

CABINET

19 February 2024

Title: Social Infrastructure Contract 2024-2028	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
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Accountable Directors: Rhodri Rowlands, Director of Community Participation and Prevention and Sal Asghar, Director of Strategy	
Accountable Executive Team Director: Fiona Taylor, Chief Executive	
Summary: <p>This report recommends that the Council proceeds with a procurement exercise to commission a social infrastructure support service. "Social infrastructure" can mean different things to different people, but it is broadly the environment in which the voluntary and community sector (VCSE) operates in, and the places and spaces people visit to connect to others. Due to the significance of the contract in how the Council works with the VCSE sector locally it is presented to Cabinet for approval, despite the four-year value of the contract being below the £500,000 procurement threshold.</p> <p>In the current financial climate, the Council is looking at all spend closely to consider whether it is absolutely essential and to ensure it will provide value for money. Alongside this the VCSE sector locally is facing similar financial pressures in supporting our residents. The decision to continue to fund a social infrastructure support service is recognition of the vital role the VCSE play in the borough and that this relationship is based on an equal partnership. The issues facing our borough and our residents can only be tackled collectively with everyone playing their part. The social infrastructure support contract allows the council and VCSE partners to engage effectively with each other, the VCSE sector to come together to support one another and our residents, and continue to work together to tackle our most pressing issues.</p> <p>In 2019, the Council adopted a new way of working with the voluntary and community sector. To facilitate a change in relationship between the Council and the VCSE, as well as between the Council and residents, a social infrastructure contract was developed and commissioned to provide a social infrastructure support service for the borough. The Council hopes to build on and continue the progress made in the last four years through recommissioning the contract.</p> <p>The Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2026 prioritises our relationship with people to ensure that no one is left behind. A strong social infrastructure:</p>	

- Supports more people at the earliest opportunity, making it easier for residents to get help within their own neighbourhoods and communities, ensuring that **residents are supported during the current Cost of Living Crisis.**
- Know their communities well and can support a diverse range of residents, ensuring that more **residents are safe, protected, and supported at their most vulnerable.**
- Makes it easier for people to help each other and resolve their own problems, creating resilient communities where **residents live healthier, happier, independent lives for longer.**
- Creates more opportunities to participate and for partners to provide training to local people means that more **residents prosper from good education, skills development, and secure employment.**
- Helps us to share power with our communities, meaning that more people can have a say over the things that matter to them, and that **residents benefit from inclusive growth and regeneration.**

It is essential that the Council and partners work collaboratively with the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector (VCSE) to fulfil the ambitions set out in the Corporate Plan, including the emergent localities model we are committed to. While much progress has been made over the past few years, more is required over the next few years to support the social infrastructure in Barking and Dagenham to promote a strong community.

The ongoing financial pressures that the Council faces are not going away. A thriving social infrastructure plays a vital role in alleviating pressure from Council services as more people are able to access help within their communities before they reach crisis point.

The COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis exemplified how strong relationships between the Council and VCSE can enable more people to access the help they need, when they need it. The Localities model will build and deepen this and the social infrastructure contract supports that work.

Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of a contract for a social infrastructure support service in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, the Strategic Director, Resources and the Head of Legal, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contract and all other necessary or ancillary agreements to fully implement and effect the proposals.

Reason(s)

Cabinet should agree these recommendations to further develop the Council's approach to supporting the vital role of the VCSE sector in achieving a shared long-term, resident-led vision for the borough. As detailed in the summary, a strong social infrastructure will help the Council achieve its Corporate Plan priorities, ensuring that more residents can

access help in their communities and help each other to lead more independent and thriving lives.

