

	Officer Key Decision
	Report to the Director of Public Health, Leisure and Parks
	Lead Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure
Authority to award contract for Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention Services (SILPS)	

Wards Affected:	All wards
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	[Part Exempt – Appendix 1 and 3 are 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)”]
No. of Appendices:	4 Appendix 1 – List of Bidders (exempt) Appendix 2 – Evaluation Grid Appendix 3 – Social Value Commitments (exempt) Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Name: Caroline Evans Job Title: Senior Public Health Strategist Email: Caroline.Evans@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council have previously commissioned contracts to deliver a Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention Service for Brent residents. A procurement exercise had been carried out for a new service with a broader remit and a wider reach. The new Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention Service will reach out to residents who presently use other services who are isolated and or lonely, those residents who are socially isolated or at risk of being, and those who are / or at risk of being lonely, and also to the people who are aware are impacted regarding health inequalities due to this. This includes those who are socially isolated and are not aware of the services they could access, or those

who tend to fall through the gaps, or would need reaching out to, as they do not have the confidence to reach out for that support themselves.

- 1.2 This report requests authority to award contracts as required by Contract Standing Order 88. This report summarises the process undertaken in procuring a contract and, following the completion of the evaluation of the bids, recommends to whom the contract should be awarded.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Director of Public Health, Leisure and Parks, in consultation with the Lead Member for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Leisure:

- 2.1 Approves the award of contract for a Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention Service (SILPS) to Ashford Place for a period of two (2) years in the sum of £312,000 with an option to extend for yearly periods at the annual sum of £156,000 up to a maximum of a further two (2) years giving a total contract value of up to £624,000.

3.0 Detail

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1 The aim of this service is to target and address Social Isolation and Loneliness in individuals who are over 18 years of age and identified as being at risk of, or suffering from social isolation, and / or loneliness, have a lack of social contact and low levels of community involvement. The service would deliver a prevention approach across health and social care services which includes GP practices, acute primary care, and adult social care to achieve a reduction in attendance to GP surgeries, A&E departments, Inpatient and Outpatient Hospital admissions, for those suffering due to unmet social needs and isolation affecting every aspect of health. The service will provide residents with various face to face group activities, individual support, peer led activities, telephone support, befriending and socialisation support etc. The Brent Social Isolation service will be for Brent residents over the age of 18 years old. However, research and evidence has shown that there are specific groups that are at risk of social isolation and loneliness. The new service will therefore build on the previous service by better reaching and supporting communities currently underrepresented or at risk of social isolation and loneliness.
- 3.2 The new service will aim to connect with as many socially isolated individuals as possible through various referrers and public services, including Adult Social Care, Brent Carers Centre, Brent Health Matters, Community mental health services, Council frontline services, Hospital discharge teams, IAPT services, other NHS entry points, Primary Care services, Social Prescribers, Social Workers, Housing services, A&E urgent care, VCSE organisations, Community and Voluntary organisations, Faith groups, and Self-referrals from residents.

3.3 The service will leverage Brent’s cultural diversity to tackle social isolation and loneliness. This Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention Service will operate by engaging with local communities and services to address health and social care needs, reduce health inequalities, and bridge gaps in social connections. Drawing on lessons from the Pandemic, the service will focus on community-centred solutions, offer additional activities in local spaces, and enhance outreach and communication. It will handle referrals and work with NHS and Social Care Services to ensure residents receive appropriate support. The Council’s goal is to help residents thrive and become better connected, in alignment with Brent Council’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Borough Plan 2023-2027. The service will also collaborate with local authorities, community groups, and faith leaders to provide support, advice, and activities for those who are socially isolated or lonely.

3.4 **Aims and Goals:**

- **Leverage Brent’s cultural diversity** to address social isolation and loneliness.
- **Enhance the Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention Service** by boosting community engagement and support.
- **Address health inequalities and gaps in social connections** identified through insights from the pandemic.
- **Develop community-focused solutions** with more local activities and improved outreach.
- **Improve communication with residents** to ensure access to social connections and support.
- **Manage referrals and coordinate with NHS and social care services** for appropriate support.
- **Help residents thrive and strengthen social connections.**
- **Align with Brent Council’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Borough Plan 2023-2027.**
- **Collaborate with local authorities, community groups, and faith leaders** to provide support, advice, and activities for socially isolated or lonely individuals.

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/the-council-and-democracy/strategies-priorities-and-policies>

4.0 **Background**

4.1 Council officers have undertaken a procurement exercise and identified a contractor providing the most economically advantageous offer in accordance with relevant evaluation criteria and therefore recommend award of a contract for A Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention Service (the “Contract”).

