1. SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to conduct a tender exercise to re-commission the existing Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service as part of the rolling programme of re-commissioning of Supporting People (SP) services. This tender exercise will ensure the commissioning of a high quality service which will provide continuity of support to vulnerable people and deliver the required saving of 11% under the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 For the reasons set out in the report, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1.1 agree the request to conduct a tender exercise to re-commission the existing SP funded Home Improvement Agency service for a term of 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years.

3. REASONS

3.1 The proposed tender to re-commission the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service for disabled people and older people is part of a rolling programme of supported living re-commissioning to achieve savings required in the MTFS. The
tender exercise is required to ensure continued compliance to the Council’s Contract Procedure rules (CPR) and the business case was reported to and approved by Strategic Procurement Board (Appendix 2).

3.2 This is a key decision for Cabinet as the estimated contract value is in excess of £1 million.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The MTFS includes an average of 11% savings on supported living re-commissioning which is targeted to achieve £705,000 savings over 2 years (2011-2013) and enables savings to be managed in a planned way, minimising disruption for vulnerable service users and working with the market of third sector providers. A re-commissioning programme for existing Waltham Forest Supporting People services was agreed by the SP Commissioning Body in June 2010 and services have been re-commissioned by client group to deliver this savings requirement and to ensure quality of services.

4.2 The HIA service is currently provided by Papworth Housing Trust on a contract which ran from April 2010 to March 2013 with an extension of 1 year being mobilised so the contract will expire in March 2014. The proposed tender exercise will be conducted to enable the new service to commence in April 2014 to ensure continuity of support for service users.

5. PROPOSALS

5.1 Cabinet approval is sought to conduct a tender to re-commission the existing HIA service as part of the programme of re-commissioning of supported living services agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The tendering process will be carried out in accordance with the Business Case approved by the Strategic Procurement Board attached as Appendix 2.

5.2 HIAs are locally based not-for-profit organisations that provide a range of housing related support services to vulnerable people with the aim of keeping people in their current homes for as long as possible. When HIA services started more than 20 years ago their core services were advice, advocacy and adaptations but this has grown to include a range of other services. They advise and assist older, disabled and vulnerable people to access funding to carry out adaptations, repairs and improvements, co-ordinate works and ensure satisfactory completion and quality checks. The Government sees HIAs as central to the delivery of better and improved services for older, disabled and vulnerable people. In particular, it recognises HIAs as integral to the delivery of the transformation of social care and its emphasis on prevention – HIAs deliver low-cost, effective preventative services which contribute to falls prevention, enabling hospital discharges and decreasing demand for residential placements. HIAs also embrace the principles in the Health and Social Care Act, 2012 to provide people with high quality integrated services which maximise independence and crates efficiencies across the health and social care economy. It also supports the Government’s five priorities for housing in relation to older people (National Strategy for an Ageing Population). These include ensuring homes are ‘warm and secure’ and to make sure that services provided are suitable to older people’s needs and aspirations.

HIA’s contribute to the following indicators:-
- The number of people supported to maintain independent living
- Bringing homes to a decent standard
- Reducing fuel poverty for vulnerable residents
- Reducing health costs
- Preventing hospital admissions
- Improved health and well-being
- Improved life expectancy
- Improvement for people over 65 (home and neighbourhood)
- Preventing the need for residential care/nursing homes
- Prevention of fires, related fatalities and non-fatal casualties

5.3 The specification will ensure that the HIA delivers a quality holistic one stop shop service. It will provide advice and information, signposting to other agencies, and coordination of services such as cross tenure major adaptations (Disabled Facilities Grants for private and housing association properties and council adaptations funded through the Housing Revenue Account), handy person services, and housing options. The HIA will provide excellent casework, technical and financial skills to assist vulnerable groups to live independently, improve their homes, health and wellbeing.

5.4 The benefits which will be achieved through this re-commissioning are:-

- achieving the average of 11% efficiency saving for supported living re-commissioning required as part of the MTFS
- alignment of services to national and local strategic priorities including the Prevention Strategy, the Health and Well Being Strategy and LBWF Homelessness Prevention Strategy
- ensuring high quality services based on open market commissioning through the Council’s Procontract system
- market-testing to ensure value for money and cost efficiencies
- continuity of services for vulnerable service users requiring HIA services including older people, disabled adults and children with disabilities and
- user involvement in the re-commissioning process

6. OPTIONS

6.1 The re-tendering of the HIA service is required to maintain continuity of support for older people and disabled people, and to ensure the commissioning of a high quality service which will be in compliance with the CPR and to enable MTFS savings targets to be met.

7. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES (AND OTHER NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES)

7.1 Supporting People services link to the Council’s priorities of support for vulnerable people, providing reliable front line services and making every penny count in tough times and to the Sustainable Communities Strategy’s commitment “to support and empower our most vulnerable residents to live independent, active
and enjoyable lives”. A national study by Cap Gemini for the CLG has shown for every £1 spent on SP services, £1.78 benefit is gained with reduced costs for homelessness, health and social care.

7.2 HIA services contribute to the Council’s Prevention Strategy, reducing demand for higher costs services such as residential care and facilitating discharge from hospital and supporting falls prevention. Demographic and service data indicates an increasing demand from older people with complex needs living in the community and young people with learning disabilities in transition who benefit from HIA services.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The report has been prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Strategic Procurement Board. Consultation has been conducted with the current HIA service provider and service users to promote engagement in the commissioning process and the SP re-commissioning programme has been agreed by the Supporting People Commissioning Body which involves senior representation from Adults Social Care, Health, and Housing. Strategic Procurement Board approved the business case on the proposed tender process for the HIA in April 2013.

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk

9.1.1 The HIA service currently costs the Council £408,000 per year and is funded within the Adult Social Care base budget.

9.1.2 The tender exercise allows for market testing to identify the potential for further cost efficiencies and will provide value for money. The contracts awarded will be monitored to ensure performance targets including establishing independent living and planned move on and outcomes measures are achieved.

9.2 Legal

9.2.1 The Council has power to provide grants for the adaptation of premises for disabled people under section 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (SI 2002/1860). By section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which allows a local authority to do anything which is incidental to or conducive to its functions, and by section 1 of the Localism Act 2010, which gives a local authority a general power of competence, it has power to contract with a HIA.

9.2.2 The council must comply with its Contract Procedure Rules set out in Part 8 of the Constitution: No tendering process shall commence without the formal approval of the Strategic Procurement Board and Cabinet as required by Rule 8.2 and 8.3.

9.2.3 This contract will be tendered in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and will be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union. The services being tendered fall within both Part A and Part B of Schedule 3 to the Regulations. In the circumstances the most legally robust route is to treat the
contract as falling within Part A and comply with the full requirements of the Regulations.

9.3 Equalities and Diversity

9.3.1 An Equality Impact assessment has been conducted on the Supporting People savings. The Equality Assessment identified the positive impact SP services have for vulnerable people including older people, young people and the high proportion of BAME people benefiting from SP services.

9.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)

9.4.1 From the sustainability assessment, this proposed tender contributes directly to sustainability issues through the work covered by the service including advice to vulnerable people regarding reducing fuel poverty and moving towards decent homes standards. The main sustainability implications for service tendering specifications involve the energy efficiency of the buildings used by the service and how staff and users travel to deliver and access the services.

9.5 Council Infrastructure

9.5.1 There are no implications for the Council Infrastructure.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

LBWF Supporting People Strategy 2010-15

Approval by the Portfolio Holder

I have cleared this report for inclusion on the Cabinet agenda.

Signed: Angie Bean
Date: 22 April 2013

Portfolio Member for Adults