

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	12 th November 2013
Report of:	Strategic Housing and Intelligence Manager
Subject/Title:	Handyperson and Minor Adaptations Service (Forward Plan Ref. CE 13/14-34)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor D Stockton, Housing, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration / Councillor J Clowes, Health and Adult Care

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Cheshire East Council is committed to helping people to stay in their own homes and remain as active and independent as possible. To support this, a number of services are provided so that vulnerable people can benefit from opportunities that give them the choice to remain in their own homes. The re-commissioning of the Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service is part of a suite of developments across housing, social care, health and public health to increase good outcomes to achieve Outcome 5 in the Council's 3 year plan: "Local People Live Well and for Longer".
- 1.2 Handyperson services provide low level practical support for vulnerable people to enable them to remain independent and safe in their own homes. Assistance includes installing grab rails and hand rails on stairs to minimise the risk of falls, key safes to enable care to be provided at home, and an array of small repairs around the home. Handyperson services are able to reach vulnerable people who might be reluctant to accept more intensive help from statutory services and contributes to our strategy for achieving early intervention and prevention. These services are highly valued by older people as they can access support from a trusted provider to carry out jobs they can no longer do for themselves, or can't find a reputable contractor to do at an affordable price.
- 1.3 Evidence suggests that over 65s are more likely to fall in their home than younger people, and such falls are more likely to result in hospital admission. Each year, around 35 per cent of people aged 65 and over experience one or more falls, and the rate rises to 45 per cent for people aged 80 and over. Around 10 to 20 per cent of those who fall will sustain a serious injury. An evaluation concluded that for every £1 invested in handyperson services in Cheshire East, there was a cost benefit of £1.97 to public services.
- 1.4 The Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service is commissioned by Adult Services and is currently delivered in-house by the Strategic Housing service. As a result of a Strategic Housing review, this part of the service was identified as suitable for delivery by an alternative provider, which was confirmed through market testing.

- 1.5 This report seeks permission to conduct a procurement exercise to tender for a Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service. The estimated aggregated contract value is £600,000 - £800,000 over the 5 year maximum timeframe for the contract.
- 1.6 The changes to the delivery of the Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service will trigger the automatic application of the TUPE regulations which will effect a transfer of up to six members of staff employed by the Council to the successful bidder.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To authorise officers to conduct a procurement exercise to tender for a Handyperson and Minor Adaptations Service. This tender will secure a contract for the provision of the service for three years, with the option to extend the contract for up to a further two years subject to satisfactory performance.
- 2.2 To delegate authority to the Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration to award the contract to the highest scoring bidder following a legally compliant procurement exercise and subsequently enter into a contract with the successful bidder.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The re commissioning of the Handyperson and Minor Adaptations Service forms part of the Strategic Housing review which was instigated in 2012 (Major Change Programme 5.1) to consider whether the services provided were fit for purpose and met the needs of our customers. The review was structured in a phased approach; in the first phase we have restructured the Strategic Housing service to enhance the customer journey as well as bringing forward efficiencies, and work is now underway on options appraisals for new models for service delivery for front line services. This element of the review will be concluded early in the New Year. Further reports on the options available to the authority will then be progressed through the appropriate routes for consideration and implementation.
- 3.2 The second phase will be the integration of housing into a more corporate approach, ensuring that it meets the wider agenda of economic growth and supporting our most vulnerable residents.
- 3.3 During the Strategic Housing Review, a cross-service review of the Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service has been undertaken to establish the future place of this support in delivering the Council's outcomes, and following an options appraisal it was concluded that this is a key service to achieve early intervention and preventative outcomes for vulnerable people, improving their physical and mental well-being and independence at homes. There is a well developed market to be able to deliver this type of service, and

opportunities to develop a more creative and sustainable Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service have been identified in the market place.

