

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The Council currently delivers, and/or commissions, a number of services from a variety of providers to support people with hearing and visual impairments. These services have been commissioned on a piecemeal basis and consequently they do not provide an integrated pathway and do not connect well together. The Council provided element of this service is a small isolated part of the overall provision and as a consequence it is disconnected from the other providers. In addition it has been difficult to guarantee a consistently reliable service as there is no cover for holidays and sickness absence. As a result of the lack of continuity and connectedness the Council has attracted criticism from the visually impaired community.

In order to address the concerns raised by the visually impaired community the Council has carried out a review of sensory services. Linked to this the Cabinet meeting held on the 3rd July 2015 considered recommendations regarding savings following from the Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) sector review. Members considered and agreed a budget reduction of £152,769 relating to small grants paid by Adult Social Care to the VCF sector. This budget reduction impacts upon several of the organisations that provide services that support people with a sensory impairment. Thus it is recommended that current services are decommissioned and a single Hearing Impairment/Visual Impairment service is commissioned so that the required savings are realised and the service provides a clearer and more consistent Pathway. In addition it is proposed to commission the service on a Merseyside City Region basis to ensure that by aggregating Council budgets with other neighbouring local authorities, and jointly contracting a single contract to cover all sensory services, we will secure a better, more flexible and cost effective service.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Two other options have been considered:

- Continuing to grant aid existing services at a reduced level of grant – not recommended as this would continue the current disconnection in service delivery and the reduced funding would either make services unsustainable or would at least increase the gaps in service delivery.
- Commission a new single service on a Sefton only footprint – not recommended because whilst this option would address the issue of better joining up services, it is questionable whether a cost-effective, comprehensive and sustainable service could be provided within the reduced Sefton-only funding available.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The total budget available to fund the sensory service is £132,600

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial
Legal
Human Resources There are potential TUPE implications attached to the re-commissioning of these services
Equality 1. No Equality Implication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains <input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

The commissioning of a single sensory service has the potential to provide an improved service giving better value for money through economies of scale and from the input of different providers. The impact on service users will be improved access to sensory services by way of a single point of access that will enable service users to be signposted to the most appropriate service that can meet their individual needs.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Chief Finance Officer (FD.4115/16) and the Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD.3398/16) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Consultation has been undertaken with those organisations affected by the VCF Review.

A Provider event has been held in November 2015 to advise existing and potential providers of the nature of the proposed services.

Service User Events were held in January and February 2016 to advise existing and potential service users of the nature of the proposed service.

Initial informal consultation with Sefton Council staff who may be affected by the proposed changes to services has been undertaken and reported to the JTU on 2nd March 2016. Further formal consultation will be undertaken when any potential impact is clearer.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Background Papers:

LCR Service user feedback
Sefton MBC Service user consultation summary

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1. Sefton Council currently provides a rehabilitation and advice service for people with a visual impairment. The service is delivered by one full time Rehabilitation Officer for Visual Impairment (ROVI) who conducts assessments, and two Community Care Practitioners (CCP) who devote a total 25 hours per week to delivering low level support for both visual and hearing Impairment.
- 1.2. Due to the low staffing levels it has been difficult to guarantee a consistently reliable service and there have been gaps due to staff holiday/sickness absence. These gaps have been covered by spot purchasing from external providers but this has not been sufficient to deliver a quality service. As a consequence the Council has attracted criticism from the visually impaired community.
- 1.3. In addition there is an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) employed by Bradbury Fields and based at Aintree Hospital, plus other service level agreements with Merseyside Society for Deaf People, Galloways, RNIB, Christopher Grange, Deaf Blind UK and Sense which have been in place for some time and have simply been continued each year. All of the agreements stipulate a 90 day notice period.
- 1.4. The following table gives a breakdown of the current and future budgets for sensory services, including those organisations/budgets (**in bold**) considered by the VCF review:

Service Name	Service Type	Provider	15/16 Budget	16/17 Budget
Sensory Team	VI assessments	Sefton Council	£37,450	£37,450
Sensory Team	HI & low level VI assessments	Sefton Council	£22,050	£22,050
ECLO	VI assessment	Bradbury Fields	£15,900	£15,900 Part of Better Care Fund
Floating Comms guide	Service provision	Deafblind UK	£7,900	£7,900
Talking Books	Service provision	RNIB	£23,500	£23,500
SW	Specialist assessment	MSDP	£18,,600	£18,600
Galloways	Service provision	Galloways	£5,200	£2,600
VI Rehab	Intensive rehab	Christopher Grange	£4,600	£4,600
			Total Budget	£132,600

- 1.5. Toward the end of 2014 discussions took place with other Merseyside local authorities to explore the possibility of, and appetite for, a jointly funded single service covering the whole of Merseyside.
- 1.6. Further meetings have taken place and it is now proposed to jointly commission a service covering all sensory services with the following local authorities and with Liverpool City Council taking the lead on the procurement process.

