



Officer Decision Record – Key Decision

Key decisions taken by an officer are subject to the 5 day call in period from circulation to Members, and therefore the decision will be released for implementation following the call-in period and no call in being received

1. Cabinet date and copy resolution this key decision relates to

Cabinet approved the following recommendations on the 12th February 2025
(Forward Plan Ref CB 02/25/07)

1. That the undertaking of a procurement exercise for dedicated outreach support service and outreach provision for children with autism or communication and interaction needs provision as set out in the report now submitted be approved.
2. That the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education be authorised to commence the above procurement exercise.
3. That the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education be delegated authority to award, and take all ancillary actions reasonably arising, including implementation and mobilisation.
4. That the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) be authorised to complete and execute all requisite legal documentation arising from the above recommendations

2. Subject and details of the matter (to include reasons for the decision)

Notification that a procurement has been undertaken, and to seek approval to award contracts for SEND Neurodiverse Outreach Services. The procurement was lotted as follows:

Lot 1 -SEND Outreach Provision for Children with Neurodiverse Needs including Autism or Communication and Interaction Needs

Lot 2 -SEND Outreach Advice Line, Email Support and Training Offer for Staff Working with Children with Neurodiverse Needs including Autism or Communication and Interaction Needs

The whole life value of the contract is £744,000 for the maximum length of 48 months.

The evaluation was conducted by a multi-disciplinary panel and followed the process outlined in the procurement tender documentation. Following conclusion of the evaluation process:

Inspire Connected Communities Trust has been identified as the most advantageous tenderer for Lot 1. Approval is sought to award the contract for Lot 1 to this provider.

Axis Recruitment Limited has been identified the most advantageous tenderer for Lot 2. Approval is sought to award the contract for Lot 2 to this provider.

3. Decision being taken

That the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education approves the award of the contract as follows for a maximum of 48 months:

Lot 1 -SEND Outreach Provision for Children with Neurodiverse Needs including Autism or Communication and Interaction Needs, to be delivered by Inspire Communities Trust

Lot 2 - SEND Outreach Advice Line, Email Support and Training Offer for Staff Working with Children with Neurodiverse Needs including Autism or Communication and Interaction Needs, to be delivered by Axis Recruitment Ltd.

4. Is it an Urgent Decision? If yes, specify the reasons for urgency. Urgent decisions will require sign off by the relevant scrutiny chair(s) as not subject to call in.

No

5. Anticipated outcome(s)/benefits

The contract for the delivery of the SEND Neurodiverse Services is awarded via an open competition to Inspire Communities Trust and to Axis Recruitment Ltd for a maximum of 48 months.

Without this decision, the Council would not be able to deliver the commissioned support to professionals, and their parents and carers. It also supports strengthening our local services and inclusive culture ensuring sustainable approaches and improved inclusivity in local schools for children and young people. Children and young peoples outcomes will be positively impacted on as a result of the services.

This will enable the Council, with its partners, to be better prepared for future SENDAP services inspections which without provision to support meeting identified needs could negatively impact on judgement, the impact that would have for the borough and children's outcomes.

6. Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision (this should be similar to original cabinet decision)

Do nothing - This would not improve inclusion in mainstream settings, outcomes for children and young people with autism or communication and interaction needs. It would also leave NELC and its partners at risk of a poor future SEND inspection.

Only deliver some of the functions described - This option wouldn't deliver the need that has been identified for all functions described.

7. Background documents considered (web links to be included and copies of documents provided for publishing)

[8.-Cabinet-Report-Recommissioning-Outreach-Services-A-and-C-needs.pdf](#)

[9.-Decision-Notice-Cabinet-12th-February-2025.pdf](#)

8. Does the taking of the decision include consideration of Exempt information? If yes, specify the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A and the reasons

No

9. Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Cabinet Member who was consulted by the officer which relates to the decision (in respect of any declared conflict of interest, please provide a note of dispensation granted by the Council's Chief Executive)

No conflicts of interest have been declared.

10. Monitoring Officer Comments (Monitoring Officer or nominee)

The decision is consistent with the will and expectation of Cabinet. The procurement exercise has been conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations and been supported by relevant officers.

11. Section 151 Officer Comments (Deputy S151 Officer or nominee)

The contract award is within the original tender value and in line with previous cabinet decision.

12. Human Resource Comments (Head of People and Culture or nominee)

There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

13. Risk Assessment (in accordance with the Report Writing Guide)

A risk exists in not being able to deliver improvement activities contributing to successful delivery of the SENDAP and Education and Inclusion strategies, improving outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children with complex needs in the borough.

Improving outcomes for children and young people is a priority and risks these will not be improved or at an acceptable rate.

If children are unable to be supported in mainstream settings there is significant risk further demands will be placed on more costly specialist placements and services, some of which will be out of borough due to sufficiency of specialist places. This places further financial strain on Council budgets and the Dedicated Schools Grant, and additional risks to children who are not educated in their own NEL community including increased safeguarding risks.

There are significant reputational risks as by not delivering these services could significantly impact the attainment, health and wellbeing of children and young people who require these SEND services. The Council also risks further reputational

damage with local partners and stakeholders such as schools, academies, parents, carers children and young people, and key partners, if provision is not available.

14. Has the Cabinet Tracker been updated with details of this decision?

Yes

15. Decision Maker(s):

Name: Ann – Marie Matson

Title: Director of Children's Services

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 29.07.25

16. Consultation carried out with Portfolio Holder(s):

Name: Councillor Cracknell

Title: Portfolio Holder for Children and Education

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 29th July 2025

17. If the decision is urgent then consultation should be carried out with the relevant Scrutiny Chair/Mayor/Deputy Mayor

Name:

Title:

Signed:

Dated:

Key Decisions are defined in the Constitution as:

A decision (whether taken collectively or individually by members) which is likely:

- (i) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

A decision will be considered financially significant if:

- (i) in the case of revenue expenditure, it results in the incurring of expenditure or making savings of £350,000 or greater;
- (ii) in the case of capital expenditure, the capital expenditure/savings are in excess of £350,000 or 20% of the total project cost, whichever is the greater

In determining whether a decision is significant in terms of its effect on an area comprising two or more wards, consideration shall be given to:

- (i) the number of residents/service users that will be affected in the wards concerned;
- (ii) the likely views of those affected (i.e. is the decision likely to result in substantial public interest)
- (iii) whether the decision may incur a significant social, economic or environmental risk.