

CABINET

18 JANUARY 2011

GATEWAY 4 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT: HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY AND HANDYPERSON SERVICE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Les Wicks, Children's Services

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Summary

This report seeks to update Cabinet on the contract performance and management of the Home Improvement Agency and Handyman Service. The report also seeks Cabinet approval for the continuation of the contract, which is expected to run until 31 October 2012.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 In accordance with the council's contract rules, Gateway 4 reports (Contract management) for projects previously judged as being high risk are discussed at Procurement Board before being reported to Cabinet.

2. Related Decisions

2.1 There are no related decisions.

3. Background

3.1 The decision to appoint In Touch was made by Cabinet on 4 August 2009 (Decision number: 136/2009). The contract commenced on 1 November 2009 after a mobilisation period, which also included TUPE transfer of Medway Council staff.

3.2 This report seeks to update Cabinet on the contract performance and management of the above service. This reports also seeks Cabinet approval for the continuation of the contract, which is expected to run until 31 October 2012.

3.3 This is a key service for Medway's residents in terms of the Council's priority for Older and vulnerable people maintaining their independence. This outcome is achieved by supporting vulnerable people in Medway through the repair, adaptation or improvement of their homes, so that the individual is able to remain in their own home in a warm, safe, secure and accessible environment. The continued provision of this service is therefore, essential to ensure that that Medway Council continues to promote the independence of vulnerable adults in the community

4 Management of the contract/ benefits realisation

4.1 The Commissioning Portfolio Manager and Service Commissioners undertake Formal and Informal monitoring and service improvement meetings on a regular basis. Some of the meetings are specific to the various aspects of the service, such as the Technician and Handyperson service, the Ancillary caseworker service and services linked to the Disabled Facilities Grant. This approach has worked well as a means of handling specific issues, given the wide range of stakeholders. Medway Council staff transferred to the service as part of the tender process and thus far, the transition has enabled a more efficient and flexible technician service. The Ancillary Caseworker Service is unique in that it is a one-stop out-reach service that can refer on to multiple other services after undertaking a holistic assessment with the service user, and also provide ongoing support to ensure successful outcomes are achieved wherever possible.

4.2 Examples of the aspects of the contract which are reviewed include but are not limited to:

- Percentage of equipment and adaptations delivered within 7 days
- Ensuring that at least 90% of all Handyperson and minor repair jobs and small works service jobs are completed within 7 days
- Service User requirements, issues/concerns
- Percentage of applications for minor works grants completed within 12 weeks
- Monitoring that at least 90% of Hospital discharge minor adaptations jobs are completed within 7 days
- Ensuring that at least 90% of major repair jobs are completed within 35 weeks or 43 if planning regulations are applied for

4.3 The Service Provider also submits a quarterly performance monitoring report, which includes various Key Performance Indicators covering utilisation and response times. The report also details the number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living (NI 142). In the first two quarters of this current financial year, 92% (*circa* 1500) service users were enabled to continue living independently.

4.4 In addition, the Home Improvement Agency and Handyperson Service is coordinated, monitored and overseen by a steering group. This group meets on a quarterly basis, is composed of various stakeholders, including service users and voluntary sector representatives. These meetings have proved to be a valuable means of ensuring that services and support are joined up and

are well attended. The Service Provider produces a written report for discussion at the meeting.

- 4.5 One of the initial objectives within the business case was for the Service Provider to assist service users with practical assistance in obtaining funds which would in turn, assist the service users to remain independent for longer within their own home. By September 2010, the Home Improvement Agency and Handyperson service had already successfully arranged over £109,500 of welfare benefits for clients.
- 4.6 Another key objective was to assist service users with processing of Grant funded works. By September, the provider had assisted with the application process of 105 Disabled Facilities Grants with a value of around £788,000.
- 4.7 The service has a key objective of providing a Homesafe/Handyperson and technician service. The outcome is to enable service users to feel safer within their own homes by fitting a wide range of equipment such as grab rails, brackets or smoke alarms, as well as undertaking repairs and adaptations. Over 2000 enquiries and 1900 jobs were handled by September 2010.
- 4.8 The service has also made over 30 referrals to providers such as Warmfront, Kent Energy & Advice Centre, as a result of establishing Energy Efficiency or Fuel Poverty issues

5 Variations required during Contract Term

- 5.1 This is a tripartite, jointly commissioned service funded by grants from Supporting People, Housing and Occupational Therapy. In June 2010, significant savings and efficiencies had to be made within the financial year as a result of the government decision to remove the Supporting People Administration Grant. This has resulted in a 7% reduction to the funding provided to this service from the Supporting People grant. This variation has now been implemented and was made in line with the terms of the current contract, which had provision to make adjustments to funding in circumstances where the Supporting People Grant was reduced or stopped.

