

Committee:	Dated:
Finance Grants Oversight & Performance Committee (for information)	21/01/2020
Resource Allocation Sub Committee (for decision)	23/01/2020
Subject: City Advice Service	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Sarah Greenwood Commissioning Manager, Commissioning and Partnerships	

Summary

The current City Advice contract runs until October 2020 and is for all residents, workers and students within the square mile and tenants on City of London Housing estates at a cost of £200,000 per year. A new contract is being commissioned with plans to let it for at least three years.

£100,000 per annum towards the cost of the service is allocated from the City's Cash Grants budget to facilitate the service for City workers and students and this funding is currently within approved/proposed budgets for 19/20 and 20/21 financial years.

Confirmation is sought for the approval for the continuation of this grant at the same level for a further period to give certainty in respect of service provision and budget management for potential suppliers.

Recommendations

Members of the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee are asked to:

- approve the continuation of the grant to the City Advice service at the same level for at least a further three financial years (ideally five years) to facilitate the new contract.

Members of the Finance Grants Oversight and Performance Sub-Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee are asked to:

- note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The current City Advice contract runs until October 2020 and is for all residents, workers and students within the square mile and tenants on City of London Housing estates. Toynbee Hall have provided the service, with support from the Royal Courts of Justice, since October 2015 at a cost of £200,000 per year.

2. From the start of the contract until September 2019 the City Advice Service has supported 469 residents and 478 workers and students in areas such as welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment rights, consumer rights and family issues.
3. The current contract will end in October 2020 and recommissioning activity has commenced to shape the future service after this time, with plans to let a new contract for a period of three years with a potential to extend for a further two years (total of five years expiring October 2025).

Funding Streams

4. The contract cost is met from the Director of Community and Children's Services' Local Risk budget and the City's Cash Grants budget reimburse the department for half the cost (for the City worker and student element).
5. The Finance Grants Oversight and Performance Sub-Committee received a report at its meeting in November last year regarding the breakdown of the City's Cash Grants Budget, the current commitments and how they relate to the budget overseen by that Sub-Committee.
6. Members noted a continued allocation of City's Cash funding to at least the current value (£100,000 per annum) to enable the City Advice service to continue for City workers and students in the future. The funding is therefore agreed at this level for 19/20 and within the proposed budget for the 20/21 financial year.
7. Under the terms of reference, the Resource Allocation Sub Committee has responsibility for setting the annual quantum for each City's Cash and City Fund grants programme (including for City's Cash funded open spaces grants). In order to recommission the City Advice Service for the future, confirmation is sought for the approval for the continuation of the grant to the City Advice Service at the same level for an additional period to facilitate the procurement of the new contract. This is to give greater certainty in respect of service provision and budget management and to enable prospective providers to bid for the contract.
8. As the contract terminates part way through a financial year (October), a table showing contract timescales relative to financial years and grant is shown below. The grant in the final year of the contract could be apportioned if the service were not to be recommissioned for a further period.

Financial Year	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Grant	Yes	Yes	sought	sought	sought	sought	sought
Contract	Current		New initial term			Extension	

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. The contract supports the Corporate Plan's aim of 'contributing to a flourishing

society' through the aims of:

- People are safe and feel safe.
- People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.

Implications

10. There are no legal and property implications as a result of this report. The ability to procure the contract with agreed budgets for the full term of the contract will enable potential bidders to plan. The uncertainty regarding half of the funding may make the contract unattractive to prospective bidders which may lead to fewer (if any) providers taking part in the tendering exercise.
11. If the grant funding were to be removed part way through the contract, the worker and student element of the contract would need to cease and may make the whole contract financially unviable.
12. The procurement of the contract will be in line with the City's procurement code and be led by City procurement. Any reduction in cost as a result of the tendering exercise would be shared equally between the two funding streams. No additional costs would be sought as the budget for the contract will not be increased.

Conclusion

13. The City Advice Service supports residents, workers and students and confirmation of continued grant funding would facilitate a robust procurement exercise and enable bidders to have certainty of funding for the life of the contract.

Appendices - None

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