As the Council experiences more financial strain, a joined-up and supported social infrastructure will enable more VCSE groups and organisations to prevent residents from reaching crisis point and in turn, reaching the Council's over-subscribed front door, saving the Council money in the long-term. Increased connection between the VCSE and Council means that resources and knowledge can be shared as we work together towards similar goals to help the diverse community of Barking and Dagenham.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 "Social infrastructure" can mean different things to different people, but it is broadly the environment in which the voluntary and community sector (VCSE) operates in, and the places and spaces people visit to connect to others.
- 1.2 Our borough and the context within which the Council operates has changed radically over the last decade. A major shift in population demographics, coupled with austerity, the pandemic, and a cost-of-living crisis has forced us to think differently about how we work.
- 1.3 The Council has endeavoured to enact a shift from a paternalistic way of working with residents to one of partnership. Key to this is a belief that residents are core to making the borough "a place people are proud of and want to live, work, study and stay".
- 1.4 In 2017, we engaged with over 3,000 residents to develop a long-term vision for the borough, now known as the Borough Manifesto. Core to all themes of safety, skills and education, community engagement, employment, environment, and health and wellbeing is a thriving social infrastructure and support for individuals to help themselves.
- 1.5 Delivering better outcomes for residents is a shared endeavour. Many local organisations, institutions, partners, and stakeholders are equally signed up to delivering the Borough Manifesto vision and aspirations.
- 1.6 The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to look past traditional and out-dated service-delivery models aimed at 'meeting needs' to work together with the VCSE and residents to change lives for the better around a clear shared purpose -. BD-CAN, set up in the first few months of the pandemic, utilised existing strong relationships and rapidly strengthened a volunteer network to help residents access food, medical supplies and vital welfare and well-being connections through lockdown.
- 1.7 Likewise, the cost-of-living alliance, built upon this collaborative system to set up a Localities Model for residents to access help within their locality through community groups, local businesses, and through people. The model connected over 2,500 people in its first year and has prevented many from needing support from the Council. Both demonstrate the value of the borough's social infrastructure and the collective potential and impact that can be made when we work together. Building on the work of the past few years, we are now seeking to re-tender the social

infrastructure support service contract to further develop this work over the next four years.

2 National and local landscape

National

- 2.1 Charity organisations are facing challenging times. Continued reductions in public funding, changes to commissioning, growing demand for services, the increased complexity of the issues that people face and, in some instances, dents to its reputation have all placed considerable strain on the sector.
- 2.2 There are an estimated 700 VCSE bodies in the UK, and the majority are likely to be social infrastructure bodies (Cohen and Kane, 2023). The social sector has witnessed a spending increase of 20% in the last ten years, but national and local infrastructure body spending has experienced very little change in the same period, with the number of VCSE infrastructure bodies declining since 2006 (ibid).
- 2.3 Boundaries between the roles of the public sector, business, and the voluntary and community sector are shifting with, notably, a rapidly growing social enterprise sector. According to Social Enterprise UK, there are over 100,000 social enterprises in the UK, employing about two million people and contributing an estimated £60 billion to the economy. 47% of these are under five years old (Social Enterprise UK, 2023).
- 2.4 In the 2021 report 'No Going Back' by Social Enterprise UK, the evidence showed that despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and austerity, social enterprises continue to develop economically, socially, and environmentally (Social Enterprise UK 2021).
- 2.5 In the UK Government's 2018 Civil Society Strategy, civil society is referred to in loose terms as "all individuals and organisations, when undertaking activities with the primary purpose of delivering social value, independent of state control" (Cabinet Office, 2018). The strategy highlights the importance of developing thriving communities to develop social value with five foundational priorities of people, places, the social sector, the private sector, and the public sector.
- 2.6 There is widespread agreement both within the UK Civil Society Strategy and beyond that rebuilding our democracy and responding to a rapidly changing age must involve everyone to allow civil society groups more decision-making and control, and to devote time and resources to build trust (Unwin, 2018).
- 2.7 The pandemic increased the number of large one-off grants, but these grants are unlikely to be sustained. For Black and minoritised infrastructure organisations, structural inequalities have made it harder for such groups to access funding and over 50 have closed since 2010 (Kane, Cohen 2023).
- 2.8 In real terms, the social infrastructure of the UK remains a similar size today as it did ten years ago but is now supporting a larger voluntary sector with an increased diversity of workload. Austerity has impacted funding available from local and national government, making the sector a fragile environment where infrastructure bodies must do more with less.

