

Administration of the North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF) DN366375

REPORT TO; Assistant Director Policy, Partnerships and Communities in consultation with Executive Member for executive member for corporate services

DECISION DATE: 26 October 2022

SUPPORTING ANNEX; This report includes a supporting Annex which contains exempt information as described in paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Authority agrees to the increase of the admin fees for FFBS for the 2 year extension period to ensure the continuation of the service for the remaining term. It is also recommended to approve the variation for the PayPoint changes.

BACKGROUND TO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION

The North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF) provides practical support for vulnerable people, for example, those fleeing domestic abuse, or those with complex mental health issues and individuals who might have recently experienced a crisis and need a few basic essential items to help cope.

Beneficiaries may apply for up to two awards of emergency food and / or utility top-up in any 12-month period. For other items provided under the Fund, a maximum entitlement of two items may also be awarded within the same 12-month period, only one of which may be a white good item. This has been increased to four awards for the time being due to additional grant funding. Beyond the direct voucher awards and emergency items, NYLAF operates the fund using Authorised Agents – who are frontline charities, or council teams and services that offer more in depth short or long-term specialist support.

The 2 year extension was approved for this contract (from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2022) in January 2022. Since that approval the provider has come back to the council seeking an increase to their admin fees for the extension period and the signing of a variation for to increase auditing with PayPoint whose service they use as part of this contract. The current provider is performing in line with the contractual obligations and service specification. There are regular contract meetings with the Provider meeting all the KPI's set for them.

The proposed variation has been through the council's governance and an Addendum to the original Gateway 4 report has been submitted and approved by the Procurement Assurance Board. The report is included in the Annex at Appendix 1.

LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE

Regulation 72(1)(e) of The Public Contract Regulations 2015 allows for a variation of the contract. There is an argument that the additional money would amount to a non-substantial variation but there is a risk of proceeding with the variation due to the cumulative effect of all the variations increasing the overall contract value. It is possible that other suppliers who originally did not bid may have done so if the total contract value was over £500,000. However, the risk of challenge to this is low. Any variation that has been made has been to include a grant or scheme that was not in existence when the contract was originally procured.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Authority agrees to the increase of the admin fees for FFBS for the 2 year extension period to ensure the continuation of the service for the remaining term. It is also recommended to approve the variation for the PayPoint changes.