision of a digital gateway. This is based on a design principal, developed through engagement with service providers and users, to ensure that *'digital channels are maximised, enabling more local residents to access and choose online services and ensure traditional channels are more available for those with the greatest need'*. The inclusion of the digital gateway within this model will free up the availability of traditional channels (face-to-face and phone) for those with the greatest need, including the most vulnerable and older age groups, by increasing digital capacity and use of online channels by those with this preference.

The model also includes the digital gateway as a key option on the home screen of Brent Council self-serve terminals within the Civic Centre and the Library at Willesden Green. Colocation arrangements for advice provider staff and Brent Council officers will promote assisted self-serve for those who are new to digital services and require support, including those in older age groups.

A key concern identified through the engagement process whilst developing the new model was the lack of coordination by providers in the current model and the frequency of service users being incorrectly referred to an organisation that could not effectively assist them. The new model will introduce a coordinated network of advice provisions and a standardised client referral process. This will ensure that, where the client requires a face-to-face service, they will be referred to the provider within the network that is best placed to meet their need,

including provisions tailored to particular groups. Also, this will help to address the possible imbalance identified in the table above, which indicates that older groups are accessing specialist legal advice significantly less than is expected based on the size of this cohort in Brent as a whole.

### **Disability - impact: positive**

The latest census data shows that 14.4% of residents (1 in 7) report that they have a condition which limits their day-to-day activities.

#### Model one

The current model includes a dedicated advice and guidance provision for people with disabilities. This service aims to achieve a number of outcomes including: ensuring that these groups have access to relevant advice and information when they need it, increasing their independence, helping them make informed choices and being more accurately referred to and between services. The service can be accessed by website, face-to-face, phone advice-line and e-mail. There is also an additional function of outreach and home visits.

#### Model two

A key outcome that model two is designed to realise is a higher proportion of residents being able to access the support they need within the community. This will be achieved through the Brent Advice Partnership (BAP). The service specifications for BAP includes a requirement to develop a grants programme that funds local community organisations that wish to develop or expand their information, advice and guidance provisions where there is an identified need within Brent. This methodology will increase the capacity of multiple local advice and guidance providers and is flexible enough to allow the model to respond to the needs of particular client groups, including those with disabilities.

In model two the BAS4IL consortium will cease to be funded. In 2013-14 BAS4IL provided services to 1,928 disabled residents. As such, the removal of funding for BAS4IL may mean that alternative forms of service have to be provided for these residents. The Brent Community Network (BCN), which will include organisations funded by the BAP grant programme, is expected to deliver a range of alternative services in the form of tailored local provisions, which will cater to the needs of particular groups, including disabled people.

The service specifications for the BAP contract also include additional face-to-face provisions in accessible local offices and an element of community outreach to vulnerable clients who are unable to access the core service. This will include home visits for the most vulnerable and access to advice services in community locations such as local GP surgeries,

hospitals, community centres and mobile services. This will ensure the provisions can be accessed by disabled people in a range of accessible locations.

To ensure continuity of service the BAP provider is required to advertise and undertake promotional campaigns and ongoing activities to ensure people living in Brent, in particular vulnerable and hard to reach groups, are aware of BAP, the services offered and how to access it the increased number of tailored advice providers within it's network.

Model two includes an enhanced digital offer and the provision of a digital gateway. This is based on a design principal, developed through engagement with service providers and users, to ensure that *'digital channels are maximised, enabling more local residents to access and choose online services and ensure traditional channels are more available for those with the greatest need'*. The inclusion of the digital gateway within this model will free up the availability of traditional channels (face-to-face and phone) for those with the greatest need, including the most vulnerable and disabled people, by increasing digital capacity and use of online channels by those with this preference. For those that are disabled and digitally enabled it may improve service provision, as they can now access the service without leaving their home which they may require assistance to do.

The model also includes the digital gateway as a key option on the home screen of Brent Council self-serve terminals within the Civic Centre and the Library at Willesden Green. Colocation arrangements for advice provider staff and Brent Council officers will promote assisted self-serve for those who are new to digital services and require support, which would include a number of disabled service users.

A key concern identified through the engagement process whilst developing the new model was the lack of coordination by providers in the current model and the frequency of service users being incorrectly referred to an organisation that could not effectively assist them. The new model will introduce a coordinated network of advice provisions and a standardised client referral process. This will ensure that, where a service user requires a face to face service, they will be referred to the provider within the network that is best placed to meet their need, including provisions tailored to the needs of disabled people.

### **Gender re-assignment and variance - impact: positive**

It is estimated that approximately one per cent of the British population will experience gender variance at some point in their lives (3,100 people in Brent) and approximately 0.02% of the UK population will undergo gender re-assignment (60 people in Brent). Ensuring that adequate provisions are put in place for all different demographic groups will ensure that the new service is fully inclusive of all transgender residents including those with non-binary and/or fluid genders.