- 3.4 There is a need to achieve best value for the services that the Council directly commissions and provides, and to reduce net operating cost wherever possible, whilst at the same time maintaining the best possible service for its residents in line with the Council's agreed three year plan.
- 3.5 The business case was endorsed by EMB on 31st October 2013, the next stage of which is to start the procurement process.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Wards

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 The recommendations within this report support the delivery of priority five of the Cheshire East Council Three Year Plan– people live well and for longer.
- 6.2 The recommendations also support the aspiration of Cheshire East to be a Council which enables and supports communities, families and individuals to flourish and be self-reliant, a Council that works in partnership with others to ensure the best outcomes for local people and a Council that ensures services are delivered in the way which gives the best value for local people.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The first stage of the Strategic Housing review has identified efficiency savings of £200,000 across both Housing and Adult Services. In 2013/14 savings of £79,000 were incorporated into the Strategic Housing budget. A further £119,500 savings will be incorporated into the 2014/15 budget setting process against the Adult Services budget. This is based on a mix of the capitalisation of costs relating to the management of capital schemes and efficiency savings from the restructure of both the Care & Repair and the Handyperson and Minor Adaptations services. The ability to achieve the full saving will be subject to the contract price following the tendering of the Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service.
- 7.2 Within the Business Planning process, Strategic Housing was identified as having the potential to achieve £300,000 over the period 2013/14 to 2015/16. The ability to make any further savings over the identified £200,000 can only be determined following the implementation of new delivery models.

- 7.2 There is an existing budget for the Handyperson and Minor Adaptations contract which is sufficient to cover the value of the contract (£600,000-£800,000 over 5 years).

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 Detailed legal advice may well be necessary on procurement and HR issues, including TUPE issues, and this requirement, and the legal resources implications, must be borne in mind and built into any future plans which might arise out of this review.
- 8.2 The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 places a duty on local authorities to arrange practical assistance in the home, and any works of adaptation or the provision of additional facilities designed to secure greater safety, comfort or convenience. Authorities may discharge their duties by the direct provision of equipment or adaptations, or by providing a grant to cover or contribute to the costs of such a provision. Part 2 of the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc) Act (Qualifying Services) (England) Regulations 2003 provide that any community care equipment and minor adaptations for 'the purposed of assisting with nursing at home or aiding daily living which a person has been assessed to need, and for which he or she is eligible, should be provided free of charge provided the cost is £1,000 or less'.
- 8.3 The power to deliver a Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service is contained within Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 which states: "Without prejudice to any powers exercisable apart from this section but subject to the provisions of this Act and any other enactment passed before or after this Act, a local authority shall have power to do any thing (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions."
- 8.4 The aggregate value over the lifetime of the planned Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service contract is above the EU threshold for supplies and services (£173,934), so the full EU procurement regime applies.
- 8.5 Transferring the service delivery to an external provider will trigger a TUPE transfer of current Council staff who are working on the delivery of the Handyperson and Minor Adaptations service immediately before the transfer. The Council will have to undertake the necessary due diligence to identify which employees have the right to transfer to the new provider and to be able to provide the necessary employee liability information in accordance with the TUPE regulations. The Council and the new provider will also have to comply with the Regulations' consultation requirement, which stipulates that consultation on any planned changes to terms and conditions of employment (measures) needs to be conducted in good time before the transfer. In "good time" is not defined in the regulations, but a comparison is usually drawn with the timescale for redundancy consultation which is 45 days.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Failure to procure works in accordance with EU procurement regulations and the Council's Finance and Contract Procedure Rules would leave the Council open to challenge and in breach of regulations, with a subsequent reputational impact. The contract will be advertised on the North West Chest. The tenders will be evaluated using criteria to establish the most economically advantageous tender.
- 9.2 There is a risk that the cost of discretionary activities under the contract which are passed on to customers will rise substantially, with the subsequent risk that this will be viewed negatively by current and potential customers and lead to negative publicity and a reduction in take up of services. An engagement exercise will be undertaken to mitigate this risk.
- 9.3 The Handyperson service and Minor Adaptations Service is to be contracted out with the expectation that efficiency savings will be made. The level of savings will be determined by the contract price and therefore the risk is that we will not achieve the anticipated levels.

10.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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