6 Performance and Change Management

- 6.1 Overall, the Service Provider has performed well throughout the term of the contract so far.
- 6.2 The Service Provider is continually responsive to stakeholder comments and minor complaints. The support provided by the organisation has been in line with the contract and indeed demonstrates a continued need for these services.
- 6.3 Continual monitoring and regular dialogue has helped the process and this will be maintained.

7 Lessons Learned

- 7.1 Specific and targeted operational meetings, with relevant attendees have been undertaken where necessary, as opposed to full contract monitoring meetings. This has worked well given the number of stakeholders with differing interests, and has enabled faster resolution of issues, confidence building, and visible continuous improvement.
- 7.2 Since the contract was awarded in 2009 the Social Care Commissioning Team has recruited Performance and Compliance Officers who make on site visits to the services, analyse performance data and report back on the quality of service provided.

8 Next Steps

8.1 Future Variations / Amendments Required:

8.1.1 At the time of writing, further variations and amendments are not required. However, given the Government's recent Comprehensive Spending Review, it is very clear that Medway Council has to continue looking at ways of achieving savings and generating efficiencies in order to meet identified shortfalls in the budget.

8.1.2 Future funding for this service may, therefore, be affected in light of the above, which would lead to variations and amendments. Appropriate impact assessments will be undertaken once more information is available.

8.2 Contract Extension Required:

8.2.1 Not required.

8.3 Service Improvement Plan / Continuous Improvement Plan

8.3.1 This contract is performing well, however both Medway and In Touch wish to see continuous improvements being made and recent figures would suggest this is the case.

8.3.2 Improvements over the life of the contract will center on:

- Response times within various services
- Working more closely with the provider to ensure that where possible, efficiencies can continuously be realised, especially when choosing subcontractors or purchasing equipment and materials.

9. Comments of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services

9.1 The Home Improvement Agency and Handyperson Service assists older, disabled and vulnerable people to remain living in their homes independently by helping them to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home. This report sets out the contract performance of the service and how the contract is meeting the intended objectives.

10. Procurement Board

- 10.1 Procurement Board considered this report on 22 December 2010 and supported the recommendation to approve the continuation of this service contract.

11. Financial, procurement and Legal Comments

- 11.1 Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

No financial implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

- 11.2 Comments of the Head of Procurement or designated deputy:

Strategic procurement has provided ongoing support and guidance for this procurement activity from project inception. The Client department has indicated its satisfaction with the performance of the contractor to date and as such there are no immediate concerns with regard to all the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) agreed by the Parties at the onset of the project. The Client department together with the contractor do accept the need for continuous improvement of the service as outlined in paragraph 8.3 above.

It is imperative that the lessons learned from managing this project as well as best practice associated with this project are captured in a lessons learned log and disseminated across the department for officers commissioning similar projects to tap into for an efficient provision of services.

- 11.3 Comments of the Monitoring Officer or designated deputy:

Overall the services provided under this key contract have been satisfactory in continuing to promote the independence of vulnerable adults in the community. It is encouraging to note that the Service Provider is continually responsive to stakeholder comments and minor complaints in respect of these core value services.

12. Recommendations

- 12.1 Cabinet is recommended to note this report and approve the continuation of this service contract.

13. Suggested reasons for decision

There are no adverse observations regarding this contract and the Service Provider is performing to a standard equal or better than that set out in the contract specification.

The continuation of this service is vital in enabling older and vulnerable people to remain independent within their community and their own homes.

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Head of Procurement or deputy: Frederick Narmh ☎ 01634 331021

Background papers

The following documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Description of document	Location	Date
Gateway 3 High-risk procurement contract award acceptance report.	Intranet	4 August 2009
Home Improvement Agency and Handyperson Service Contract Specification and Terms & Conditions		November 2009