

	<b>Officer Key Decision</b>
	<b>Report to the Chief Executive</b>
<b>AUTHORITY TO AWARD CONTRACT FOR AN INDEPENDENT ADVICE &amp; GUIDANCE SERVICE</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Appendix 1 and 3 is exempt as it contains the following category of exempt information as specified in Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)"
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	3 Appendix 1 – names of tenderers (exempt) Appendix 2 – evaluation grid Appendix 3 – social value commitments (exempt)
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Lorna Hughes Director Engagement Strategy and Communications, Regeneration <a href="mailto:Lorna.Hughes@brent.gov.uk">Lorna.Hughes@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report concerns the tender process for a local Independent Advice & Guidance service for Brent residents. This report requests authority to award contracts as required by Contract Standing Order 88.
- 1.2 The contract term will be for an initial period of two years with the option to extend for up to two years on a 1+1 basis.
- 1.3 This report summarises the process undertaken in tendering this contract and, following the completion of the evaluation of the tenders, recommends to whom the contract should be awarded.

## **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

That the Chief Executive:

- 2.1 Approves the award of a contract for the provision of Independent Advice & Guidance services to Brent Citizens Advice Bureau trading as Citizens Advice Brent.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 Information, advice and guidance is an early intervention service for Brent residents. The aim is to deliver free, confidential, impartial and independent information on a range of subjects with a focus on vulnerable families, some of whom may be impacted by multiple deprivation indicators. The service also includes a specialist legal advice service for more complex issues. Provision of advice and guidance to local residents is a key public service, therefore access to high quality legal and generalist advice is vital to enabling early resolution of potential problems that, without intervention, may lead to complex and distressing circumstances for residents.
- 3.2 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 by developing advice and guidance services that provide support in the right place, at the right time, through a range of channels to meet the needs of residents and support resilience building across the borough.
- 3.3 The service will:
  - Support the provision of advice to Brent residents in a number of different ways, including face-to-face, online and by telephone
  - Address the changes in residents' needs that have come about as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic
  - Require the successful provider to be an active member of the Poverty Commission, and other council processes to provide insight on residents' needs

## **The Tender Process**

- 3.4 The new contract will be let using the Contract Terms issued with the invitation to tender. Invitations to Tender were advertised on the London Tenders Portal on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022 to seek initial expressions of interest.
- 3.5 This procurement has been conducted in accordance with The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations). At the time of the commencement of this procurement exercise, the threshold for Schedule 3 services for the purposes of the Regulations was £663,540. Accordingly, as the value of the proposed contract exceeds the aforementioned threshold for this category of service, a

Contract Notice was placed on the Find a Tender service, Contracts Finder service and the London Tenders Portal on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Bidders were provided with a specification, details of the tender approach and invited to complete the published tender documents comprising of a selection questionnaire, quality questions, pricing schedule and a social value action plan using the Council's Electronic Tendering Facility. Four bidders subsequently completed the questionnaire.

- 3.6 The tendering instructions stated that the contract would be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous offer to the Council and that in evaluating tenders, the Council would have regard to the following criteria:

Award criteria	Weighting
Quality	45%
Comprised of:	
Mobilisation	6%
Resources and Workforce	13%
Access to Service	10%
Quality Assurance arrangements	8%
Collaborative working	8%
Social value	10%
Price	40%
Presentation	5%
Total	100%

### Evaluation process

- 3.7 The tender evaluation was carried out by a panel of officers from Resident Service and Communities and Regeneration.
- 3.8 All tenders had to be submitted electronically no later than 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022, 1pm. 4 valid tenders were received. Each member of the evaluation panel read the tenders and carried out an initial evaluation of how well they considered each of the award criteria was addressed in the tender.
- 3.9 The panel met between 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and each submission was marked by the whole panel against the award criteria and each submission was moderated by Procurement in the presence of the evaluation panel.
- 3.10 Only one of the bidders met the required quality threshold in order to have their price evaluated and was therefore invited to present to the evaluation panel on a known presentation topic set out in the Invitation to Tender on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The presentation was also attended by Brent residents as representatives from the community in the evaluation panel.
- 3.11 The names of the tenderers are contained in Appendix 1. The scores received by the tenderers are included in Appendix 2. It will be noted that Tenderer C

was the highest scoring tenderer. Officers therefore recommend the award of the contract to Tenderer C, namely Brent Citizens Advice Bureau trading as Citizens Advice Brent.

