

Re-commissioning of Translation and Interpretation Services

To: Children and Young People's Committee

Meeting Date: 5 July 2022

From: Charlotte Black, Executive Director, People & Communities.

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: KD2022/084

Outcome: The recommissioning of translation and interpretation services will reduce communication barriers and ensure language support to families and individuals engaged with County Council services.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve the re-commissioning and procurement of Translations and Interpretation Services; and
- b) Delegate responsibility for awarding a contract for the provision of Translation and Interpretation services starting on the 8th of November 2022 to the Executive Director: People and Communities.

Voting: Co-opted members of the Committee are eligible to vote on this item.

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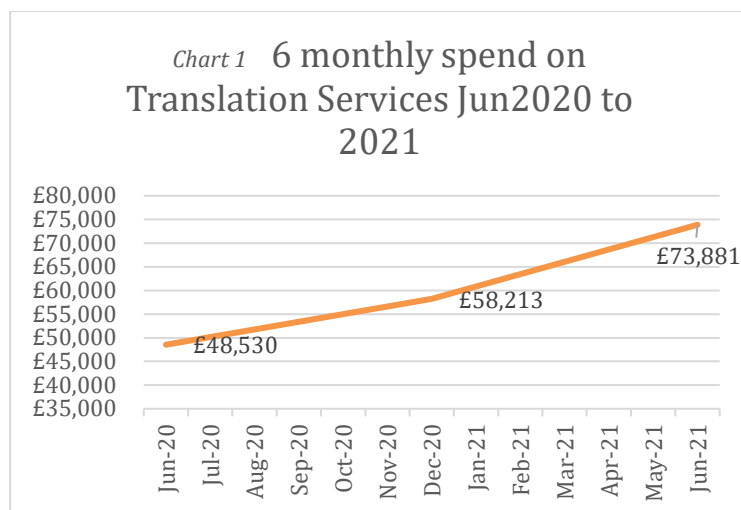
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1. Background

- 1.1 Capita Translation and Interpretation Services provides Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) with translation and interpretation services. Translation services are part of the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty. The service meets this obligation by ensuring accessibility for customers and communities we serve. This contract with Capita expires 7th November 2022.
- 1.2 Capita's interpretation and translation services include:
- Onsite face to face spoken language interpreting
 - Prebooked remote spoken language interpreting (MS Teams, Skype, telephone)
 - On demand telephone and video interpreting
 - Deaf, Deafblind and British Sign Language interpreting (face to face and video)
 - Transcription of documents
- 1.3 Cambridgeshire County Council officers' access Capita's booking system through Personal Identification Numbers (PIN) that are linked to their team budgets. This means that officers are much more aware of the costs on their budgets.
- 1.4 A survey of officers showed overall, satisfaction with Capita's booking system and services is high (4.45 out of 5). There are challenges (securing onsite face to face interpreting for rare languages, delays confirming bookings), but Capita has been outstanding in responding when issues are raised with them.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Council spend on the provision of Translation and Interpretation Services is rising each year and dependent on factors outside our control for example, global trends (conflicts and war, Covid pandemic) national policy (Brexit, inflation) and local population growth.
- 2.1.1 Annual Spend for 2021- 22 was £142,182. This is a 22% rise on the previous year. Chart 1 shows the rising trend in spend to 2021. Spend on Capita services was affected by covid and although it initially reduced, it has since increased to higher levels than the covid months. Three factors are increasing the Council's spend:
- 1) The increasing population of Cambridgeshire (currently at 6 to 7% while national average is 0.5%)
 - 2) More complex cases requiring on going specialist/family support and therefore more interpretation, and
 - 3) Unexpected international conflict e.g., Ukraine and policy shifts.



2.2 Prices for language services have remained stable over the lifetime of the Capita Contract. Spend in the best indicator of usage as we are charged by time not by the number of appointments. The Council's highest spend has consistently been on document translation.

2.2.1 Document translation accounts for 53% of the total spend for 2021. Other language service providers charge the same rate for document translation as Capita (10p per word). There is an additional charge for proof reading (1.8p per word). It is therefore very unlikely that this price can be negotiated downward. In response to a survey question about this, Officers told us the volume of cases they are dealing with means more child protection plans are needing translating which are often longer reflecting the complexity of many cases.

2.2.2 Table 1 shows the 121% increases in the use of telephone translation services. With Council teams paying for their own service, telephone interpretation enables the service to be run with a lower cost base than onsite face to face interpreting and may explain its popularity.

