

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	PROCUREMENT OF AN ADVICE, INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE (AIG) SERVICE		
DATE OF DECISION:	18 APRIL 2017		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Carole Binns	Tel: 023 8083 4785
	E-mail:	Carole.binns@southampton.gov.uk	
Director	Name:	Stephanie Ramsey	Tel: 023 8029 6941
	E-mail:	stephanie.ramsey@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

One of the four priority outcomes in the Council Strategy is for people in Southampton to live safe, healthy and independent lives. A key aspect of achieving this outcome is for residents to have easy access to Advice, Information and Guidance (AIG) services. The vast majority of these services are currently provided by external organisations grant funded by the Council. In October 2016 the Cabinet agreed its approach to investment in the voluntary sector and this report seeks approval of the recommendations for progressing one of the workstreams through the future procurement of an integrated Advice, Information and Guidance (AIG) service for Southampton residents of all ages. This follows a review of the services currently in place and how they are funded, and dialogue with current providers of these services.

The current AIG services are funded through a number of separate grants and contracts with the majority being funded through the grants route. The Council's grants programme has recently been subject to a 12 week consultation which ended on 24th February 2017. The findings from the review and the grants consultation have been taken into account in developing the recommendations in this report.

The review identified that AIG services in the city are well regarded but are fragmented and that there is a need to develop a more integrated approach to the delivery of AIG services in order to improve efficiency and access.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	To approve the recommendation to proceed with a procurement of an integrated AIG (Advice, Information and Guidance) service.
	(ii)	To delegate authority to the Director of Quality & Integration to carry out a procurement process for the provision for AIG (Advice, Information and Guidance) services as set out in this report and to enter into contracts in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules.

	(iii)	To delegate authority to the Director of Quality & Integration following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members to decide on the final model of commissioned services for Advice, Information and Guidance (AIG) and all decision making in relation to this re-commissioning.
	(iv)	To delegate to the Chief Strategy Officer, following consultation with relevant cabinet members and following an option appraisal, the authority to approve the inclusion of SID (Southampton Information Directory) in the appropriate procurement exercise
	(v)	To authorise the Director of Quality and Integration to take all necessary actions to implement the proposals contained in this report

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	The provision of effective AIG (Advice, Information and Guidance) services supports the outcomes the Council wants to achieve in relation to increasing prevention and early intervention approaches and helping people to find their own solutions as far as possible.
2.	There is an opportunity to specify the outcomes the Council wishes to see achieved and to simplify delivery and access arrangements through a procurement process.
3.	The funding arrangements for the current AIG services have come to an end and there is a need to re-commission these services to comply with the strategic approach the Council wishes to take in relation to funding and to comply with public procurement law.
4.	A reliable information resource/directory is fundamental to an effective AIG service. The Southampton Information Directory (SID) is currently provided by the Council and if a procurement exercise proceeds a decision is needed on whether SID remains within the Council or whether it is integrated into a commissioned service.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5.	To continue to fund the same services without maximising the opportunities for efficiencies and developing an integrated approach to service delivery: this would not provide the most appropriate service and miss opportunities for improving access for individuals
6.	To decommission some/all service areas: this would not achieve the necessary outcomes for residents and while it may achieve some savings, it would not support the strategic approach to increase the focus on prevention and early intervention approaches. It is likely that any savings would be mitigated by activity moving to other service areas including internal Council services.
7.	To continue to fund AIG services through a mix of contracts and grants: this does not support recent decisions taken in relation to the use of grant funding and the aim to specify core services more clearly.
8.	To continue to support SID independently of this decision: this would not

