



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Adur Cabinet Member for  
Communities and Wellbeing

Worthing Cabinet Member for  
Community Wellbeing

Published on 10 August 2022

Decision to be taken on or after 18th  
August 2022

Key Decision [Yes/No]

Ward(s) Affected: All

## Recommissioning of advice provision

## Report by the Director for Communities

## Executive Summary

### 1. Purpose

This report seeks to finalise the contracting arrangements for general advice provision by Citizens Advice West Sussex for the period 2022-2028.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 That Members note the outcome of the procurement process for general advice services carried out by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) on behalf of the Districts and Boroughs, and authorise the Director for Communities to enter into the contract with Citizens Advice West Sussex on the terms set out in this report.

2.2 That Members note the contract sum payable by each Council for the period 2021-2028 is within the annual budget allocation of £83,824 for Adur and £79,829 for Worthing.

### **3. Context**

**3.1** In 2021 recommissioning of the advice service (co-ordinated on behalf of Districts and Boroughs by West Sussex County Council) was proposed under a rolling contract arrangement of 3 plus 3 plus 1 years. Under the procurement regulations, WSCC was required to carry out a competitive procurement process for the contract.

**3.2** On September 7th, 2021 Adur and Worthing Council endorsed entering into a new contract for general advice services and supported the proposed annual budget allocation of £83,824 for Adur and £79,829 for Worthing for the contract period 2021-2028.

**3.3** Following the procurement process carried out by WSCC, Citizens Advice West Sussex were selected as the preferred provider and the notice of intention to award was issued on July 27th 2022, which will be proceeded by the mandatory 10 day standstill period and a period of mobilisation, the contract is anticipated to go live on September 1st 2022.

**3.2** The provision of general advice services to residents and communities in Adur and Worthing forms a critical part of the infrastructure needed to support households to manage, this need has been significantly exacerbated as a result of the current cost of living crisis.

**3.3** Between 2020 and 2021, Citizens Advice West Sussex received 11,542 calls for advice for Adur and Worthing residents. Of these the greatest number of issues being asked about were benefits, universal credit, consumer rights, debt, financial services, employment and housing rights. The service also resulted in significant additional funds coming into West Sussex due to optimising residents' benefits and entitlements.

**3.4** Prior to the end of the contract with Citizens Advice West Sussex in April 2021, WSCC commenced a new competitive procurement process for advice services for 2022-2028. This resulted in the reselection of Citizens Advice West Sussex as the preferred service provider.

**3.5** All signatories to the contract were consulted in the contracts redesign, and a number of changes were made to ensure a greater focus on more tailored responses to the issues impacting on local residents.

**3.6** The new contract for 2022 to 2028 is a rolling contract with review and renewal dates at three, three and one years. This arrangement allows all signatories to consider performance of the service provider against the contract and to seek amendments at each review point.

#### **4. Issues for consideration**

In September 2021 Adur and Worthing Joint Strategic Committee endorsed entering into a new contract for advice on the basis of a 3+3+1 year agreement. WSCC subsequently held an open tender and this resulted in the selection of Citizens Advice West Sussex . You only need to confirm that the outcome of the procurement process showed that the Citizens Advice West Sussex provided the most economically advantageous tender and as such have been awarded the contract subject to individual authority approvals

The September 2021 Joint Strategic Committee also approved the allocation of funds from Adur District Council of £83,824 and Worthing Borough Council of £79,829 per annum for the contract period 2021-2028.

#### **5. Engagement and Communication**

To inform Councils' input into the development of a new contract specification, work was carried out in April and May 2020 with key departments in AWC to identify areas where the Generalist Advice Service might be improved and reflected in the new contract.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

The Councils have the following budgets available to fund the proposed new generalist advice contract 2022- 2028 for Adur - £86,790 Worthing - £83,690 (per annum).

The proposed contract price is within the budgets available.

#### **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.
- 7.2 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 7.3 s1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 confers power on the local authority to enter into a contract for the provision of making available assets or services for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the local authority.

7.4 In entering into this contract the Councils must ensure that a compliant procurement process was followed by WSCC and that there are no outstanding issues arising from the procurement prior to execution of the Contract.

## **Background Papers**

Report to the Joint Strategic Committee: The Recommissioning of Advice 7.9.21.

### **Officer Contact Details:-**

**Paula Doherty**

Interim Head of Communities and Wellbeing

07790994283

[paula.doherty@adur-worthing.gov.uk](mailto:paula.doherty@adur-worthing.gov.uk)

## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic Funding**

A 'citizens advice' service has a positive impact on the economic development of Adur and Worthing by ensuring that incomes for our poorest community members are optimised and thereby reinvested in the local economy. It also helps build people's personal capacity so they are enabled to participate in economic activity.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

This service has a significant positive impact for Adur and Worthing Councils' most vulnerable communities, including older people, people from minoritised communities, those with disabilities, and those living in areas of disadvantage. The service is currently accessible in two key locations across the Councils, and offers an extensive range of advice.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

The Councils' will be looking to add additional groups to the list that the advice service must particularly engage with, including people from minoritised ethnic communities and older people. This will help to address some of the key themes identified in the Thrive Board Equality Summary and Approach including: ○ Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by equality groups. Taking steps to meet the needs of equality groups Due to extensive research into the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic outlined in the Marmot Review, it is known that it has had a greater adverse impact on minoritised ethnic communities, young people, and those with disabilities. This is supported by the experience of Adur and Worthing and improving the access of members of Councils' priority community groups to the provision of advice services is an important measure to address such inequalities.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

This measure is completely consistent with the Human Rights Act. Funding advice services that are accessible and non-discriminatory is a core component of the UKs approach in upholding human rights values in the context of private citizens and their individual rights.

### **3. Environmental**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **4. Governance**

This proposal is in line with Councils' 'Thrive' aspirations. The advice service contract was developed through constructive collaborative work with all other Boroughs and Districts and West Sussex County Council. There are no implications for risk management, health and safety and governance of the Councils.