Which interpretation services do Officer book the most?	Cambridgeshire County Council	
	2020 £	2021 £
Onsite Face to Face	20,496	21,073.3 (15%)
Telephone	14,975	33,022 (23%)
Pre-booked calls	Not available	14,021 (10%)
Document Translation	71,273	75,961.1 (53%)
	106,743.65	144,077.40

2.3 Children's Social Care are the biggest spenders and main users of translation and interpretation services. 87% of spend on translations services is from Children's Social Care. Table 2 shows Children Social Care spend makes up the majority. Within this

directorates, the biggest users of translation services are the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (SQA) Child Protection team (£22,909). As a comparison, there were 52 children and young people teams with PINs in 2021. The average spend of these was £2,409. The rest of the council averaged £849.

<i>Table 2</i> CYP Spend Compared to other Directorates in 2021	Document Translation	Pre-booked call	Telephone	'Onsite' Face to Face	Total
CYP	94.08%	84.49%	75.62%	80.73%	86.96%
Other Council Directorates	5.92%	15.51%	24.38%	19.27%	13.04%

- 2.4 The UK language market was the largest interpreting market in Europe with over 1600 UK language service companies. The translators and interpreters used by these companies are mostly freelancers who choose who and where to work, often working with multiple language provider. Hence, we have had challenges ensuring onsite face to face translations for the Council's Children's Social Care.
- 2.5 In 2021 the top three languages requested for interpretation was Lithuanian (28%), Polish (18%) and British Sign Language (10%). For document translation it was Lithuanian (21%), Kurdish Sorani (20%) and Arabic Modern Standard (13%). The languages requested will change as world events (Ukraine) and government policy affect local services.
- 2.6 It is Brexit that is having the most negative effects on language service providers. Notably, the difficulty acquiring new translators and loss of work as clients/translator move away from UK. The impact of the pandemic and Brexit on the Language Service Market may make delivering on time, onsite face to face and quality services an ongoing challenge for all language service providers.

The Recommissioning and Procurement Options

- 3.0 There are several Public Sector Language Service Frameworks that list 20 to 30 language providers on their framework all with a proven track records of delivering language services. These frameworks include for example, the Crown Commercial service, NHS Shared Business Services, ESPO, and The Bigword. Approved providers on these frameworks are quality checked while pricing is standardised.
- 3.1 A comparative analysis of each framework against our requirements and usage is underway to identify the most competitive provider. By comparing provider prices against our usage, we can estimate savings and then direct award using the frameworks pre agreed terms and conditions. This reduces time, effort and resources spent on commissioning and procurement activities. This process is compliant with Public Contract Regulation 2015 and CCC's Contract Procedure Rules 2022.

- 3.2 A collaborative recommissioning and procurement approach between Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council has started. This will optimise volume purchasing discounts and realise economies of scale. However, at the end of the procurement, each authority will have separate contractual arrangements.
- 3.3 The use of a framework shortens procurement timescales. The Joint Commissioning Board will be presented with our analysis, finding and recommendations as to which Framework offers the best value for money. In August, legal services will draft a contract. A direct award from the framework will occur at the beginning of October and the new contract will start 8th November 2022.
- 3.4 The total value of a four-year Translation and Interpretation Services based on existing usage is £568,728 and could be higher depending on global and local factors. This is in excess of £500,000 threshold and is a key decision.

4. Alignment with corporate priorities

4.1 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.2 Health and Care

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.3 Places and Communities

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- Access to a professional, responsive interpreting service plays an important role in enabling customers access Council services. The interpreting services that is commissioned will enable Council Officers to continue delivering excellent service.

4.4 Children and Young People

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in 2.3

4.5 Transport

There are no significant implications for this priority.

5. Significant Implications

5.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in 2.1,2.3,3.4

5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in 3.0, 3.1,3.3

5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category

5.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

5.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas (See further guidance in Appendix 2):

5.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

neutral Status:

Explanation:

- The provider will be required to report on their net zero carbon emissions, social value and contribution to energy efficiency.

5.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive Status:

Explanation:

- Many of the interpretation services are carried out via telephone rather than face to face, thus there is less travel.

5.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

neutral

Explanation: not applicable

5.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

neutral

Explanation: not applicable

5.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

neutral

Explanation: not applicable

5.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

neutral

Explanation: not applicable

5.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.
neutral
Explanation: not applicable

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes
Name of Officer: Claire Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? YES
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?
Name of Officer: Will Patten YES

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
YES
Name of Officer: Matthew Hall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?
Name of Officer: Will Patten YES

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? YES
Name of Officer: Kate Parker

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?
Name of Officer: Emily Bolton YES

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 Source documents
Language Industry Survey and Report, ATC UK, 2019

5.2 [ATC-UK-Survey-and-Report.pdf](#) [accessed 2 May 2022]