

## **Report to Leader**

**Subject:** Transform Your Future Programme with Futures

**Date:** 11 April 2025

**Author:** Kathryn Banning, Economic Growth Officer

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose**

To seek approval to start a new contract with the Government Funded Organisation, Futures as part of a continuation of the 'Transform Your Future' Programme, which supports the economically inactive under the People and Skills theme of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) 2025-2026 Programme. UKSPF is time-limited funding and swift mobilisation is needed to meet the required outputs and outcomes, therefore an urgent decision is needed.

### **Key Decision**

#### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the Leader:**

- 1) Approves a new contract with Futures Advice Nottingham to allow services to be provided from April 2025 until 31 March 2026, in line with the UKSPF Y4 funding allocation.**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1** A joint commission was carried out by Nottinghamshire County Council including other District and Borough's, resulting in the formation of a Call Off Contract 'TYF Call Off Contract 2023\_25', commencing on the 1 October 2023 and ending on 31 March 2025. The value of this contract to Gedling Borough Council was £200,000.00. Due to the effective working

of Futures over the last few years the service has been fine tuned to the needs of Gedling residents. It is proposed to enter into a further contract. The new contract would cover UKSPF Y4 until 31 March 2026, at a cost of £105,000.00.

- 1.2 The contract provides the provision of services to support the economically inactive residents of the borough, through close working relations with key stakeholders such as the DWP (Arnold Jobcentre). This is achieved through one-to-one appointments, group workshops and online sessions, enabling participants to develop essential life skills, access learning courses and gain qualifications. Employment opportunities, volunteering and accessing the benefits system are also explored.
- 1.3 The process to procure a new contract has been initiated by the announcement of UKSPF Y4 funds. As the previous contract expired on 31 March 2025 a new contract value would need to be cumulative totally £305,000.00. Therefore this new contract with this same supplier would exceed the statutory threshold for goods and services which is £213,000.00.
- 1.4 The Council has several options available to it, including:
  - a) Do nothing and not proceed with delivery of the service for UKSPF Y4;
  - b) Go out to tender as part of a procurement process and award a new contract to deliver the service.
  - c) Direct award to Futures under the conditions detailed within the report.

Option a) would leave the Council without the ability to offer support for the economically inactive within the community, who are furthest away from the job market and in need of intervention.

Option b) would take time to establish, causing disruption to service delivery. Any new provider would need to re-engage and familiarise itself with economically inactive residents within a limited timeframe of opportunity, due to the twelve-month funding window as part of the UKSPF Y4 extension. There is also a risk that other suppliers may not show interest, due to the highlighted time constraints.

Option c) Futures have an existing case load of economically inactive participants from within the Gedling community that have been receiving support. They have also successfully delivered the service to support residents as part of the UKSPF 2022-25 programme, a breakdown of this can be seen in the 'TYF Gedling Performance Report April 2025'. The

Direct Delivery tab supports that Futures overachieved with their expectations and supported across several key outputs and outcomes linked to the UKSPF People and Skills theme. Allowing Futures to continue the service would enable consistent and extended support for new and existing residents on the programme. Therefore, Option c) is recommended.

## **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Option c) - Due to the ongoing requirement to support economically inactive residents within the Borough and the restricted time available to deliver a meaningful and impactful service.
- 2.2 The continuation will maximise the time for service delivery by avoiding lengthy procurement and mobilisation processes.
- 2.3 The open market could present significant risk to the viability of the service, as alternative providers would likely have insufficient time to meet the outputs and outcomes required.

## **3 Contract Considerations**

- 3.1 The previous contract with Futures was part of a joint commission carried out by Nottinghamshire County Council with a value of £200,000.00. A new contract is required, this is considered a continuing contract and therefore the value is cumulative. Any further contracting with the same supplier is over the statutory threshold of £213,000.000. A statutory exemption contained in the Procurement Act 2023 will need to be engaged. The exemption identified is contained in schedule 5 Paragraph 6.

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**The following conditions are met in relation to the public contract—**

**(a) due to an absence of competition for technical reasons, only a particular supplier can supply the goods, services or works required, and**

**(b) there are no reasonable alternatives to those goods, services or works.**

- 3.3 As to the requirement in Paragraph 6(a) Futures have specialist knowledge of the economically inactive cohort, due to the close working relationships that have been formed with key stakeholders such as the DWP and key contacts in some of the hardest to reach communities, such as Calverton and Netherfield. They have a healthy case load of economically inactive residents, which it has taken time to build, with the support of the key contacts. As to the requirement in Paragraph 6(b) Any alternative supplier would take time to mobilise, impacting service delivery, as relationships would take time to establish. This would also cause disruption to the service users already engaged on the programme, where familiarity and continuation is required, with some experiencing complex issues and significant barriers to training and employment.
- 3.4 The new contract would cover UKSPF Y4 until 31 March 2026, at a cost of £105,000.00.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The cost of the service has been allocated as part of the People and Skills theme of UKSPF Y4 spend.
- 4.2 This contract will be fully funded through the Council's 2025-26 allocation of the UKSPF Grant

#### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Consideration has been given to compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 (PA 2023), regarding justification for direct awarding a contract in these circumstances, as set out above.

The relevant department must seek support from the Procurement Team as the PA 2023 requires that certain notices are published both before and after a contract is awarded via Direct Award. A compliantly drafted contract would need to be executed under seal of the Council.

As the contract is not being procured competitively, the Council must carry out a Subsidy Control Principles Assessment to ensure that the award of the contract is justified under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Due to the value of the subsidy, where a contract is completed, Legal Services will need to log the details of the subsidy onto the Government Portal in order to comply with transparency requirements.

#### **6 Equalities Implications**

6.1 The service provider is committed promote diversity and inclusion ensuring all participants feel valued.

**7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

7.1 None identified

**8 Appendices**

8.1 None

**9 Background Papers**

9.1 TYF Call Off Contract 2023\_25  
TYF Gedling Performance Report April 2025

**Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**