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To: Supporting People Commissioning Body, 23 July 2012

Subject: Home Improvement Agency (HIA) and Handyperson
Services

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

The Commissioning Body has agreed that HIAs and Handyperson services should be re-tendered in time for a relet of contracts on the 1 October 2012. The contracts with the current providers have been extended by six months in order to facilitate the procurement of the new services. The Supporting People Programme held a Market Engagement Day on the 11 April 2012, which gave a good indication that there is a range of provider interest in delivering this service. A competitive tendering exercise is now underway with a revised specification in place, which has been consulted upon across all the districts and boroughs. The Invitation to Tender (ITT) has now been published on the South East Business Portal inviting providers to submit bids for the service. All bids will be evaluated by a panel against agreed set criteria.

1. Introduction

- (1) The Commissioning Body agreed in January 2012 for the commencement of the procurement process to start early April 2012 with the understanding that the final award of newly tendered contracts for Home Improvement Agencies and Handyperson Services begin on 1 October 2012. The use of £445k from reserves has been agreed in order to continue to contract with current providers from the 1 April 2012 to the 30 September 2012. The aim is to ensure that service users continue to receive an uninterrupted service until the tender process is successfully completed.

2. Tender Update

- (1) A Market Engagement Day was held on the 11 April, which was very successful and demonstrated significant provider interest in delivering this type of service. The purpose of the engagement day was to present the proposed specification, enable providers to input into its design and to provide feedback as to the feasibility of delivery. A broad

range of opinions were gathered at the event, many of which informed the final specification.

- (2) The districts and boroughs have been fully involved in the process throughout the different stages contributing to the specification development and the market engagement day.
- (3) The proposed configuration for the procurement, reflecting the overall views and opinions determined at the market event will be:
 - A west Kent wide agency comprising Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells.
 - Ashford, Dover and Shepway as one agency
 - Canterbury, Maidstone, Swale and Thanet as individual agencies
- (4) The Invitation to Tender (ITT) has now been published and will be evaluated by a panel against set criteria.

3. Consultation and Communication

- (1) There has been significant consultation with the districts and boroughs throughout the process as well as engagement with potential providers.
- (2) In it June meeting members of the Core Strategy Group discussed the consultation that had lead to the final specification. It was explained that given the differing requirements of the districts and boroughs, the specification was drafted to meet the best fit within the procurement responsibilities of the county council.
- (3) It was agreed at the meeting that a note would be provided to Maidstone Borough Council to provide further clarification on the framework agreement that would be in place to support districts and boroughs to commission any further HIA or handyperson work in the future.

4. Risk and Business Continuity Management

- (1) The Commissioning Body agreed that existing services will continue to be funded pro rata at 2011/12 levels until the 30 September 2012. The objective is to ensure that service users continue to experience continuity of service, whilst new services are being procured. The risk of not undertaking a competitive retendering process will present significant budget pressures going forward and could result in a legal challenge from any provider looking for an opportunity to tender for this type of service.

5. Financial Implications

- (1) The existing provider contracts were due to expire at the end of March 2012. The current budget build for 2012/13 included an allocation of £689K for HIA and Handyperson services only.

- (2) A further £445k of investment (£345k for the twelve HIA/Handypersons services and for £100k for the Countywide Handypersons services) was required. It was proposed and agreed at the Commissioning Body on the 26 January 2012, that this is supported through the use of non recurring reserve funds.

6. Legal implications

- (1) The Supporting People Programme is obligated to ensure services are commissioned in an open and transparent way. It is essential that a competitive procurement exercise is undertaken to minimise the risk of any legal challenge and to ensure delivery of best value for money in the resulting contract.

7. Sustainability Implications

- (1) The intention has been to ensure that the procurement process which incorporates the aspirations of the District and Boroughs to include the Disabled Facilities Grant (where required) will ensure services are sustainable in the long term.

8. Conclusion

- (1) The retendering of HIAs and Handypersons has now begun following the development of a service specification and consultation with the stakeholders and providers. The ITT has been published with providers being asked to submit bids, which will then be evaluated against set criteria with the aim of new services being in place by October 2012.

9. Recommendations:

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| (1) The Commissioning Body is asked to note the update on progress. |
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Background Documents

None

Appendix A

HIA procurement plan

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