#### Model one

There is no data available on the current service. The service is required to be inclusive.

### Model two

The enhanced digital provisions in model two may have positive equalities outcomes for trans and gender variant residents. Furthermore, tailored and localised support set out in model two may make it easier to members of this protected group to access the service than model one currently offers.

### **Ethnicity - impact: positive**

Brent has an exceptionally large Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population. The needs analysis produced by Brent's Business Intelligence team shows the ethnicity of users below:

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Generalist legal advice</b>	<b>Specialist legal advice</b>	<b>Advice for older people and disabled people</b>	<b>Brent</b>
White	26%	31%	27%	36%
Mixed	6%	8%	1%	5%
Asian	21%	13%	19%	34%
Black	33%	35%	35%	19%
Other	14%	14%	19%	6%

Ensuring that adequate channels are put in place to meet the different needs of residents of all ethnicities would ensure that the service is fully inclusive of residents of all ethnicities in Brent. This is particularly important as the BAME population of the borough is projected to increase by 6.8% (911 people) by 2020.

According to the ONS mid-year population projections cross referenced with data from the Labour force survey. Residents of Bangladeshi ancestry had the highest percentage of never accessing the internet followed by residents of Indian and Pakistani ancestry. As such, residents from these ethnic backgrounds may require support to access the enhanced digital services that are more readily available in the new model. The tailored and localised provision set out in model two would make adequate provisions for any ethnic groups who may need additional support to access the service.

### Model one

The needs analysis revealed that in comparison to Brent as a whole, there is a clear discrepancy of proportionally more Black residents and fewer Asian residents accessing these services. Any changes to the current service will have a disproportionate impact on black residents.



### Model two

Improved access to digital services will ensure that advice and guidance is not limited to specific locations within the borough and would support access to advice services from all BAME groups. The shift towards tailored, localised support would also help support engagement of different communities at a local level, making model two more inclusive.

### **Sex - impact: positive**

The needs analysis produced by Brent's Business Intelligence team shows the sex of service users set out by individual service providers:

Gender	Generalist legal advice	Specialist legal advice	Advice for older people and disabled people	Brent
Male	43%	38%	46%	50%
Female	56%	56%	54%	50%
Unknown	1%	8%	0%	0%

### Model one

The needs analysis revealed that more women access local advice and guidance services than men. Any changes to the current service will potentially have an impact on women.

### Model two

Enhanced access to digital services will ensure that advice and guidance is accessible to all. The shift towards tailored, localised support would also help support access for both men and women.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity - impact: positive**

In 2013, there were a total of 7,022 conceptions in Brent according to the Office for National Statistics. Furthermore, in 2014 Brent had a teenage pregnancy rate of 16.0% (under 18) of all pregnancies. Ensuring that tailored, localised support is put in place for expecting and recent mothers would ensure that members of this protected characteristic who may require additional support can access the service.

### Model one

There is no data available on the current service. The service is required to be inclusive.

#### Model two

The enhanced digital provision may have positive equalities outcomes for this protected characteristic as recent and expecting mothers who may be able to access the services from their own home without requiring childcare or mobility support.

#### **Sexuality - impact: positive**

According to research conducted by Brent's Business Intelligence Team based on figures from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) charity Stonewall, an estimated 5-7% of Brent's population is LGBTQ this being somewhere in the range of 15,600 to 21,800 people.

#### Model one

There is no data available on the current service. The service is required to be inclusive.

#### Model two

The increase of digital provision would ensure that residents of all demographics can access the service and would make sure the service is fully inclusive of LGBTQ residents in the borough. This may also have a positive equalities outcome for this protected characteristic as LGBTQ residents will be able to access the service anonymously.

Tailored and localised support would also help to ensure that residents with this protected characteristic are provided with any additional support that they may require to access the service.

#### **Religion or Belief - impact: positive**

According to the most recent census, the main faith groups in the borough are Christian (41%), Muslim (18.6%) and Hindu (17.8%).

#### Model one

The current providers for Generalist and Specialist legal advice do not capture client data for this protected characteristic. BAS4IL do capture this data but it is not sufficiently robust to draw significant conclusions from.

#### Model two

Tailored and localised support would ensure that all religious groups who may require additional support can access the service.

#### **Marriage or Civil Partnership - impact: positive**

Brent council recognises that under the public sector equality duty, it is unlawful to discriminate against people who are married or in a civil partnership.

#### Model one

There is no data available on the current service. The service is required to be inclusive.

#### Model two

Providing digital services as well as tailored and localised support would help ensure that any residents with this protected characteristic are given adequate support to access the service.