- 3.12 The contract will commence on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 subject to the Council's observation of the requirements of the mandatory standstill period noted in paragraph 5.4 below.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The total cost of the contract is £1,997,163.48 over the four year contract term.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that the cost of this contract will be funded from Strategy and Partnership, Citizens Advice Brent Budget.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The estimated value of this contract over its lifetime, £1,997,163.48, is in excess of the Public Contracts Regulations, 2015 threshold for Services and the award of the contract is therefore governed by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The award is also subject to the Council's own Standing Orders in respect of Medium Value Contracts and Financial Regulations.
- 5.2 Officers advise that this procurement has been conducted in accordance with The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations). Due to the nature and estimated value of the proposed services that Officers are seeking to procure, the services fall under Schedule 3 services under the Regulations. Officers have advised in paragraph 3.4 of this report that the requirements of the Regulations for the procurement of Schedule 3 Services have been satisfied.
- 5.3 As indicated in paragraph 5.1, the award of the contract is subject to the Council's own Standing Orders in respect of Medium Value Contracts. Chief Officers have delegated to them power to award Medium Value Contracts in accordance with paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution.
- 5.4 The Council must observe the PCR's Regulations relating to the observation of a mandatory minimum 10 calendar day standstill period before the contract can be awarded. Therefore once the Chief Executive has determined which tenderer should be awarded the contract, all tenderers will be issued with written notification of the contract award decision. A minimum 10 calendar day standstill period will then be observed before the contract is concluded – this period will begin the day after all Tenderers are sent notification of the award decision – and additional debrief information will be provided to unsuccessful tenderers.. As soon as possible after the standstill period ends, the successful tenderer will be issued with a letter of acceptance and the contract can commence.

5.5 The standstill period of 10 days have been taken into account by Officers in setting out the procurement timetable. As a result, there is unlikely to be a delay to the award of the contract as a result of compliance with the standstill period. However, a call-in by an unsuccessful bidder during the standstill period may cause a delay and potential suspension of the service.

5.6 There are no TUPE implications arising from the award of the contract to the successful tenderer as Officers have advised that the incumbent provider, Citizens Advice Brent is the successful tenderer.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and Officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications.

## **7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

7.1 The then Strategy and Partnerships team worked closely with stakeholders to develop the service specification for the tender.

7.2 A survey was carried out with voluntary and community sector to ascertain their capacity building requirements; this and other consultations carried out by the Council's Grant Team was used to inform the development of the specification.

7.3 The Strategy and Partnerships service also consulted with the lead member and included service users as part of the evaluation panel.

## **8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

8.1 This service is currently provided by an external contractor and there are no implications for Council staff arising from retendering the contract. Relevant information with regards to TUPE was shared with the bidders during the procurement process. There is unlikely to be TUPE implications as the successful bidder is the incumbent provider.

8.2 Brent Citizens Advice Bureau is the current operator of the service with a registered office at 270-272 High Road, Willesden, London NW10 2EY. These offices are subcontracted from Citizens Advice Brent. Brent Citizens Advice Bureau will be expected to provide the service from their own premises, but with an expectation of face-to-face delivery at each of Brent Council's Family Wellbeing Centres 1 day per fortnight.

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

9.1 The Council is under a duty pursuant to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 ("the Social Value Act") to consider how services being procured might

improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area; how, in conducting the procurement process, the Council might act with a view to securing that improvement; and whether the Council should undertake consultation. Officers have had regard to considerations contained in the Social Value Act in relation to the procurement.

9.2 Social value had a weighting of 10% of the evaluation score and in evaluating tenders, the Council requested proposals address the following initiatives:

- Employment support and skills provision, including significantly increasing the take-up of apprenticeships
- Contribute a number of hours to local businesses, voluntary and community organisations for: business support, financial advice, legal advice, HR advice
- Helping with community clear-up days gardening and food growing projects

9.3 This contract will deliver the social value benefits set out in Appendix 3.

**Related documents:**

[Officer Key Decision Report - Authority to Tender contract for Independent Advice and Guidance services](#)

**Report sign off:**

**Carolyn Downs**  
Chief Executive