

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 27 February 2023
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Re-commissioning of Family Support Services in the Vale of Glamorgan
Purpose of Report:	To seek authority to re-commission the existing Regional Children’s Family Support Service Contract which is due to elapse on 30th June, 2023. To seek delegated authority to award the contract to the successful provider.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member, Social Care & Health.
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Operational Managers, Children and Young People Services. Operational Manager, Commissioning and Finance.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to undertake a re-commissioning exercise and to enter into a contract for the delivery of Family Support Services to children and young people in the Vale of Glamorgan. • The Council awarded a multi-lot contract for the following services Action for Children in 2018 for a period of 5 years. • This contract is due to elapse on 30th June 2023; therefore, we are seeking to award the contract by May 2023. 	

Recommendations

- 1.** That Cabinet authorises the re-commissioning of the existing Regional Children's Family Support Services Contract, due to elapse on 30th June, 2023 via a procurement process. The current contract value is £1.07 million per annum over the three Lots, though it should be noted that funding for future commissioning is under review, and future funding increases will be agreed according to the Council's budget setting process.
- 2.** Following completion of the tender process, that Cabinet authorises the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health to award the contract(s) for this service for an initial period of 4 (four) years with an option to extend for up to a further 4 (four) years.
- 3.** That delegated authority is granted to the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services to negotiate, draft and execute contract(s) with the successful bidder(s).

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.** To ensure that the Council provides Family Support Services in a cost-effective way and meets the assessed needs of children and young people and their families.
- 2.** Fulfils the responsibilities set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- 3.** Meets the requirements of its Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules.

1. Background

- 1.1** The Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support was endorsed by Cabinet in September 2016. This Strategy sets out how the whole Council is going to work collaboratively to improve the general well-being of children and young people who, for whatever reason, need care and support.
- 1.2** The key objectives and principles of the Strategy are:
 - To support families to stay together and reduce the need for children to be looked after, by focusing on services which intervene early and prevent greater need arising across all provision.
 - To manage risk confidently and provide support at the 'edge of care' by making sure that need is accurately assessed, resulting in the right children being accommodated at the right time. This includes supporting families to avoid children becoming accommodated unnecessarily and by making private arrangements within their wider family networks.
- 1.3** A new updated strategy for children has started to be developed following a number of initial engagement events.
- 1.4** There is currently a contract in operation which is set out into three lots:

- Lot 1 – Families with Additional Needs. A service which comprises a respite continuum of an overnight service, with short breaks and a leisure service for children with disabilities and additional needs.
 - Lot 2 – Direct Family Support and Crisis Intervention (edge of care). A service which provides time limited support to children, young people and their parents who have been assessed as having a need.
 - Lot 3 – Contact Service. To deliver a quality led service that enables parents and children who are going through the court process, have care orders and where the plan is for adoption, to have contact that is supervised by suitably trained and consistent staff, enabling a proper assessment of the contact to take place.
- 1.5** Due to increasing demand and complexity following the Covid-19 pandemic, the provision of preventative services to support families to stay together is paramount. In addition, the service will also support children who have become looked after to return to their families where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The tender process will be managed by a project group which includes representation from Children's Services, Procurement and Contracting representatives. The group has been meeting frequently to allow timely discussions to be held with regards to issues that may occur within the tender processes. Informed debate and discussion will be allowed for decisions to be agreed, ensuring continued progress of the tender process within required timescales.
- 2.2** Following advertising the tender process, organisations will complete an Invitation to Tender (ITT).
- 2.3** The quality element of the submission will be evaluated through a number of means and will cover a number of areas that have been weighted appropriately in accordance with importance.
- 2.4** Bidders will be able to submit tenders for between 1 to 3 lots. The price submission will require bidders to submit a price for each lot individually (the standard price); in addition they will need to evidence economies of scale should they be tendering for more than one lot. Initial evaluations of price will be based upon the standard price in order to ensure equality within the evaluation process. The evaluation criteria for the contract are 70% quality and 30% price.
- 2.5** All bidders will be asked to provide written submissions against quality questions included within the ITT document. Their written submissions will be assessed by an internal evaluation panel.
- 2.6** Providers will also be evaluated on their quality through an interview and presentation process. Providers are to be asked to present their proposals and answer a series of formal questions to the evaluation panel. These responses will be evaluated and scored by the panel.