### **Summary of research and/or engagement activities**

To inform the review and development of models, CVS Brent was commissioned to engage with representatives from a range of advice providers and beneficiaries of local advice services. Most significantly five key design principles, which underpin the new model, were developed through the engagement process:

1. Consider individual needs: the ways local residents are expected to access the service are appropriate to their individual needs;
2. Digital by design: digital channels are maximised, enabling more local residents to access and choose online services and ensure traditional channels are more available for those with the greatest need.
3. Tailored community-based service: the local community are empowered to support residents and provide access to the advice and guidance they need within the community;
4. Co-ordinated and well connected: through access to an established network organisations are able to provide, signpost and refer residents to good quality information and advice services to help them make informed choices.
5. Outcome focussed: supports joint delivery of a shared outcomes framework across partner organisations.

The outcomes from this work have been fully considered within the review.

The equalities impact assessment drew on a range of sources including a detailed needs analysis carried out as part of the review, the consultation outlined above and information from external sources such as the Office for National Statistics and charities such as Stonewall.

### **Could any of the impacts of the advice and guidance review be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?**

No

### **What actions will we take to enhance the positive potential impacts that have been identified?**

The positive impacts will be monitored and enhanced through contractual monitoring arrangements and assessment of performance against outcomes outlined in the service specification.

**What actions will be taken to remove any potential negative impacts that have been identified?**

The new model has been designed to mitigate the potential negative impacts that have been identified.

The service specifications for the new model will include a requirement to collect equalities and diversity data for service users as standard and performance information that enables the development of business intelligence. This will provide a clear understanding of end to end customer journeys (including multiple and repeat contacts within a single organisation and referrals between organisations within the wider network) and capture where there is more than one presenting issue for individual service users. Customer insight gained from this intelligence will be used to inform further development of the new model, including improved preventative measures. It will also inform the allocation of future funding to ensure that the needs of all Brent residents are provided for within the model.

The new model will be managed through contractual monitoring arrangements and assessment of performance against outcomes outlined in the service specification, including the following:

- The provider shall be required to attend a meeting within four weeks of the contract commencement date to discuss its performance and achievement of the implementation plan.
- The contract will be monitored regularly by Brent Council. BAP will report on its activities and finances on at least a quarterly basis throughout the term of the agreement and as reasonably specified as part of a performance management review process set by the Council.
- BAP will be expected to report, quarterly, on the small grants programme. All funds provided as a result of the contract awarded are to be spent on contract fulfilment.
- BAP will need to be able to demonstrate to Brent Council its performance against key performance indicators.
- BAP will ensure effective robust and secure data management and record-keeping of information which may include personal information.

**Please explain how any remaining negative impacts can be justified?**

N/A

## Appendix 2

### List of service providers from consultation

CVS Brent engaged with the following organisations.

Organisation	Provision overview
Brent Citizens Advice Bureau	Offering a free generalist and legal advice service for residents and people working in Brent.
Brent Community Law Centre	General legal advice about any area of law. If they cannot solve the entire problem their lawyers aim to point clients on their way to a solution.
Age Concern Brent	Advice service mainly focuses on making sure older people are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to, helping with housing issues and providing an insight and help for older people dealing with social services.
Health Watch Brent	Local consumer champion on health & social care services delivered in Brent. An independent organisation with the aim of giving people in Brent a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided in the borough.
Penderels Trust	Penderels Trust offers advice, guidance and practical solutions to enable people with disabilities and older people to live independently in their own homes, to achieve their goals in life and to help them play an active part in their community.
Energy Solutions	Supporting residents with advice and guidance that supports them to overcome and resolve issues related to fuel poverty and related issues.
VoiceAbility	Advocacy, guidance and advice in relation to the needs, rights and concerns of those with mental health problems.
Alzheimer's Society Brent	The first point of contact for anyone dealing with dementia - whether you are worried about dementia or have it yourself, are a family member or carer, or a health or social care professional, and wherever you live.
Advice for Renters	Advising and representing tenants regarding their rights and concerns.
Iraqi Welfare Association	Advocacy and guidance for the Iraqi community. Including issues related to immigration and welfare.
Brent Advocacy Concerns	Organisation representing the rights of disabled people and aiming to improve the quality of their lives through the use of volunteer advocates and advocacy styles.
Sufra	Sufra NW London is a Community Food Bank & Kitchen, based in the London Borough of Brent, which aims to support disadvantaged families suffering food poverty in the local area.
Horn Stars	Advice, guidance, support and advocacy for those from the Horn of Africa.

Help Somalia Foundation	Advice, guidance, support and advocacy for those from the Horn of Africa.
Community Health and Sciences Initiative	Health advice and guidance for the community.
One Voice Community	Advice and guidance for parents and carers of children with special educational needs.
Horn of Africa Welfare Group	Advice, guidance, support and advocacy for those from the Horn of Africa.