Local

- 2.9 The social sector in Barking and Dagenham is smaller than other London boroughs, with a turnover of £24.5 million annually, and 225 registered charities (Little 2023). However, there are an estimated 5,000 civil society groups made up of around 46,000 people.
- 2.10 According to the National Lottery Fund, the strength of funding applications from Barking and Dagenham VCSE groups has improved in recent years, in line with the timescales of the current social infrastructure support contract in operation. This has had a positive influence on the amount of funding brought into the borough.
- 2.11 Research conducted by the BD_Collective in 2023 asked residents where they receive a “warm welcome in their community” and “who and where did they turn to for help”. Most respondents included friends, family, and neighbours in their answer as well as faith groups, cafés, shops, and hairdressers. 75% of Barking and Dagenham residents give to charities and just under 20% are involved in social action (Little 2023). However, two thirds of residents don’t feel they are able to influence decisions in their community and only 64% of residents feel “a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood” which is the lowest in London (ibid).

The journey since 2018

- 2.12 In 2019, the Council adopted a new VCSE strategy to commit to shifting the relationship with voluntary sector partners and residents from one of paternalism to partnership. The vision focused around three goals: increasing participation; enabling and embedding relationships based on trust; and building the sector’s capacity.
- 2.13 In line with this strategy, the Council commissioned a social infrastructure support service on a three-year plus one basis, to provide support to VCSE groups in the borough to work more collaboratively, access funding together, to set up a local giving model, and to increase volunteering opportunities. This contract was awarded to the BD_Collective.
- 2.14 The BD_Collective has since grown significantly in respect of its reach, activity, supported networks and contribution to borough wide issues of shared importance. Examples are highlighted below and in the Together We Lead 2023 report, which can be found in Appendix 4.
- 2.15 The BD_Collective adopted a set of core values – which were connection, trust, shared accountability, and shared power. These shared values have since bound all its work and have been further used to underpin collective initiatives such as the Cost of Living Alliance and Locality Model.
- 2.16 In 2017, the Council part-funded the ‘Every One Every Day’ project: which set a bold aspiration to become the biggest participation platform in the country. This project supported over 10,000 residents in over 80,000 hours of activity (Every One Every Day *Places to Practise* 2023). The project has now closed its resident activity, but its legacy remains in the presence of social enterprises and civil society groups

and the distribution across the borough of various assets such as equipment, machinery and skills to a range of local VCSE groups.

- 2.17 The pandemic showed us what can be achieved when we put our traditional service delivery mindset to one side and work together for the benefit of residents. The BD-CAN model of food and medical support during lockdown built on existing relationships between the Council and VCSE and was set up quickly to ensure that as many residents in need of support could access it (over 30k people were supported), with the Collective playing its part in facilitating.
- 2.18 The Locality Model of cost-of-living support utilised the learnings and relationships of BD-CAN to set up networks for residents to access cost-of-living support in their locality, from VCSE groups and from each other and would not have been possible without the social infrastructure contract and the relationships it has supported and developed. The Locality Model has helped over 2,500 residents in its first year and prevented many from reaching crisis point and needing to access Council services. This is core to the ongoing development of the localities model that is being developed from across the Council with partners. In addition, the localities have established relationships with lead GP's and at the heart of community-led work to find new ways of addressing health inequalities in the borough. Examples of impactful work emerging through these include the community / GP led well-being clinics and pop-ups as well as various resident ideas that are being developed.
- 2.19 The BD_Collective has set up [networks](#) of partners and VCSE groups around several shared issues such as mental health, youth work, social isolation, early help, and sport. For example, the Early Help network has brought together seven organisations and brought in £960,000 of funding to the borough to create space for families with young people to support each other. The work of the networks is diverse but bound together by the shared values, linking people ready to put the benefit of the community ahead of their organisation.
- 2.20 The Food Network, also facilitated by the BD_Collective, has brought together organisations focusing on food poverty in the borough, adopting a consortia approach to £200,000 of funding. This funding has been used to develop a hot meals delivery service across Barking and Dagenham, and to fund a network lead.
- 2.21 The collaborations that the BD_Collective has facilitated have led to fewer local people going hungry, more people feeling connected to each other in their area, and helping health systems to understand and honour the power of community.
- 2.22 The Council also established a local endowment fund through CIL money, which is now managed by the ever-growing BD Giving. Over £1.67 million has been transferred by the Council and the group's investment policy was co-developed by a panel of 12 local people. Recently, grants of £25,000 were distributed to eight VCSE organisations to develop their ideas for social value in the borough. In June 2022, the Community Steering Group and LBBDD's Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Development presented their work at the Houses of Parliament.