- 2.7 Children and young people and their families will also be involved in the quality element of the process, with them asking direct questions of the potential providers during the interview stage.
- 2.8 Following the evaluation of overall quality, quality will be combined with the provider financial score to identify the preferred provider for the service.
- 2.9 The contract is to be awarded initially for four years with an option to extend for up to a further four years in negotiation with the successful provider.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (“the 2015 Act”) requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 3.1 To make sure we are all working towards the same purpose, the 2015 Act places seven well-being goals on the Council. The 2015 Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two, these being:

A prosperous Wales

A resilient Wales

A healthier Wales

A more equal Wales

A Wales of cohesive communities

A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language

A globally responsible Wales

- 3.2 By embedding the five ways of working, the Council is working in a more sustainable way. The Council aims to meet these as detailed below:

3.3 Looking to the Long Term and Prevention

Lot 2 - The Family Support Service will comprise two areas: Direct Family Support and Crisis Intervention (Edge of Care). The purpose of these interventions is to de-escalate situations and to promote changes in behaviour with the goal of preventing accommodation. The goal of these outcomes is to secure long-term positive outcomes for young people and their families and to mitigate the escalation of critical need.

One of the key objectives of the Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support is to support families to stay together and reduce the need for children to be looked after, by focusing on services which intervene early and prevent greater need arising across all provision.

3.4 Taking an Integrated Approach

The service specifications for all three lots require that the successful providers will offer a service which is appropriately integrated into a relevant network of both statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups; the expectation is that the successful provider will build upon existing relationships with other professionals to avoid duplication and to maximise positive outcomes.

Involving Young People

Bidders are required to involve service users in recruitment where appropriate, using a children's panel. Young people are supported to develop skills and confidence to partake in the interview, including letting them pick their own questions to candidates.

Each child/young person accessing the services is supported to participate in decisions affecting them and be involved in planning, reviewing and designing services. This ensures they are safe; have fun; have a say; learn new skills; experience new activities and have something to share about their time with the provider, something to talk about and something to be proud of.

With respect to Lot 1, the provider is encouraged to actively support children and young people with additional needs to become involved in activities which match their individual interests / aspirations and are appropriate to their ability.

Involvement of young people and their families will also be central to the commissioning process, whereby a young person / family panel will ask questions to bidding organisations at the interview stage of the procurement process. The scores of these questions will be given equal weighting to those posed by the Commissioners' interview panel.

3.5 Collaborating with Others

Service provision is not effective without collaboration with young people and their families, but also partner organisations. The Provider will have local knowledge of the organisations involved with our service users, for example Atal y Fro, Taff housing, and Mind Cymru and work with them to ensure no gaps in provision.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** It is the intention of the Vale of Glamorgan Council to undertake a procurement exercise to identify a suitable provider for the services set out above.
- 5.2** Services for Vale of Glamorgan service users will be funded from within the Social Services budget.

Employment

- 5.3** The process of monitoring the service will be undertaken by staff within the Social Services Directorate, making appropriate use of corporate expertise and processes in areas such as procurement, finance and HR where required.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.4 Any change of service provided as a result of a tendering exercise may result in TUPE being applied. If this occurs, Legal Services will be consulted as appropriate.
- 5.5 The review of all working arrangements between the Council and other agencies will ensure that services are provided through robust contracts that fully reflect the responsibilities of the Council and the provider.

6. Background Papers

[Report to Cabinet – 19th March, 2018 – Children’s Support Service](#)