

Portfolio Holder decision record sheet

Name of decision maker: Cllr Margaret Griffiths

Portfolio: Housing Services

Date of decision: 26/04/2023

Title of decision: To award a contract to Tunstall Healthcare for planned upgrades and maintenance of community alarm equipment at supported housing schemes

Part II: N/A

Part II reason:

Decision made and reasons:

To award a contract to Tunstall Healthcare for planned upgrades and maintenance of community alarm equipment at supported housing schemes following a direct award via the Procurement for Housing (PfH) Framework Agreement.

The contract is for a fixed term two year period, which will allow us to undertake a full commissioning and procurement exercise for when this contact expires

Background:

Community alarms are installed within our supported housing dwellings and offer our tenants a direct “lifeline” to the onsite scheme manager or out of hours call centre, whilst also promoting independent living. The alarm provides the tenant with a pendant that they can press or is automatically activated if there is an incident such as a fall. This allows us to react quickly and appropriately to the needs of our vulnerable tenants and ensures their health and safety remains a council priority.

In 2015 Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) procured a community alarm installation and maintenance contract with Tunstall Healthcare successfully winning the contract via a tender process that focused on value for money. The contract commenced in January 2016 on an initial five-year term with an additional two-year option that was subsequently approved; the contract ended on 13 January 2023.

The installation element of the contract has focused on upgrading our supported housing schemes and over 80% of our schemes have now been completed. These improvements result in our community alarms systems migrating on to a digital system, which is imperative with the ISDN analogue/digital switchover taking effect in 2025. The switchover will make landlines redundant, meaning the old community alarm system will no longer be functional, hence the proactive improvement programme implemented to date.

Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic resulted in two years where the activity within our schemes was limited. This was due to the vulnerability of the residents we would potentially come in to contact with and our commitment to keep our tenants safe during uncertain times. As a result we have several schemes that still require upgrading.

Through the lifetime of the contract the partnership working between DBC and Tunstall has proved successful and enhanced the safety of our tenants within supported housing schemes. As part of the current specification new smoke alarms are installed and integrated in to the community alarm system. This extra layer of compliance results in the call centre being notified immediately if there is a smoke alarm activation. In addition, the new door control system has a camera allowing tenants to view who is requesting access to the building, thus improving the overall security of the building and individuals.

Portfolio Holder decision record sheet

Procurement process:

Tunstall are a market leader when it comes to community alarms and as such are on a variety of government frameworks where a direct award is a compliant option. DBC's remaining installation work could be satisfied by procuring a two-year contract and we have identified Procurement for Housing (PfH) as a framework that can enable this activity.

Within PfH's "Telecare & Telehealth" framework there are three lots where Tunstall are top ranked on two and second on the installation lot. A direct award is a compliant option that allows us to continue the relationship with Tunstall's installation team to ensure consistency with operatives and tenant engagement. We have worked closely with Tunstall over the years to develop a robust specification that best suits our tenants needs and offers value for money. In addition, future maintenance contracts will be less complicated if we take a uniform approach to installed equipment now.

The installation and maintenance of telecare equipment is specialist work and therefore requires a specialist contractor. Tunstall meet this requirement and allows consistency as they will be responsible for maintaining the equipment they have themselves installed. This allows for a quick and responsive service with stock readily available and also removes any issues around responsibility for parts in warranty.

The proposed rates for the contract will be linked to the tendered framework rates, a framework that Tunstall are score highly on both quality and cost. As Tunstall are the incumbent contractor a direct award allows us to maintain and continue the relationship and complete the planned works programme whilst maintaining existing equipment. However, the equipment is open-protocol and can be serviced by other contractors, meaning Tunstall will not have an unfair advantage when it comes to future tendering processes.

Finance:

The total value of the two-year contract for installations would be £1,000,000 with this split evenly across both years. This would be funded through the BM110 Capital M&E Contracted Works budget and monitored monthly by the HRA Accountant and Head of Compliance.

Contract Management:

A JCT Measured Term Contract will be the form of contract awarded and Fairthorn Farrell & Timms (FFT) will assist us as our CDM co-ordinator. The term of the contract is a maximum of two years and the Council will withhold the right to terminate the contract after one year. Contractual KPI's have already been established and can be adopted from the previous contract agreement.

Regular performance meetings will capture contractor performance and will be led by the Lead Surveyor – Electrical Works. Monthly valuations will be put forward by the contractor for completed works and payment will only be made once DBC are satisfied works are completed on time to a satisfactory standard and all relevant paperwork has been received.

Reports considered: (here reference can be made to specific documents)

Commercial Delivery Board – Community Alarm Installation and Maintenance Contract (10/03/23)

Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders consulted:

Portfolio Holder decision record sheet

Commercial Delivery Board
 Mark Pinnell – Assistant Director (Compliance)
 Ricky Lang – Head of Compliance
 Andrew Linden – Head of Commercial Development
 Matt Baxter – HRA Accountant

Financial comments:

There is a total budget of £1.5m for 2023-24 and similar expected for 2024-25 for M&E Capital works to cover the cost of Community Alarm Installation.

M Baxter
 Accountant.

Monitoring Officer comments:

Direct award of the contract is permitted by the procurement for housing framework agreement noted in the report and I therefore have no further comments to add.

Chief Financial Officer comments:

The Mechanical and Electrical capital budget will be monitored as part of the Corporate financial monitoring framework, the budget holder will need to ensure the service remain within the approved budget.

Implications:

Finance: The total value of the two-year contract for installations would be £1,000,000 with this split evenly across both years. This would be funded through the BM110 Capital M&E Contracted Works budget and monitored monthly by the HRA Accountant and Head of Compliance.

Risk: The Council's Community Alarm Contracts are a direct lifeline to our vulnerable tenants. This is a key contract for Dacorum due to the support it brings to our tenants and ensuring our tenants can feel safe and comfortable, whilst also living independently.

Value for money: A direct award is a compliant option that allows us to continue the relationship with Tunstall's installation team to ensure consistency with operatives and tenant engagement. We have worked closely with Tunstall over the years to develop a robust specification that best suits our tenants needs and offers value for money. In addition, future maintenance contracts will be less complicated if we take a uniform approach to installed equipment now.

Options considered and reasons for rejection:

Portfolio Holder's signature:

Date:

Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:

Portfolio Holder decision record sheet

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Date decision record sheet received from portfolio holder: 18/04/2023	
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Date of expiry of call-in period: 03/05/2023	
Date any call-in received or decision implemented:	