

Informal Call-in Meeting – 13 March 2024

Decision to withdraw the Tender for Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure - FP/079/03/24

Attendees:

Cllr Mike Mackrory (caller-in and VC of CPSC)

Other call-in members present: Cllr Robinson, Cllr King (for end of discussion only)

Cllr Louise McKinley (responsible Cabinet Member)

Officers:

Emma Tombs (Interim Democracy Lead)

Neave Beard (Lead for Strengthening Communities)

Agenda:

Cllr McKinley set the scene, explaining the background to the decision and why it was needed. She advised that legal advice had indicated that it was not possible to manage the cessation of the procurement process and the arrangements that would be put in place thereafter within one CMA. The CMA that had been called in therefore referenced only the cessation of the procurement process; once this had been implemented a second one would follow containing the onward arrangements.

Cllrs Mackrory and Robinson noted the high level of uncertainty experienced by CVSs in connection with these arrangements and the impact that the loss of funding whilst future arrangements were agreed would have.

Cllr McKinley acknowledged this, though highlighted that organisations had been given over a years notice in respect of the planned changes. It had not been possible, due to circumstances outside of the Council's control, to award a contract and the steps now being put in place were an attempt to resolve the situation as efficiently as possible. It was noted that it was unfortunate that CVSs who had previously been successful in the procurement process were experiencing more uncertainty, as they had previously been in expectation of funding.

Two CVSs had been in contact with concerns about short term funding, in one case a meeting had been held in order to explain the position, next steps and likely timeline; a similar meeting with the other CVS had been scheduled. It was now the case however, that until the cessation of the procurement process was implemented, meaningful discussions around the onward arrangements could not be progressed.

Cllr McKinley agreed that, should the call in be withdrawn, further detail in relation to short term funding arrangements and the outline content of the next CMA which will

set out the longer term approach for VCS Infrastructure could be shared with Cllr Mackrory and group colleagues by the end of the week. The authority's commitment to short term arrangements would be communicated to Chelmsford CVS prior to their meeting on Monday and to other affected CVS's if this is requested to provide reassurance.

Cllrs Mackrory, Robinson and King agreed to privately consider the discussion held, and the offer made by Cllr McKinlay, and advise as soon as possible whether or not the call in could be withdrawn.

Post meeting note.

It was subsequently advised by Cllr Mackrory that the call in was withdrawn in the light of the undertakings made by Cllr McKinlay as set out in the note above.