3 Funding to VCSE

- 3.1 Barking and Dagenham historically has not been as successful as other boroughs in attracting external funding. This has been addressed in some ways, but there is

more to be done and an effective social infrastructure locally is core to this. This includes the work of BD Giving BDCVS, BEC and BD_Collective and BD_Collective has provided an effective mechanism for coordinating conversations and relationships. This approach over the last few years has secured over £2.5 million worth of funding into the borough, which has supported local VCSE groups.

3.2 Between 2019 and 2023, 770 grants worth £174 million were received by local VCSE groups from funders using the 360Giving GrantNav tool. The most popular funder was the National Lottery Community Fund, with 159 grants, followed by the Department for Education and the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport with 116 and 81 grants respectively. A detailed breakdown of grant funding from 2018-2023 can be found in Appendix 4, providing specific values of grants over £100,000. BD Giving conducted research into grant funding that the local VCSE have received in recent years. It was recognised that organisations and groups find it difficult to successfully access funding and investment. This is typically due to them being small and lacking in some of the professional skills and expertise required to make high quality bids which demonstrate outcomes. BD Giving provides an important layer of support to help VCSE organisations access funders and funding.2.21

3.3 Desk research was conducted to understand the landscape of social infrastructure support across other London boroughs. A table detailing the funding given to social infrastructure support as well as VCSE grant funding is provided below. As shown below, the approach to funding varies significantly across boroughs.

Borough	Social Infrastructure funding per year	Other grant funding
Barking and Dagenham (current landscape)	£100,000	£300,000 NCIL and smaller incidental grants plus Commissioned contracts across the Council.
Greenwich	£175k over 4 years (2023-27) -£57k per annum	£3,665,000 over 4 years (including £100k per annum for community centres)
Hounslow	£130,000 per annum	Unknown
Kensington and Chelsea	£1,645 invested in external capacity building support to the VCSE in 2022-2023.	£23 million in total, including £15.7m in contracts
Lewisham	£180,000 including £40,000 for a community directory. In addition, 3 full time equivalent fundraising posts hosted in VCSE orgs in Lewisham -cost: £150,000 per annum	£1.4M main programme, £620k social prescribing (BCF), £325k for arts and culture.
Oldham	£270,500	£550,000 per annum for wider social infrastructure and in addition small grants schemes funded annually.
Redbridge	£330,000 including £270,000 for anchor institutions (one being the CVS)	Unknown
Southwark	£401,000	Unknown

4. Proposed Procurement Strategy

4.1 Outline specification of the works, goods or services being procured

4.1.1 The Council seeks a provider for a social infrastructure support service on a three year plus one year basis. The provider will offer support for VCSE groups across Barking and Dagenham in the following areas:

- Develop strong networks of organisations and places across the borough that act as gateways to information, advice, and support.
- Create spaces for shared learning and practices to support smaller organisations to grow their capacity and reach a wider range of residents.
- Work alongside the Council to ensure that there is VCSE representation at boards and committees to enable wider representation of communities in policymaking.
- Help social infrastructure groups to work together and with statutory partners towards common goals, understanding that we are stronger when we work in collaboration.

4.2 Estimated Contract Value, including the value of any uplift or extension period

4.2.1 The contract value is estimated at £100,000 per annum, for a period of four years on three years plus one year extension basis, totalling £400,000. This includes management and staff costs. There will be no possibility for uplift.

4.3 Duration of the contract, including any options for extension

4.3.1 The contract will run for three years with a possible one-year extension at the sole discretion of the Council.

4.4 Is the contract subject to (a) the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or (b) Concession Contracts Regulations 2016? If Yes to (a) and contract is for services, are the services for social, health, education or other services subject to the Light Touch Regime?

4.4.1 Yes

4.5 Recommended procurement procedure and reasons for the recommendation

4.5.1 An open procurement procedure is recommended to allow multiple organisations to bid for the contract. This also creates the opportunity for a new provider to come forward with a fresh perspective and experience, and to offer something different to the last four years. An open process should increase trust levels towards the Council, as it shares power with multiple organisations rather than maintaining funding within one organisation. While any UK organisation will be eligible, the method statement will prioritise local relationships and knowledge.

