

# Executive

## Award of Contract for the Provision of the following Voluntary Services to Cherwell District Council:

- 1) Debt and Money Advice
- 2) Services to Increase Volunteering
- 3) Voluntary Driving Services

**7 November 2011**

## Report of John Hoad, Head of Service

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the award of a contract for the provision of voluntary services across three thematic areas:

1. Debt and money advice
2. Services to increase volunteering
3. Voluntary driving services

This report is public
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### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Award a contract for the provision of voluntary services across all three thematic and geographical areas to Banbury CAB, whose bid involves arrangements and partnerships with five other voluntary organisations, for a period of three years from 1 April 2012 with the option to extend by up to a further two years.
- (2) Confirm the cessation of existing funding arrangements for organisations funded through the Council's Voluntary Sector (Community Development) Grants Programme and Community Transport Grants Programme as from 31 March 2012.

### Executive Summary

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#### Introduction

- 1.1 Further to a detailed options appraisal in light of the reduction in central government funding, Cherwell District Council's Executive decided in May 2011 'To signify a likely cessation of existing funding arrangements for

organisations funded through the Council's Voluntary Sector (Community Development) Grants Programme and Community Transport Grants Programme as from 31 March 2012'. (Exact copy of the Executive decision.)

- 1.2 The Executive also agreed to the commencing of a commissioning process to fund strategically relevant Advice, Volunteering and Volunteer Car Driving services across three geographical areas within Cherwell, requesting that it receive a further report on the outcome of this exercise as part of the 2012/13 Service and Financial Planning process in the Autumn.
- 1.3 This report outlines the outcome of this exercise and recommends the award of a contract for all three thematic and geographical areas – a total of nine lots as outlined below – to Banbury CAB.
- 1.4 The May 2011 Executive decision marked the Council's desire to commission strategically relevant services at a time when it is important that the Council funds services which target those most in need, are delivered on an equitable basis and support the Council to deliver its statutory responsibilities and its other wider corporate planning and community planning priorities.
- 1.5 The Council aims to make this shift in how it funds services via the voluntary sector in the context of a national agenda of Localism and the Big Society.
- 1.6 The service model that the Council approved is being commissioned in three *thematic* service packages:
  - Debt and money advice
  - Volunteer car driving services
  - Services to increase volunteering activity
- 1.7 Each of these services will operate across three *locality* areas and are therefore split into a total of nine individual lots. Tender lots are as follows:
  - Debt and money advice in Banbury and surrounding villages (Lot 1)
  - Debt and money advice in Bicester and surrounding villages (2)
  - Debt and money advice in Kidlington and surrounding villages (3)
  - Volunteer car driving services in Banbury and surrounding villages (4)
  - Volunteer car driving services in Bicester and surrounding villages (5)
  - Volunteer car driving services in Kidlington and surrounding villages (6)
  - Services to increase volunteering activity in Banbury and surrounding villages (7)
  - Services to increase volunteering activity in Bicester and surrounding villages (8)
  - Services to increase volunteering activity in Kidlington and surrounding villages (9)
- 1.8 This is a Part B service in terms of the EU Regulations and though procurement best practice and the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules have been followed to the letter there is only an onus on the Council to publish an award notice and no requirement to advertise via the Official

Journal of the European Union.

- 1.9 Prior to the tender exercise all existing grant recipients were consulted and the net was cast into South Northants and across the rest of Oxfordshire for potential providers.
- 1.10 A workshop was held to provide information about the exercise with notes provided for any potential bidder who was unable to attend the workshop.
- 1.11 The opportunity was then advertised in the local media and the Council's website for an open tender procedure whereby the pre-qualification element was included within the tender submission document.
- 1.12 The advertisements and previous engagement led to a total of 11 organisations expressing an interest in receiving the tender pack:
  - South Northants Volunteer Bureau
  - Banbury CAB
  - Bicester CAB
  - Oxfordshire Advice Centre
  - Age UK Oxfordshire
  - Kidlington & District Information Centre
  - Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)
  - Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA)
  - Cherwell Community and Voluntary Services (CCVS)
  - Banburyshire Community Transport Association
  - N-gage
- 1.13 Interested parties were encouraged to put forward further questions and ask for further advice about fulfilling the specification supplied by the Council. A number of questions were put forward the answers to which were circulated to all those expressing an interest to ensure equal treatment and transparency.
- 1.14 Bidders were encouraged to consider partnership bids to strengthen the services provided and the result was that four bids were received as follows:

Bidder 1: Cherwell Community and Voluntary Services – bid for lots 4, 5 and 6 for the volunteer driving schemes.

Bidder 2: Banbury CAB – bid for all nine lots with partnerships agreed with Bicester CAB, South Northants Volunteer Bureau, Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, IAC and Aspire Oxford.

Bidder 3: Banburyshire Community Transport Association – bid for lots 4, 5 and 6 for the volunteer driving schemes.

