

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Deputy Leader
2.	Date:	7th October, 2014
3.	Title:	Fareshare Food Contract Extension – Request for Exemption to Standing Orders
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhood and Adult Services

5. Summary:

The current contract for provision of food supplies to Community Food Members (CFM) by Fareshare Yorkshire (FSY) in Rotherham is due to end on 31st October, 2014. FSY has delivered the provision since it started on 1st October 2013.

It is proposed that the current contract with FSY is extended for a further 5 months until 31st March 2015. During this time period the Council will undertake an open and competitive tendering exercise for a new contract to commence 1st April 2015. The new contract will be for 12 months with an option to extend until 31st March, 2017 subject to continued demand, quality performance and finance/grant availability.

6. Recommendations

The Deputy Leader is recommended to approve:

- 6.1 **An exemption to the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as provided for by Standing Order 38, to waive Standing Order 47 in order to extend the contract with Fareshare Yorkshire Ltd for the operation of the Rotherham Food Centre and provision of food to Community Food Members.**
- 6.2 **That the contract be extended to 31st March 2015 to the sum of £15,154.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

Following abolition of the Government's Discretionary Social Fund under the provisions of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (c. 5), the Government provided local authorities, from April 2013, with two years funding for "local welfare provision". The funding has been provided as a Section 31 grant (S. 31, Local Government Act 2003 (c. 26)). The funding is not ring-fenced for any specific purpose although the Government expect it to be used for welfare provision, albeit that there is no statutory duty placed upon the Council in this respect.

In Rotherham, the Council has used the grant to create the "fund for change", which among other things has been used to tackle food poverty by providing a supply of food to local organisations and food banks (Community Food Members) (CFM), which in turn is given to people in need.

As a pilot, a contract was entered into for one year with FareShare Yorkshire Ltd (FSY) to provide local food banks with food. FSY is a charity affiliated to the national Fareshare who have contracts in place with various supermarkets (e.g. M&S; Asda; and Tesco). FSY currently distribute 'surplus food' across Yorkshire and other areas. The contract provides for a centrally located Rotherham Food Centre for the storage and distribution of 'surplus' food, enabling storage of surplus food supplies and stockpiling of high demand foods. FSY manage the centre and facilitate the collection of ambient food only from the premises by CFMs. An agreement between the FSY and the CFMs has enabled direct communication regarding food requirements and collection of data. The contract expires on 31st October 2014.

In the first 10 months of operation the following performance has been achieved:

- 14.5 tonnes of food has been collected and redistributed to people in Rotherham;
- 1248 referrals for a food parcel have been received to date;
- 1599 food parcels have been provided;
- 513 people are currently engaged in long term support;
- Food centre has built up a long term supply of food which enables a sustainable supply of food should demand increase; and
- 13 organisations signed up to the model.

7.2 Continuation of the service

Evidence to date suggests there is an ongoing need for the model and level of support.

The Rotherham Food Centre was opened in December 2013 providing an infrastructure for the distribution of food. There are thirteen CFMs signed up to receive food through the FSY contract. Looking forward the current arrangements could be expanded to increase capacity to supply twenty CFMs in the coming months from the existing centre.

7.3 Proposal for Waiver of Standing Orders

Given that the initial set up investment has been made and demand continues, an extension to the current arrangements until March 2015 would offer a cost effective approach to meeting local need in the short term. It is proposed that an exemption is made to the Council's "Contract standing orders and Financial Regulations" contained in Part IV of the Council's constitution (as provided for by standing order 38), to enter into a contract extension to 31st March 2015 for the following reasons:-

1. To provide sufficient time for the Council to undertake an open and competitive tendering exercise for a new contract to commence 1st April 2015
2. To provide the service users sufficient time to engage with any potential new service provide ensuring a smooth transition into the new contract with minimum impact to vulnerable people of Rotherham.
3. Maintaining the current provision would allow Rotherham to respond efficiently and effectively to emergencies and unforeseen circumstances for vulnerable people and families therefore preventing further and more intensive interventions- depending on the level of demand.

8. Finance

Based on the current level of provision the cost to extend the existing contract to 31st March 2015 would be £15,154 . Sufficient resources are available from within the 2014/15 Local welfare Provision allocation to fund the service until March 2015. It is estimated the cost of the new contract will be approximately £30K per annum.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Not extending this service provision contract would result in the ceasing of the service in Rotherham of a key preventative service which would impact significantly on vulnerable people and families in the borough.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The provision of food banks relates to the corporate plan Priority 2 "Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence".

11. Background Papers and Consultation

None

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