4.6 The contract delivery methodology and documentation to be adopted

4.6.1 The Council's standard contract terms and conditions shall be used for the provision of this support service contract.

4.7 Outcomes, savings and efficiencies expected as a consequence of awarding the proposed contract

- 4.7.1 The outcomes of the contract will be delivered through a collaborative approach to working with Council, partner, and VCSE colleagues. A stronger and more connected social sector is expected through increased support for networked approaches and diverse representation of organisations on decision-making boards.
- 4.7.2 The Council can expect to save money in the long-term as more VCSE partners are equipped with the tools and resources to help more residents in their communities. This will have a positive knock-on effect on overstretched Council services as the number of people accessing them decreases with more people able to resolve their problems through the community and with each other.
- 4.7.3 Better outcomes for residents will be achieved with more joined up working, as civil society groups have strong connections with specific communities that a centralised system simply cannot replicate. When a seat at the table is given to these groups, we are collectively able to pool our resources and respond to problems in the best interests of residents.
- 4.7.4 The provider will provide quarterly updates in the form of an activity tracker, which will detail how work has progressed in the last quarter. The activity tracker could include for example: new network that has been set up, what funding has been accessed, and progress on consortium approaches. It will also detail how many groups, and which ones are actively involved in each network.

4.8 Criteria against which the tenderers are to be selected and contract is to be awarded

- 4.8.1 The evaluation criteria used for the tendering selection process will be allocated on a quality: price: social value basis, with a ratio of 70:20:10.
- 4.8.2 The weighting of the quality evaluation will be split into 80% method statement and 20% presentation. The evaluation will be a two-stage process and only providers who meet the minimum method statement quality standard of 50% out of the possible 80% will be considered to make a presentation and have their pricing schedule evaluated for the award of the contract.

4.9 How the procurement will address and implement the Council's Social Value policy

- 4.9.1 Barking and Dagenham Council is working to deliver wider social, economic, and environmental benefits in the borough. Together with partners, the Council wants to do all it can to deliver for residents in the context of limited resources. That means seeking to work with organisations who share the Council's values and commitment to the borough and using resources as efficiently as possible.
- 4.9.2 The Council is committed to sharing power and resources to deliver a wide range of benefits to local communities, building capacity within the social infrastructure to

allow more organisations the space to get their voices heard and to influence change in the borough.

4.9.3 The provider will help to improve the lives of residents by:

- Developing strong networks of organisations and places across the borough that act as gateways to information, advice, and support.
- Creating spaces for shared learning and practices to support smaller organisations to grow their capacity and reach a wider range of residents.
- Working alongside the Council to ensure that there is VCSE representation at boards and committees to enable wider representation of communities in policymaking.
- Help social infrastructure groups to work together and with statutory partners towards common goals, understanding that we are stronger when we work in collaboration.

4.10 **How the Procurement will impact/support the Net Zero Carbon Target and Sustainability**

4.11 The provider will be based within the borough which will keep transport emissions for staff to a minimum.

4.12 The provider will work to establish more collaboration between VCSE organisations to help tackle challenges jointly, such as those of an environmental nature. The contractor will support groups aiming to improve conservation efforts, increase civil society involvement in parks and green spaces, and work alongside Council efforts to encourage more resident involvement in Net Zero plans and activity through the Citizens' Alliance Network.

4.13 As climate catastrophes increase in the borough, the VCSE sector will play a crucial role in supporting residents in ensuring the safety of their lives, their homes, and supporting them through challenging circumstances.

4.14 The provider will work with the Council to progress a borough assets policy. Through this, community groups will have shared access to spaces. By encouraging collaboration of asset use, fewer buildings will be used, and emissions will be cut as multiple groups use the same space.

5. **Options Appraisal**

5.1 **Option 1 (PREFERRED OPTION): Commission a VCSE organisation(s) to deliver the social infrastructure support at £100,000 per year.**

5.1.1 We propose the commissioning of a social infrastructure contract to lead the continuous change towards a thriving VCSE with stronger outcomes for residents. This would involve closer working between public, private, and civic institutions to increase resident participation and wellbeing to achieve the Borough Manifesto targets.

