

# Report to Cabinet

**17 March 2021**

<b>Subject:</b>	Tender for the Provision of Interpreting & Translation Services – Appointment of Contractors
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Living Healthy Lives Councillor Farut Shaeen
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Adult Social Care Katharine Willmette
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Corporate Procurement Services Neil Whitehouse – Procurement Officer

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to authorise the Chief Executive and the Acting Section 151 Officer to award a contract for the provision of Interpreting & Translation Services for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2025 at an anticipated value of £400,000 following the conclusion of the current procurement exercise.
- 1.2 That in connection with 1.1 above, the Director, Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into appropriate contracts.

## 2. Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The current contract is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.



2.2 In response to the contract notice published in the Government's Find a Tender website, 14 completed tenders were received. Evaluation of the returned tenders in accordance with the published award criteria in terms of price and quality is being undertaken but due to the relatively short timeline now available to complete this activity in readiness for Cabinet deadlines, it is necessary to request authority to award this contract upon completion of tender evaluation by early to mid-March 2021. This will ensure that mandatory standstill requirements are observed and it will allow for any appropriate mobilisation period to be implemented.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people</b></p> <p>The provision of interpreting and translation services will assist Council staff where professionals work together across agencies to promote the importance of communication and language to parents to provide earlier support to children who need it</p>
	<p><b>People live well and age well</b></p> <p>The provision of interpreting and translation services will assist Council staff to support service users and their families with care and support needs to make choices about the life they lead.</p>

### 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Council has an ongoing requirement for the provision of externally provided Interpreting & Translation Services via Face to Face meetings, via telephone/video calls and the translation of the written word (letters, leaflets etc)



- 4.2 Although there is some smaller usage across other various Council Services (e.g. School Admissions/Taxi Licencing) and Sandwell Childrens Trust, the largest spend and frequency of usage of Interpreting and Translation is within Adult Social Care where Social Workers are working with Service Users to complete care assessments, mental health act assessments, safeguarding issues, case reviews, Best Interest Assessor assessments, etc.
- 4.3 The current contract arrangement is due to expire on 31 March 2021 and a tendering exercise has been conducted in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to renew the contract for a four-year period. Sandwell Childrens Trust have also requested that they are able to participate in the Council's Contract for the provision of these services and their annual expenditure combined with the Council's is around £100,000 based on current usage levels.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the new contract will be let for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2025 and based on current levels of expenditure will have a value of £400,000.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The only alternative option to enable interpretation and translation to be undertaken would be for the Council to employ its own interpreters but this would prove to be costly and impractical due the wide range of languages that would need to be covered.



## 6 Implications

<p><b>Resources:</b></p>	<p>The estimated value of the contract for the Provision of Interpreting and Translation Services over the four year period is £400,000. Funding will be drawn from existing service level budget provision.</p>
<p><b>Legal and Governance:</b></p>	<p>The tender opportunity has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules. A contract notice was published on the Government's Find a Tender and Contract Finder website via In-tend – the Council's e-procurement portal.</p> <p>The provision of these services plays a fundamental role in ensuring the Council's service users have access to information, advice and communication for assessments, letters and other Council documents, in their own language. All local authorities must comply with the duties set out in the Equalities Act 2010, including the duty not to discriminate and the public-sector equality duty. The services help the Council to comply with these duties.</p>
<p><b>Risk:</b></p>	<p>The provision of these services plays a fundamental role in ensuring clear and understandable communication between Council staff and service users that is necessary for the prompt completion of assessments, enquiries and other interactions that enable the Council to meet the needs of its service users and to comply with its statutory duties. For example, in the case of Adult Social Care this would include meeting the Care Act 2014 duty to offer assessment to vulnerable peoples' needs for care and support, or to carers for their needs for support</p> <p>If the contract is not awarded some of the Council's service users may not be able to access care and support assessments, reviews, support and services to which they are legally entitled, due to lack of communication between themselves and the Council, and this could lead to complaints, and legal challenges. Therefore, the risks have been considered and the policy has been complied with.</p>



<b>Equality:</b>	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment was completed, which has identified that there is likely to be no adverse impact on protected groups because of the new contract. Service users and partners of the Council who use Translation and Interpreting Services are likely to have a higher representation of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, older adults, disabilities (including learning, sensory and physical disabilities) and women compared to the Sandwell population. They will benefit from the procurement of these services.</p>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>The Services will provide clear, accurate and timely translations of assessment forms, safeguarding inquiry forms, etc and interpretations of meetings between Council service users and staff. This will provide reassurance and clarity to service users that their needs for care and support are being met and will enable better understanding to service users about Council services, decisions and processes. It will also enable staff to perform their jobs with improved support around communication. This will lead to a lessening of stress and improved wellbeing for the service users and staff.</p>
<b>Social Value</b>	<p>Social Value commitments have been built into the tender evaluation criteria to ensure the successful contractor(s) complies with nationally recognised standards and contributes to the Council's Vision 2030 ambitions.</p>