Bidder 4: Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) – bid for lots 7, 8 and 9 for increasing volunteering activity.
- 1.15 The attached spreadsheets provide a summary of the final scores after the clarification meetings by thematic service.
- 1.16 The evaluation panel was satisfied that the business case, robust partnerships and forward thinking methodology of the Banbury CAB bid

would best meet the requirements of the services across all nine lots with added value being provided by:

#### **Economies of scale to deliver synergies of service**

- a cost effective service delivered by a single entity
- efficiencies due to overheads being apportioned across other income sources
- one agency to manage the contract – less in-house resource required managing the contract
- The use of three CAB offices to create volunteering centres in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington

#### **Additional funding**

Banbury and Bicester CAB received additional funding of over £235,000 in the last year and will continue to generate extra external funding for these services.

#### **New Project Development**

Banbury CAB in partnership with West Oxfordshire CAB has been designated as one of the three HMRC centres of excellence – adding funding of £30,000 per year for the next five years.

#### **Early Intervention**

Gateway advice centres provide a low cost and time efficient triage service, ensuring clients receive the correct level of support, allowing fully trained advisors to provide services for clients with more complex needs – especially the vulnerable and those who are excluded from other services.

#### **Effective partnerships**

Subcontracting to Bicester CAB and buying in expertise throughout the lifetime of the contract from SNVB, Aspire, IAC and ORCC.

#### **Effective Self Monitoring**

Banbury CAB have an effective performance management framework which will allow objective driven monitoring of the contract without drawing on too much resource from Council officers.

For clarity the Banbury CAB bid would therefore cover the whole of the District including Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.

- 1.17 A clear SLA will accompany the contract with SMART objectives – many of which have already been presented by Banbury CAB as part of their bid – and this will be monitored on a regular basis with quarterly review meetings by the Authorised Officer and the operational team members.

#### **Wider Context**

- 1.18 This report covers the procurement exercise, and the emphasis of this exercise has been to improve access to services across the whole of the District. The exercise has sought to improve services, improve signposting to other services where achievable, and to mitigate against any grant reductions.
- 1.19 The most notable grant cessation in the move to commissioning strategically relevant services is that to the Banbury Community Transport Association

(BCTA). Council officers are working with the County Council in their plans for a county wide Dial-a-Ride service to ensure a community transport facility beyond voluntary car driving scheme and to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable customers continue to be met.

### **Proposals**

- 1.20 To confirm the cessation of existing funding arrangements for organisations funded through the Council's Voluntary Sector (Community Development) Grants Programme and Community Transport Grants Programme as from 31 March 2012'
- 1.21 To accept the recommendations based upon the evidence of a robust and fair tendering exercise which actively engaged all existing voluntary services providers across the district.
- 1.22 To award a contract for the provision of voluntary services across all three thematic and geographical areas to Banbury CAB, whose bid involves arrangements and partnerships with five other voluntary organisations, for a period of three years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 with the option to extend by up to a further two years.

### **Conclusion**

- 1.23 The proposals put forward by Banbury CAB fully meet and even exceed the requirements of the Council in providing fair and equitable services across three key thematic areas across the entire district and are based upon robust partnerships and buying in of expertise which has the potential of extending the services provided while still delivering 24% of savings on the budget currently allocated to the Council's Voluntary Sector (Community Development) Grants Programme and Community Transport Grants Programme over the lifetime of the contract. It also provides an opportunity to target funding at services which support the Council's statutory responsibilities and improve cost effectiveness and a more equitable distribution of resources.

### **Background Information**

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- 2.1 23 May 2011 Executive Report on Advice, Volunteering and Car Driving Schemes.

## Implications

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**Financial:** Provision of 24% of savings on the budget currently allocated to the Council's Voluntary Sector (Community Development) Grants Programme and Community Transport Grants Programme over the lifetime of the contract.

Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council 0300 0030 106

**Legal:** The decision to commission strategically relevant services through a competitive tender exercise open to third sector bodies was made to ensure best use of Council resources in the funding of services which still targeted those most in need, were delivered on an equitable basis and supported the Council to deliver its statutory responsibilities at a time of significant pressure on budgets and in the context of a national agenda of Localism and the Big Society.

The award recommendation contained in this report, which arises out of a tender process undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and all EU Procurement Regulations, is the culmination of that decision.

Comments checked by Richard Hawtin, Team Leader – Property and Contracts, Legal and Democratic Services 01295 221695.

**Risk Management:** The main risks to the Council associated with this recommendation are legal (mitigated through the procurement process) and service failure impacting on the customer (mitigated through contract and performance management and a service level agreement).

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager 0300 0030113

**Equalities** The approach will ensure that accessible advisory, voluntary and voluntary car driving schemes formerly funded through grant provision will continue to be available to communities across the District including those most vulnerable. Officers are working with organisations affected by the move to commissioning services rather than grant provision to ensure any adverse impact are limited or mitigated through effective signposting to other services including County Council etc...

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager 0300 0030113

## Wards Affected

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All

## Corporate Plan Themes

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### An Accessible, Value for Money Council

#### Executive Lead Member

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**Councillor Debbie Pickford**  
Lead Member for Housing

**Councillor Ken Attack**  
Lead Member for Financial Management

#### Document Information

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Appendix No	Title
1	Evaluation spreadsheet for lots 1 to 3 – Debt and Money Advice
2	Evaluation spreadsheet for lots 4 to 6 – Car Driving Schemes
3	Evaluation spreadsheet for lots 7 to 9 – Increasing Volunteering
Background Papers	
N/A	
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