5.1.2 This option will allow multiple groups to apply for the contract, offering competition and allowing the potential for a new provider to step forward with fresh perspective and experience, while still providing scope for existing providers to bid.

5.1.3 This option will contribute towards demand pressures on Council services as people access help within their communities, further the co-development of locality infrastructure and capacity, increase feelings of trust towards the Council through joint working, support more residents through challenging times as VCSE groups have a wider reach than the Council alone, and help fewer people reach crisis point.

5.1.4 An increase to the £100k per year contract value was considered but ruled out as unviable given the Council's overall financial position.

5.2 Option 2: Fund a social infrastructure support service at half the cost i.e., £50,000 per year

5.2.1 This option is unfavourable because of the great ambition the borough has for working towards the goals set out in the Borough Manifesto. A reduction in funding would inevitably lead to cuts to the work that can be achieved, would impact the relationships between the Council and local VCSE partners and undermine the capacity and ability of the sector to meaningfully engage in initiatives of shared interest.

5.2.2 The financial strain already felt by VCSE organisations due to inflation and funding scarcity following the pandemic, combined with a growing population means the social sector is already trying to do more with less. A reduction in funding would make the targets unattainable and necessitate an upheaval of what is set out in the specification.

5.3 Option 3: Do not fund.

5.3.1 This option should be rejected because the social infrastructure in Barking in Dagenham has undergone a change in landscape over the past few years and continues to require support from a centralised body to ensure resources, knowledge, and best practice are shared between groups and organisations across the borough.

5.3.2 This option would save the Council £400,000 over four years. However, deciding against funding a social infrastructure support service will decrease resources within the social sector, meaning fewer help people can access help in their communities. This would likely also cause significant financial implications elsewhere as pressure on Council services increases.

5.3.3 This option may also decrease trust in the Council as a partner as VCSE groups lack the opportunities to collaborate and connect through joint projects and discussions.

6. Waiver

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Consultation

7.1 Two workshops, online and in person, with representatives from the VCSE sector were held in November 2023. These workshops were combined with an online

survey which ran for four weeks through the Council's One Borough Voice platform. A total of 12 representatives from the VCSE offered feedback at the workshops or through the survey. The questions and feedback discussed in these workshops and the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

7.2 A consultation workshop with senior Council officers was also held in December 2023, including officers from Public Health, Culture and Heritage, Strategy, Education, and Commissioning. A summary of the questions and feedback gathered through this workshop can be found in Appendix 2.

7.3 The proposals in this report were considered and endorsed by the Executive Management Team at its meeting on 25th of January 2024.

8. Corporate Procurement

Implications completed by: Sam Woolvett, Category Manager, Resources

8.1 An open tender is likely to yield the best value for money for this requirement and is suitable for this level of spend.

8.2 This approach complies with LBBD's Contract Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. As the value of this procurement exceeds the threshold for services under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations), standstill periods will be adhered to.

8.3 Corporate Procurement will be managing the procurement process and will work with the service area to draft the tender documents.

9. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Nurul Alom, Finance Manager

9.1 The award of a 4-year (3+1) Social Infrastructure Contract is outlined in the business case above. In taking this course of action the Director of Community Participation and Prevention needs to be satisfied that this provides best value for the Council. The Participation and Engagement Service has budget of £100,000 for the Social Infrastructure, and the annual contract cost will be contained within this budget envelope. There will be no uplift in the contract period.

10. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Lauren Van Arendonk, Principal Lawyer Contracts

10.1 This report seeks to approve the procurement of a contract for a social infrastructure support service in accordance with the proposals set out herein. The proposed procurement route is via an open procurement. The anticipated value of the total contract, being a 3+1-year format, is £400,000.

10.2 The open procurement must follow a compliant exercise in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Council's Contract Rules and the procurement strategy set out in the Procurement Strategy Report.

10.3 In accordance with r 59.2(a), the contract must be sealed as it is over the value of £250,000. Legal will be on side to assist with this and prepare any terms and conditions as is necessary.