1.7. The following table shows the total annual budget for each local authority with regard to sensory services.

Sefton	£132,600.
Liverpool	£726,917.00
Knowsley	£168,000.00
Halton	£144,085.00
Wirral	£126,000.00
Total available budget	£1,297,602

1.8. A service provider workshop took place at the end of November 2015 and this was followed by two service user events covering those with visual impairments and those with hearing impairments early in the 2016. The feedback from these three events will inform the service specification prior to invitation to tender being published on 18th April 2016. The proposed procurement schedule is shown below.

- Bidders Session Wednesday 6th April 2016
- ITT notice issued on 18th April 2016
- ITT closing date 17th May 2016
- Contract Awarded 29th July 2016
- Contract Start Date 31st October 2016 (allowing circa 12 weeks at the partners request for any TUPE)

1.9. Currently there is a 'soft' agreement amongst the commissioners for the following key areas to be considered. Work is on-going to strengthen this working agreement between the LCR Councils:

- Introduce a 'one-stop' sensory service with a strong focus on prevention, enablement and rehabilitation.
- Facilitate the integration of sensory services provision on a Liverpool City Region footprint, while considering the interface and interaction between and across both statutory and non-statutory services.
- Exploration of new models of person centred / outcome focused models of delivery, which are flexible and dynamic to meet the fluctuating need of individuals with a sensory impairment.
- Embrace the notion of innovation through the exploration of new technologies and equipment to support service provision and promote independence.
- Create a platform for the long-term development of sensory support services with a forward thinking approach.

2. The Intended Services:

2.1. It is intended to procure the new sensory service on a 3 year contract with an option of 2 x 1 year extensions.

2.2. Primarily the LCR are looking to procure services that support the following areas for people who have a sensory loss / impairment.

- Registration of impairment
- Statutory Assessment of Need
- Rehabilitation / Floating Support
- Provision of specialist aids for daily living

2.3. The Joint Commissioners Group is proposing a two tiered 'framework' approach in the recommissioning of sensory impairment support services for adults.

2.4. **Tier One – Single Point of Access:** This 'front door' service may be delivered by a single provider or a consortium that is suitably qualified to assess and support all service users who fall under the umbrella term of Sensory Impairment.

2.5. It is recommended that this should be a 'standard contract' tendered and based on either a set or maximum budget and anticipated volume of service users they are likely to support. This will then support the uniformity of the front line elements (social work assessment, sign-posting, duty function etc.) and promote the quality and equality of service delivery on a regional footprint.

2.6. The primary function of this role would be to carry out;

- Statutory Assessment of Need (where applicable) including statutory review of an individual's support plan.
- Social Work Intervention / Duty Support
- Administration of the Register
- Coordinate and navigate an individual (dependent on need) through services

2.7. Should the Tier One provider / consortia feature as a tier two provider in addition and offer services such as rehabilitation, interpretation etc. It is recommended that this should be capped at approximately 25% of the business to allow equal opportunity for each provider featuring on the flexible framework to provide services equitably.

2.8. **Tier Two - Sensory Support:** Providers who meet the pre-determined quality / price threshold as part of the tender process will feature on a flexible framework – this will in effect become a 'shopping list' where the preferred provider will work with services and individuals to develop their individual support plan.

2.9. Each Council will hold a contract with the providers featuring on this list and services will be invoiced directly with the commissioning authority.

2.10. Both Tier One and Tier Two will be funded from within the available budget of £132,600

Annex 1 – Summary of Relevant Demographic Data

The following tables have been taken from reports produced by the RNIB and analysed in conjunction with population data from the Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment.

Total number of people living with sight loss	2011	2020	2030
Number of people living with sight loss	9,980	11,570	13,990
Number of people living with severe sight loss	1,230	1,460	1,830
Estimated prevalence of sight loss	3.7%	4.1%	4.9%

Total number of people registered as moderate/severe or profound hearing impairment – 2014	Moderate or severe hear impairment	Profound hearing impairment
20-64	7,099	43
65-74	5,446	179
75-84	12,897	132
85 and over	6,388	326
Total	31,830	724
% of Total Sefton Population	11.62%	0.26%

Total number of people partially sighted or registered blind – 2014

0-17	Under 5
18-49	135
50-64	110
65-74	100
75+	720
Overall total	1,065
% of Total Sefton Population	0.39%