	maximise the opportunity to consider further integration of services to support Council outcomes in relation to prevention and early intervention approaches.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
9.	One of the four priority outcomes in the Council Strategy is for people in Southampton to live safe, healthy and independent lives. This means that “We want Southampton to be a city that is recognised for its approach to preventing problems and intervening early. We want our residents to have the information and support they need to live safe, active, healthy lives and to be able to live independently for longer.” A key aspect of achieving this outcome is for residents to have easy access to Advice, Information and Guidance (AIG) services.
10.	The Council has a long history of commissioning information and advice services which promote the well-being of the city’s residents. These commissioning arrangements have grown over time, with a range of services providing both core and specialist information and advice. Services are provided by voluntary sector organisations and the recommendations in this report are consistent with the Councils strategic approach to working with the voluntary sector.
11.	The demand for AIG services outstrips the supply in the city and national changes, including ongoing Welfare Reforms, will continue to have an impact on demand. The Care Act (2014) and the Children and Families Act (2014) have placed additional requirements on local authorities in relation to ensuring the provision of advice and information.
Review of Advice, Information and Guidance services	
12.	The vast majority of AIG services are currently provided by external organisations grant funded by the Council. The allocation of grants was done on an outcome based approach in 2013 for a 3 year period which was extended in 2016 to provide continuity. In October 2016 the Cabinet agreed its approach to investment in the voluntary sector and gave approval to progress key workstreams of which one was future provision of an integrated Advice, Information and Guidance (AIG) service for Southampton residents of all ages.
13.	AIG service provision has been subject to a review to inform future service design. Services are currently provided by a range of organisations and by a number of approaches which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated clinics/appointment to provide advice and guidance, as provided by SARC (Southampton Advice and Representation Centre) and Citizens Advice (CAB) • Information – provided through the Southampton Information Directory (SID) • Drop-in Centres, as provided by No Limits (providing confidential information, advice, counselling, support & advocacy for children and young people) in their own premises or CAB within the Central Library. • Dedicated phone advice lines, as provided by ‘the Environment Centre’ (Environmental Charity providing advice and support targeting improvements in healthy homes) and CAB • Experts in welfare benefit law and employment law) SARC and CAB.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to support services other than those providing purely advice, such as that provided by EU Welcome to a range of groups in the city.
14.	<p>In addition there are a small number of contracts which are included within the current provision of AIG and as such were in scope of the review. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Advice Service – provision of a home visiting advice service • Homesafe – to support individuals to live safely in Southampton - this includes ensuring they are supported with social, financial, housing and personal issues. Service will offer support, advice, referrals, benefit maximisation and form completion. • Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) – provision of information and advice to families who have a child who has special educational needs and disability (SEND).
15.	<p>The review considered the current provision of AIG against Council's strategic intentions. Information was gathered from individual service reviews, literature reviews, evidence of national best practice, engagement events, service user feedback and a number of wider determinants such as legislation, welfare reforms, and the need for access to specialist services. The review identified that a wide range of advice and guidance provision is available locally, there is a track record of good provision and a strong culture of collaboration between advice and guidance providers.</p>
16.	<p>A key part of the review was to identify the outcomes that the Council wants to achieve through the commissioning of AIG services. These outcomes take account of the fact that AIG services are a key system enabler and that access to good quality services supports the achievement of a range of measures. The key areas identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to information, advice and guidance on a range of topics that residents need such as money management, employment, welfare benefits, rights, eligibility, housing, etc. • Improved access to early help and advice to support people finding their own solutions and prevent problems arising • Reduced risks attributable to wider social determinants for wellbeing, including poverty, employment and housing issues • Financial or social gain by individuals accessing the services of AIG • Access arrangements that are responsive to the diverse needs of the population including specialist advice where indicated • Improved access to specialist services when needed – to support health and wellbeing for people and to prevent problems escalating • Reduced/managed demand for other services by earlier intervention and signposting • Promotion of self-management/self-serve approaches within the city • Individuals and carers knowing how and when to access services appropriately.
17.	<p>Quantitative and qualitative data considered during the review demonstrated a high use of services. There is a growing demand for advice services which</p>

	is expected to continue given the increasingly complex welfare and benefit system, which also requires a well-informed workforce whose knowledge needs constant updating. The review also considered a 'customer journey' exercise undertaken by an independent consultant, commissioned by the alliance of local providers and endorsed by the Integrated Commissioning Unit. This demonstrated the complex nature of enquiries and the preferred method of accessing and receiving the service. The findings of this piece of work will inform the future model of service.
18.	The challenges highlighted include the absence of an information resource or directory which is reliable and up to date, the perception that clients are receiving a good but disjointed service, the number and range of access points, some duplication in effort and infrastructure and some limitation in the IT solutions to promote a seamless service.
19.	The issue of the Southampton Information Directory (SID) was raised at a number of points in the review. A reliable resource is considered to be fundamental to an effective AIG service. SID is currently provided by the Council and a decision is needed on whether this continues or whether this is integrated into a commissioned service. In any event a future AIG service must be strongly aligned with SID to avoid duplication of effort and systems. This is currently being considered in relation to a number of other work areas – it has for example been raised within the current scrutiny enquiry into loneliness.
20.	The findings of the review have led to the following considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a continuing need to ensure good quality advice and information services are available to local residents • Service delivery and access needs to be more integrated so that people experience a seamless service and do not have to tell their story many times. • A reliable information resource/directory needs to be integrated into the AIG service or strongly aligned • Outcomes need to focus on Council priorities • IT and digital solutions need to be maximised to achieve efficiency, whilst recognising that complex problems benefit from face to face contact which can ensure the right service is provided • AIG services can provide additional value in supporting the Councils prevention and early intervention approaches
	Consultation and engagement
21.	During the review period there has been a high level of engagement with current AIG services and the wider community and voluntary sector. This has included a number of meetings and engagements events. The alliance of local advice providers has also been proactive in developing best practice approaches to improve the current local offer. This has been freely shared with commissioners and has provided valuable information to inform a future model and specification. Rich information relating to the service user view and experience was provided by the 'customer journey' exercise noted above.
22.	As the majority of current services are funded through grants the current providers of AIG services were affected by the recent grants consultation