5.0 **The Procurement Process**

- 5.1 The Contract will be let using the Council’s contract terms and conditions for a period of two (2) years with an option to extend for yearly periods up to a maximum of two (2) years (on a 2+1+1 basis).
- 5.2 The required service was categorised as Schedule 3 Service under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the value of the Contract was below the Schedule 3 Light Touch Regime threshold of £663,540. The Council advertised the opportunity on the Find a Tender service, the London Tenders Portal and Contracts Finder on 4th December 2024. Bidders were provided with a specification and details of the tender approach and were invited to complete a selection questionnaire (“SQ”), quality, social value and pricing proposals using the Council’s Electronic Tendering Facility.
- 5.3 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:

Award Criteria	Weighting (%)
Quality/Technical	50%
1. Service delivery, workforce & mobilisation	
1.1 Service delivery	10%
1.2 Staffing	10%
1.3 Mobilisation	10%
2. Policy, Practice & Governance	
2.1 Quality Assurance	5%
2.2 Safeguarding	10%
2.3 Systems and Processes	2.5%
3. Partnerships	
3.1 Partnership working	2.5%
Social Value	10%
Pricing Schedule	40%
Total	100%

6.0 Evaluation process

- 6.1 The tender evaluation was carried out by a panel of officers from Public Health and Adult Social Care teams within the Council.
- 6.2 All tenders had to be submitted electronically no later than 12pm (midday) on

24th January 2025. Six (6) compliant tenders were received. Two (2) did not 'pass' the initial required threshold for Previous Experience of managing and delivering support to people with similar needs in the SQ and were therefore excluded from the process. Four (4) bidders were then shortlisted on the basis of technical ability, financial resources, business eligibility and relevant experience to be taken forward to have their tender evaluated on the above award criteria. 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.

- 6.3 The panel met between 28th January 2025 – 28th February 2025 and each submission was marked by the whole panel against the award criteria.
- 6.4 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 Contractor 2 was the highest scoring tenderer. Officers therefore recommend the award of the Contract to Contractor 2, namely Ashford Place.
- 6.5 The Contract has a proposed commencement date of 1st May 2025 subject to the Council's observation of the requirements of the voluntary standstill period noted in paragraph 9.3 below.

7.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 7.1 Officers have held focus groups with residents in community settings where they access various services in regard to social activities, who are, or who have been socially isolated and /or lonely. Officers have also held focus groups with residents who are Carers in the borough, a total of 8 focus groups were held for those who were accessing previous services for Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention services as well as other community events, in order to get their feedback and thoughts regarding what they liked about the services regarding prevention of social isolation and loneliness, and where any gaps could be identified. This feedback added to officers' knowledge when writing and completing the specification. Also, during one of the Public health team meetings, officers presented on what Social Isolation and Loneliness are, and how these impact peoples' health and wellbeing, leading to health inequalities. Officers also held an exercise where 40 staff members fed back their viewpoints and experiences regarding the topic. Officers have recently held two resident stakeholder panel meetings, consisting of a small group of residents, for them to feed back their thoughts about the specification for the new service, and what they thought important regarding the offer, which was held with public health and co-production officers. Officers have undertaken market research and have had previous discussions with providers.

Officers also engaged with the lead member in three Portfolio Holder meetings, to let him know about and seek approval from him for the scope and commissioning of the service.

8.0 Financial Considerations

- 8.1 The total value of the proposed 2+1+1 year Contract is £624,000 inclusive of VAT, equating to an annual cost of £156,000.
- 8.2 The cost of the Contract will be funded from existing resources within the Public Health budget.

9.0 Legal Considerations

- 9.1 The estimated value of the contract over its lifetime is below the threshold set by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) for Schedule 3 services. As such, the award of this contract is not governed by the PCR 2015. However, the procurement process has been carried out in accordance with the Council's internal procedures and best practice. Section 3 of this report outlines how the contract was procured.
- 9.2 The award of the Contract is subject to the Council's own Standing Orders in respect of Medium Value Contracts. The Director has delegated power to award Medium Value Contracts in accordance with paragraph 9.5 and paragraph 9.7 of Part 3 of the Constitution.
- 9.3 The PCR 2015 standstill period is not applicable for Schedule 3 services. However, in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and paragraph 5.4 of the Authority to Tender report for this contract, a voluntary minimum 10-calendar-day standstill period will still be observed before the contract can be awarded. Once the Director of Public Health has determined the preferred tenderer, all tenderers will be notified in writing of the contract award decision. The standstill period will commence the day after all tenderers have received the notification, providing a minimum of 10 calendar days for any potential challenges. Unsuccessful tenderers will be offered the opportunity to request debrief information in line with the Council's procedures. The standstill period will run concurrently with the Council's standard call-in process. Subject to no objections arising during the standstill period or call-in process, the successful tenderer will receive a letter of acceptance, and the contract can then be formally awarded and commence.

10.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 10.1 Pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010 (the "Public Sector Equality Duty"), the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

- 10.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.3 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 10.4 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.
- 10.5 There are no equality implications arising out of this decision, as the proposals in this report have been subject to screening, and officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications.
- 10.6 The service is designed to help alleviate health inequalities.

11.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

11.1 None.

12.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

12.1 This service will be provided by an external contractor and there are no implications for Council staff arising from retendering the Contract.

13.0 Communication Considerations

13.1 The service provider will take the lead on the communication strategy for the service

Related documents

The Authority to invite Tenders for a Social Isolation and Loneliness Prevention Service report. Signed off on 02/12/2024.

Report sign off:

Dr Melanie Smith

Director of Public Health, Leisure and Parks