

# Report to Cabinet

**20 July 2022**

<b>Subject:</b>	Award of Contract for Local Welfare Provision
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Bob Piper - Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
<b>Director:</b>	Simone Hines – Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ian Dunn <a href="mailto:ian_dunn@sandwell.gov.uk">ian_dunn@sandwell.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:carl_jones@sandwell.gov.uk">carl_jones@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

## 1 Recommendations

### That Cabinet:






- 1.1 Authorise the Director of Finance - Section 151 Officer in consultation with Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to award a contract for Local Welfare Provision, following the conclusion of an open procurement exercise that commenced on 6 June 2022, for a 4 year period commencing 1 October 2022.
- 1.2 Authorise the Director Law and Governance – Monitoring Officer to execute any documentation necessary to enable the action referred to in 1.1 above.



## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 This report is seeking approval to award a contract for the provision of white goods and household items to support the delivery of the Council's Local Welfare Provision scheme following a compliant procurement process.
- 2.2 The current contract with Loaves N Fishes ends on the 30 September 2022.
- 2.3 Sandwell's Local Welfare Provision scheme has been co-designed with the voluntary sector/charitable organisations. It provides crucial support by way of food parcels, fuel, white goods, and essential household items to Sandwell's most vulnerable residents who are faced with a crisis.

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

	Best start in life for children and young people	The Local Welfare Provision scheme provides crucial support to Sandwell's most vulnerable residents who are faced with a crisis. It therefore supports several of the Council's objectives
	People live well and age well	
	Strong resilient communities	
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods	
	A strong and inclusive economy	

## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Local Welfare Provision scheme was introduced in April 2013



- 4.2 It replaced the Social Fund and Crisis Loan elements of the social fund scheme previously administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 4.3 The DWP provided funding for the first 2 years. Since 2015 our Local Welfare Provision scheme has been funded by the Council.
- 4.4 Sandwell's Local Welfare Provision scheme provides crucial support by way of food parcels, fuel, white goods, and essential household items to Sandwell's most vulnerable residents who are faced with a crisis/emergency and are suffering financial hardship.
- 4.5 Sandwell Council's decision to continue to fund a Local Welfare Provision scheme demonstrates commitment to support our most vulnerable residents. A number of our neighbouring authorities no longer provide a Local Welfare Provision scheme or have in place alternative arrangements where residents in acute need have to take out loans.
- 4.6 Sandwell Council supports the main foodbanks in the borough with grant funding and residents who present to us requiring food are referred to a foodbank for a food parcel.
- 4.7 Residents requiring assistance with fuel are given a voucher. This voucher is issued via Paypoint.
- 4.8 The number of residents provided with white goods and/or household items in the past 3 years is as follows:
- 2019/20: £176,801 and 406 residents supported.
  - 2020/21: £222,537 and 429 residents supported.
  - 2021/22: £242,452 and 446 residents supported.
- 4.9 Based upon the details in 4.8 we have estimated the annual cost of the contract at £232,000 making a total of £928,000 for the 4-year period.
- 4.10 The contract will not commit to a fixed level of provision in any one year and is also subject to the provision of on-going funding throughout the period of the contract remaining in place. In addition we are also proposing a fixed price on items for 24 months from the commencement



of the contract and considering increases via the Consumer Price Index on an annual basis afterwards.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 If a contract is not in place to provide white goods and household items to Sandwell's most vulnerable customers there is a risk that families would suffer poverty and their basic needs would not be met

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The total cost of this contract is estimated to be in the region of £232,000 per year. This is fully funded by the Council and if the funding is not available there is the option to no longer provide or reduce the level of Local Welfare Provision.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The Council's Contract and Procurement Procedures and Public Contract Procedure Rules (PCR) 2015 will be adhered to. Legal Services will be involved in the preparation of the Contract Documentation prior to the award.
<b>Risk:</b>	The corporate risk management strategy has been complied with to identify and assess the risks associated with the recommendations being sought. This has concluded that there are no significant risks that require reporting. Further measures will be put in place to ensure that the risks identified during the procurement process are considered and mitigated to levels within the council's appetite for risk.
<b>Equality:</b>	No implications
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Sandwell's Local Welfare Provision scheme has a direct impact upon the health and wellbeing of the residents it supports
<b>Social Value</b>	Social Value is being considered as part of the evaluation of returned tender submissions

## 7. Appendices

None



## 8. Background Papers

None.