	exercise. This was a formal 12 week consultation which was concluded on 24 th February 2017 and as agreed by Cabinet in October 2016, it was an Officer Key Decision delegated to the Chief Strategy Officer, made on 23 rd March 2017. The result of that consultation is the subject of a separate report which was published on the Council website in line with usual procedures.
23.	As part of the consultation process all current grant recipients were offered an individual meeting as the proposals impacted directly on them. The majority of providers of current AIG services took up this offer in addition to attending public events and responding to the on-line questionnaire.
24.	Equality and Safety Impact Assessments were undertaken on each individual service/organisations as part of the grants review and this was taken into account in making that decision. An Equality and Safety Impact Assessment is now in progress in relation to the recommendations in this report and will be available to inform these decisions.
Recommendations	
25.	In line with the findings of the service review and the Officer Key Decision taken on 23 rd March 2017 it is recommended that a procurement exercise is undertaken to commission an integrated AIG service which would entail the service being specified through a contractual route.
26.	It is further recommended that consideration is given to the future provision of SID, or equivalent, so that any specifications required to support the provision or alignment of this and the AIG service can be included in this procurement exercise.
27.	If recommendations are supported, the procurement process will commence in May 2017.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
28.	The current investment in AIG covers a range of services provided to people in a range of different settings. A review of AIG has been undertaken recently which represents the first opportunity for an integrated approach to commissioning services, of which a significant proportion is from voluntary sector providers with the majority subject to grant funding and a smaller number subject to contract.
29.	The proposal is to procure an integrated AIG service within the approved overall revenue budgets for voluntary sector grants and to achieve improved outcomes and efficiencies through a reduction in duplication. Any costs associated with the procurement process will be met from within these budgets.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
30.	Two of the current providers are located in buildings within the SCC estate, SARC in Porchester Road and CAS in Kings Park Road and Central Library. The Porchester Road and Kings Park Road buildings are let at full market rent, and CAB also pays rent for use of space in the Central Library. Relevant officers are being contacted to discuss any specific implications for the Council.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

31. Section 2 Localism Act 2011 and various Local Government Acts. Any procurement will be governed by EU procurement rules depending on value

Other Legal Implications:

32. The Care Act 2014 imposes various statutory duties on LAs when exercising Adult Social care functions to promote the individuals well-being, prevent needs arising and escalating, safeguarding and the duty to provide advice and information. The Care Act includes the need to provide comprehensive information and advice about care and support services in the local area. This is to help people to understand how care and support services work locally, the care and funding options available, and how people can access care and support services. The Care Act 2014 also imposes duties on local authorities to promote the well-being of individuals and to prevent need arising and escalating. The Act clearly sets out that that local authorities must provide information on:

- what types of care and support are available – e.g. specialised dementia care, befriending services, reablement, personal assistance, residential care etc.
- the range of care and support services available to local people, i.e. what local providers offer certain types of services
- what process local people need to use to get care and support that is available
- where local people can find independent financial advice about care and support and help them to access it
- how people can raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of someone who has care and support needs.

33. Local authorities must also help people to benefit from independent financial advice, so that they can get support to plan and prepare for the future costs of care. All information and advice must be provided in formats that help people to understand, regardless of their needs. This may include a range of different types of information, and include working with partners to provide information on different services together.

34. The Children and Families Act requires that:

- A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people for whom it is responsible, and the parents of children for whom it is responsible, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the special educational needs of the children or young people concerned.
- It must arrange for children and young people in its area with a disability, and the parents of children in its area with a disability, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the disabilities of the children or young people concerned.
- The authority must take such steps as it thinks appropriate for making the services provided known to parents and children, young people, head teachers and other relevant people.

35. When carrying out any public functions the LA must have due regard to the

	<p>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010. The LA must take into account a number of factors including the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equal opportunity and foster good relations. The service user who will benefit from AIG are likely to be protected by the PSED and the Human Rights Act 1998 which has a similar duties to the PSED. In particular the protection under Article 14 the prohibition of discrimination and Article 6 the right to respect private and family life. If the proposals are likely to breach the European Convention on Human Rights the Council will need to examine any particular facts and determine if such a breach is justified and proportionate. The Council can though take into account general economic and policy factors which have led the Council to conclude that the proposals are necessary. This though must be balanced against the impact on the service users.</p>
36.	<p>The Council has to set out how it has had due regard to its equality and safety duties in its Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIAs).</p>
37.	<p>The Council must be mindful of the Southampton Compact and the Best Value Statutory Guidance in all its work with the voluntary sector. The Southampton Compact provides a code of good practice to build on existing good practice and continue to improve relationships between statutory, community and voluntary organisations. It covers five key areas with undertakings for both the public sector and voluntary sector in each area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong, diverse and independent civil society; • Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public service • Responsive and high-quality programmes and services • Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services; • An equal and fair society.
38.	<p>The Best Value Statutory Guidance was issued by central government in 2011, revised in 2015. The Guidance provides a code of good practice for local authorities considering funding reductions that may affect the voluntary sector. It complements the Southampton Compact minimum consultation and notice periods.</p>
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
39.	<p>Council Strategy 2016-2020</p>

KEY DECISION?	Yes
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All Wards
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	None
Documents In Members' Rooms	
1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	Yes
Privacy Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents	
Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None