

**From: Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services**

**Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director - Social Care, Health and Wellbeing**

**To: Children Social Care & Health Cabinet Committee**  
**20 January 2015**

**Subject: Representation Rights and Advocacy Service – Contract Award and pilot of Social Value.**

**Non-Key decision**

**Classification: Unrestricted**

**Summary:**

The Council has recently commissioned a group of services, known as the Representation Rights and Advocacy Service (RRA). The services were previously commissioned separately and across directorates, through a range of grants, and a contract.

For the first time, social value criteria were embedded into the tender evaluation process. The Social Value Act requires commissioners and procurers – at the pre-procurement stage - to consider how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being (e.g. “social value”) of their area.

The services within the Representation Rights and Advocacy Contract are county wide.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to note the decision to award the Contract to the successful bidder, and note the way that Social Value criteria have been used in the procurement process to arrive at this decision.

**Introduction**

A commissioning review of the existing representation, rights and advocacy services identified that agreements had been extended year on year and did not meet the standards set out in Spending the Council's Money. The review increased our understanding of the market and identified that the current volunteer and employee model of the services worked well and was a strength that should be built on. It also supported the case to jointly commission the services, rather than have separate arrangements.

The services included in the Representation Rights and Advocacy tender were;

1. Independent Visitors for Children in Care and Care Leavers
2. Independent Person for children and families in contact with Specialist Children's Services, who need resolution to their complaints.
3. Advocacy for children in care, care leavers, children in need and children and young people making a complaint under the Children Act (1989)
4. Appropriate Adult Service for young people being interviewed by the Police in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)
5. Accompanying Adult Service for young people being interviewed as part of the Age Assessment Process.

Procuring these services together under a longer term 3 year contract was intended to provide service stability for children, young people and vulnerable adults that use them, and be sustainable for the organisations providing the support.

### **Financial Implications**

The budget for these services was agreed by the full County Council in the budget approved in February 2014, and was delegated to the Corporate Director, Social Care, Health and Wellbeing who approved four of the five lots of this contract as they relate to budgets within Social Care Health and Wellbeing.

The final lot, which was within the budget approved by full council, was delegated to the Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services. The value of the contract was within the Director of Education and Young People's Services authority to award as a Director of the council.

### **The Report**

#### **Procurement Pathway**

A procurement plan was presented at the Procurement Board in March 2014. Members were content that these services were required and should be put to the market. In particular, they asked for a Social Value criteria to be included in selection, as a means to test how procurement can be used to progress this council priority. A revised plan was presented in April 2014 and approved.

Providers were required to demonstrate how they would drive efficiencies though the life of a 3 year contract and submit their proposals as part of the quality criteria. These efficiency proposals were tested in the procurement process.

Submissions were evaluated by KCC Managers with specific experience in relation to the services. Following evaluation, the Head of Strategic Commissioning Children's and the Procurement Category Manager completed a moderation process.

The Corporate Director Social Care, Health & Wellbeing, and Corporate Director Education and Young People's Services, approved the award for the Representation Rights and Advocacy Service Contract in December 2014.

The Head of Strategic Commissioning - Children's, has on behalf of the Corporate Directors, taken steps to implement the decision.

## **Social Value**

Local authorities are required through the Social Value Act to consider how the services we commission support social value. Currently the Act, which is under review, only requires this consideration at pre-procurement stage, and not during the procurement evaluation itself.

However Social Value is considered a key priority within KCC and so procurement board requested a trial to help understand how this could be factored into evaluation. It was anticipated that this could be a means of increasing social value and this enabling community engagement, economic value and sustainable development, within Kent.

The process was therefore designed to ensure that all organisations were given the opportunity to demonstrate the social value they offer. This included:

- Evaluating and awarding each lot individually - thereby ensuring that small specialist providers that could not provide the full range of services would be able to compete on a level playing field
- Engaging the market pre-procurement to ensure that all providers understood the criteria we were using and how we would expect a submission to be completed
- Extending the timings of the process – ensuring organisations have sufficient time to prepare submissions, and for contract implementation
- Having a “minimum quality score” that any submission must achieve. This ensures that providers cannot provide an artificially low cost at the expense of quality that specialist organisations cannot compete with
- Including specific Social Value questions within the evaluation criteria

This question had a weighting of 30% of the Quality Score for the submission. The responses to this question were evaluated by the Cabinet Member for Specialist Children’s Services, along with two KCC managers.

An evaluation of the use of social value will report to the Council’s Social Value working group and will be considered by the council’s Commissioning & Procurement Board. Initial feedback is that this has been a very useful aspect of the process, and has enabled providers to outline the added value they will be able to bring to communities in Kent. Examples cited included the use of volunteers to develop employability skills, and organisations working together with large enterprises to establish pathways for vulnerable groups into work.

In previous tender processes this value would not have been reflected in the scoring. One important consideration for the future will be to maintain a balance to ensure that social value is applied in a proportionate manner and tailored to reflect the services to be procured.

## **Conclusions**

An Award Report, based on the procurement process, was developed by Strategic Procurement in December 2014 and made the recommendation to the Corporate Director - Social Care, Health and Wellbeing and Director of Early Help and Preventative Services, to award the contract to the successful bidder.

The Head of Strategic Commissioning - Children’s, has on behalf of the Corporate Directors, take all such steps as are necessary to implement the decision.

The Representation Rights and Advocacy Service will be mobilised with the successful provider and KCC staff between January and March 2015, with a commencement date of 1st April 2015.

**Recommendation(s):** (select relevant wording from below)

**The Children's Cabinet Committee** is asked to note the decision to award the Contract to the successful bidder and how Social Value criteria have been used to evaluate the tenders.

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