

To: **Executive Member**  
**31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

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**Approval of the Strategic Procurement Plan for Youth Counselling**  
**Executive Director: People**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek Executive Member approval for the procurement of Youth Counselling Provision, in conjunction with the CCG, for a five-year contract term to begin in October 2023.
- 1.2 To seek Executive Member approval for the extension of the existing Youth Counselling service, delivered by Youthline, for 9 months to allow sufficient time to conduct a full procurement process. The current provider of the service holds a lease on the rooms they operate from Portman Close, which has a 6-month termination clause. The current lease is due to end on the 16/08/2025. The SPP will be presented to Executive Member on the 13th of December 2022 in line with the EWP.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 **Executive Member to approve this Strategic Procurement Plan for the provision of Youth Counselling, including both face-to-face and online provision in conjunction with identified need and demand.**
- 2.2 **Executive Director to approve a 9 month extension of the existing contractual arrangements until the end of September 2023. The total contract value does not exceed legal thresholds so does not require approval from Legal or Procurement. Monitoring arrangements including KPIs will be agreed with operational colleagues and the provider for the extension period.**
- 2.3 **Executive Member to agree the proposed contractual term of 5 years with a review of the provision in year 3 via a single, open stage tender.**
- 2.4 **Executive Member to delegate authority for the contract award decision to the Executive Director: People, subject to successful evaluation of bids. Executive Member to delegate authority for enacting permitted contract extensions to the Executive Director.**

**3 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The procurement of Youth Counselling supports the delivery of our Early Help service offer and helps to meet demand which has increased post Covid.
- 3.2 The proposed procurement, through a competitive tender process will help maximise tender opportunities that will generate value for money and a high-quality youth counselling provision. The procurement process will enable us to further develop consistent and efficient joint contract management arrangements.
- 3.3 Bracknell Forest Council wants all children and young people in the borough to be safe, to learn, to gain confidence, be happy and be supported to reach their full potential. Research shows that Early Help Services, of which Youth Counselling is

part of, can protect children from harm, potentially reduce the need for a referral to child protection services and improve children's mid to long-term outcomes. The evidence suggests effective early help at the earliest opportunity reduces the need for more intensive and costly support services where the needs have increased and intensified. It is intended the proposed youth counselling supports early intervention with young people that not only contributes to the reduction of potential harmful and/or negative behaviours it also provides the support required to build resilience to key life transitional stages i.e., transition from primary to secondary school and the transition from young person to adult.

- 3.4 This is a long running provision that has been instrumental in providing Youth Counselling for young people in the local community and supports the key objectives in the Bracknell Forest Council Plan, caring for your families and communities. The provision has been resourced via a grant payment which has been continuous for several years. The current arrangement will now come to an end as of 31st December 2022 and as such a full procurement process is required.
- 3.5 To be compliant with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and BFC's Contract Standing Orders, and for timely completion of the tender, award, and mobilisation phases in time for the contract to commence in October 2023.

#### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 **Do nothing:** The current Grant Arrangement and associated obligations will lapse, therefore there would be no adequate counselling provision to meet our duties and the identified needs.
- 4.2 **Extending:** Extending the existing grant agreement is not possible, as this is currently in the form of a Service Level Agreement which has been held over for over 5 years and is now required to go through the full procurement process.
- 4.3 **Spot purchasing without a contractual arrangement:** Best Value for money is unlikely to be achieved. Spot purchasing, although used for one element of the proposed contract, would not be appropriate for the main aspect of the proposed, general Youth Counselling provision.

#### **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 A Strategic Procurement Plan for this service was previously approved by Executive Member on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022. However, the procurement has been delayed due to further enquiries related to the building lease. These enquires have concluded and the Strategic Procurement Plan has been amended to take into account the lease agreement.
- 5.2 Key findings of the analysis of usage of existing provision are detailed in the Strategic Procurement plan.

#### **6 Consultation and Other Considerations**

##### Legal Advice

- 6.1 Comments are detailed in the Strategic Procurement Plan.

### Financial Advice

- 6.2 Comments are detailed in the Strategic Procurement Plan.

### Other Consultation Responses

#### 6.3 Procurement

Comments are detailed in the Strategic Procurement Plan.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 An Initial Equalities Screening Record Form has been completed for this requirement and is attached. The screening determined that a full Equality Impact Assessment was not required.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 None identified.

### Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to:  
Have no impact on emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>.

### Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 The proposed Youth Counselling provision will support the overarching aim of the council to protect children from harm, reduce the need for a referral to child protection services and improve children's long-term outcomes. The evidence suggests effective early help at the earliest opportunity reduces the need for more intensive and costly support services where the needs have increased and intensified.

### Contact for further information

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