

To: **Cabinet**
15 October 2024

East Berkshire Stroke Support Service 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2030
Executive Director: People

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) is part of an East Berkshire partnership agreement across health and social care to commission specialist services. Included in this partnership is a Stroke Support Service.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive of the proposed commissioning route to market, outline a consideration of alternative options and seek approval for the recommendations of this report.

2 Cabinet member for Adults and Public Health Introduction

- 2.1 The Stroke Support Service offers specialist advice, guidance and signposting support to all stroke survivors and their families. This service supports our borough priority 'Engaged and Healthy Communities' by supporting stroke survivors to be as independent as possible through their recovery journey.
- 2.2.1 Borough priorities: Engaged and Healthy Communities

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 **Proceed with an open tender under the current procurement regulations (2015) for an East Berkshire Stroke Support Service**
- 3.2 **Bracknell Forest to continue the role as Lead Commissioner supported by the East Berkshire Partnership**
- 3.3 **Agree delegated authority for the Executive Director: People to approve contract award in consultation with the Executive Member for Adults and Public Health**

4 Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1. The Care Act 2014 places a duty of care on local authorities to provide information and advice to promote the wellbeing of individuals, including stroke survivors, ensuring that people receive the support they need to live independently and make informed choices about their care.
- 4.2. The health and social care integration white paper published in 2022 emphasises the importance of providing comprehensive information, advice and guidance to individuals ensuring the right support is provided throughout their recovery journey.

- 4.3. The East Berkshire Specialist Stroke Support Service provides high quality information, specialist advice and (non-medical) support to stroke survivors and families / carers.
- 4.4. The service is funded through the Better Care Fund for each contributing partner which includes the Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB), Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), Slough Borough Council (SBC) and Bracknell Forest Council.
- 4.5. In consideration of the specialist nature of the service, the East Berkshire commissioning partnership have indicated a preference for a 5-year (3+1+1) contract in order to provide market sustainability and consistency of service for stroke survivors and their families.

5 Alternative options considered

- 5.1. A significant exercise led by Frimley ICB was undertaken in 23/24 to consider whether the East Berkshire Stroke Support Service should be broadened geographically to include the whole of the Frimley Integrated Care Service (ICS). It is important to note that all areas within the ICS provide stroke support services to residents, the aim of this exercise was to consider the benefits of a joint contractual service.
- 5.2. Considerations included the demographics, existing funding and contractual arrangements and stroke prevalence across the ICS.
- 5.3. Parties concluded that the varying contractual arrangements and geographical limitations of the ICS meant that an East Berkshire contract is the most viable approach for the East Berkshire residents.

6 Supporting information

- 6.1. The current East Berkshire Stroke Support Service is delivered by the Stroke Association. The service provides practical advice, emotional support and high-quality information to stroke survivors, their family members and carers.
- 6.2. A variety of support options are provided to people which includes home visits, video calls and telephone calls. A person-centred approach allows the person to decide which approach is best suited for them.
- 6.3. A wide range of options are available to support people including a 6-month review. Stroke can affect people in many ways from their emotional wellbeing, their role at home, social and occupation impact.
- 6.4. Previous, historic procurement activity indicates that this is a specialist market with limited providers. In order to engage market appetite and capacity, market engagement will be carried out to stimulate interest.
- 6.5. The East Berkshire Partnership across health and care will review their agreed terms for joint commissioning in order to ensure the continuation of a robust partnership approach.

7 Consultation and other considerations

Legal Advice

7.1 Please refer to the confidential annexe

Financial Advice

7.2 Please refer to the confidential annexe

Other consultation responses

7.3 Operational leads across health and care will be consulted in development of the procurement documentation.

Equalities impact assessment

7.4 Please see attached: Appendix 1

Strategic risk management issues

Risk	Mitigation
A partner decides to withdraw from the partnership	Unlikely to happen with all partners confirming involvement in the ongoing joint contract. This arrangement is covered by a Service Level Agreement which, whilst current, will be updated.
No providers bid for the contract	Market engagement activities planned. The current provider has provided specialist Stroke Support Services across East Berkshire and nationally for a continued period of time
Increased cost to the contract	Cost pressures will be managed through the procurement by capping the total contract value.
Limited capacity on the Integration Commissioning Team to lead on Procurement.	Recent procurement activity undertaken through a self-service model has led to an efficiency of process and effective project management / time management. Commissioning activities will be equally shared across the partnership to ease the workload. SBC retain lead of the Healthwatch contract which is due to be procured within the next 12 months
Procurement timeline slippage leading to key milestones of the Procurement Plan not adhered to	All partners have agreed to and are aware of the key milestones required in order to progress the procurement in a timely way. Contingency time has been built into the

	timeline to allow for unforeseen circumstances.
The Better Care Fund (BCF) budget (which funds this contract) has been agreed until March 2025.	The stroke support service has always been historically funded by the BCF. Providing a stroke support service meets the national objectives of the BCF. There is a low likelihood this service will cease to be funded from the BCF.

Climate change and ecological impact

7.6 The recommendations in section 2 above are expected to:

Have no impact on emissions of CO₂.

The reasons the council believes that this will reduce emissions/have no impact on emissions of CO₂ is due to the fact that the ongoing mixture of online / telephone / face to face support will continue as undertaken in the current service. The provider will be encouraged to ensure a green sustainable approach in their service delivery.

Health & wellbeing considerations

7.7 The Health and Wellbeing considerations of people supported through the Stroke Support service are core to service delivery. Stroke affects people and their families in all areas of life.

Background Papers

Appendix 1: East Berkshire Stroke Support Service Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 2: East Berkshire Stroke Support Service Strategic Procurement Plan

Contacts for further information

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