11. Other Implications

11.1 Risk and Risk Management

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Category	Mitigation
Delay to/failed procurement process	Low	Medium	Low	A realistic timeline has been set for this procurement process, allowing two months between provider selection and the commencement of the contract.
No tender received	Low	High	Medium	Barking and Dagenham has a high number of VCSE organisations in the borough, many of whom are aware and/or have been involved in the work of the BD_Collective (current holders of the contract) over the last few years and are keen to remain involved and for some, step up to take on the contract. Interest has already been recognised.
Successful provider is unable to deliver the service	Low	Low	Low	During the initial few months of contract delivery, regular check-ins will be held with the provider to understand progress and any challenges or setbacks, and to support the provider. It is likely that a consortium bid to the contract will come forward which, if successful, would mean that multiple groups would be responsible for the contract and hence, lessening the pressure on any sole organisation.
Contract award decision challenged by unsuccessful provider(s)	Low	Low	Low	The procurement process will be carried out in line with Council's contract rules and UK Public Contracts Regulations. Legal and corporate procurement will be consulted, and documentation will be kept for the required amount of time.

11.2 **TUPE, other staffing, and trade union implications** – Eligible staff currently employed in the service will, in the event of change in service provision, transfer their employment to the new provider under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2014. All TUPE information will be made available. Responsibility for assessing TUPE requirements will remain with the bidding providers.

11.3 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** – The proposed Social Infrastructure Contract aims to create the conditions and environment that will strengthen partnership working with VCSE to fulfil the ambitions set out in the Borough Manifesto and the Corporate Plan 2023-26. It also relevant to several of the principles set out in the Corporate Plan, that drive the way we work: working in partnership; engaging and facilitating co-production; and focusing on prevention and early intervention.

The Council's vision is to create and foster the conditions and opportunities for people to thrive here – and for our residents to live healthy, fulfilling lives for longer, with more choice and control, better financial resilience, in safe, supportive, and inclusive communities. In doing so, we are committed to leaving no-one behind, placing issues of equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness at the heart of everything we do. VCSE organisations are well-placed to support this vision, through their close relationships with our residents, to better understand their experiences and needs, and help to address inequalities of access or outcome. An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 5) has been undertaken, which specifies the positive impacts the contract will have on residents and community groups with protected characteristics, and outlines steps to mitigate any potential negative impacts.

11.4 **Health Issues** – The Barking and Dagenham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 sets out an aim to 'develop approaches that better enable and empower local communities to shape and contribute to how the strategy tackles health inequalities and improves health and well-being on an ongoing basis': with a commitment to co-production. It also explicitly recognises the assets within communities, such as the skills and knowledge, social networks, local groups, and community organisations, as building blocks for good health. The ongoing social infrastructure procurement will be a core enabler to achieve this; and lack of funding may challenge this.

11.5 **Net Zero/Sustainability** - The Council is committed to becoming a net zero local authority by 2030, requiring it to reduce its current annual operational footprint of an estimated 119,000 tCO₂e. 77% of those emissions come from 'indirect' Scope 3 emissions which the Council is not in control of, with 53% of that coming from contractors, supply chains and service providers.

Given the prominent role VCS sector plays in community engagement on issues relating to fuel poverty, energy efficiency advice and general sustainability initiatives, the Council should expect suppliers of the service evidence the organisations' own carbon reduction credentials. This can be through commitments underpinned in existing net zero strategies the provider has adopted or a commitment to engage with the Council in the development of one over the early stages of the contract. Incidentally, the provider should already be looking at the sustainability KPIs which Procurement have set.

11.6 **Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery** – In the specification, it will be a requirement for organisations applying to have a business continuity and disaster recovery plan in place. If an organisation doesn't already have a plan and are successfully awarded the contract, they will need to develop one with the Council within first three months of the contract.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

Good Growth by Design: Connective Social Infrastructure. Mayor of London.

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/connective_social_infrastructure_0_0.pdf

List of appendices:

- **Appendix 1:** The questions used in the consultation with VCSE representatives, both online and in person, with feedback summarised.
- **Appendix 2:** The questions used in the consultation with Council officers, with feedback summarised.
- **Appendix 3:** Grants in B&D, 2018-2023
- **Appendix 4:** Together-We-Lead
- **Appendix 5:** Equality Impact Assessment