

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Oakford,
Cabinet Member for Specialist Children’s Services

DECISION NO:

16/00079

For publication

Key decision

Affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions and expenditure of more than £1m

Subject: Single Source Action Proposal for the provision of accommodation placements for Looked After Children and Care Leavers aged 16-21.

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Specialist Children’s Services, I propose to

- a) **RE-AWARD** short-term interim contracts to deliver a Shared Accommodation Service for Children in Care and Care Leavers aged 16-21 from 1 March 2017 to 31 August 2017.
- b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, or other nominated office, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

KCC currently purchase an Accommodation Service for Children in Care and Care Leavers Aged 16-21. The service is delivered by 3 organisations on behalf of KCC and is predominantly but not exclusively accessed by Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). The service is delivered through 2 block contract arrangements for the provision of 150 accommodation placements and a multiple supplier accommodation framework (call off) contract for provision of accommodation placements. The 3 year contracts started on the 1 March 2012, and a contract extension was agreed in 2015 and this ends on 28 February 2017.

The value of these contracts is £1.8 million; however, spend for 2015/16 was approximately £3m the majority of this expenditure is met from a Home Office grant. The contracts are due to end on the 28th February 2017.

The Council is currently in the process of preparing for the procurement of a new Accommodation service. It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded in April 2017.

The dramatic increase in the number of UASC entering Kent has resulted in an increase in demand for services. This service is the most affordable for this client group. There are approximately 600 service users and previous contract transition experience has shown that it could take up to one year to transition service users to a new service/ providers

The three current providers have been clear that they cannot continue to lease houses for use by KCC without a contract as providers must commit to a 6 month minimum lease on all properties.

Approving a Single Source Action allows sufficient time to align with the Procurement timetable, existing services to continue with minimal disruption to service users and support a gradual transition to new service.

Legal Implications

KCC has a statutory duty to provide suitable and safe accommodation that has the right level of support for Children in Care (including UASC). KCC must also accommodate 16 and 17 year old

child in need (in accordance with Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989), a child / young person to whom Bail has been denied and children remanded to local authority accommodation (RLAA) and 16 and 17 year old Care Leavers.

KCC must provide Care Leavers (including former UASC) with support and financial support to assist in promoting their welfare, especially in relation to maintaining suitable accommodation and promoting education and training.

This activity is an element of the Facing the Challenge 0-25 transformation programme (16-25 Accommodation Programme).

Equality Implications

An EQIA assessment has been undertaken and a low weighting has been determined. The EQIA supports the intention to diversify provision according to individual needs of service users

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

This matter will be considered by the Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee on 10 November 2016, and the outcome included in the paperwork which the Cabinet Member will be asked to sign.

Any alternatives considered:

Consideration has been given to doing nothing. Contracts expire on the 28 February 2017, if new interim contracts are not in place a large number of UASC and Former UASC currently accessing the services may lose their accommodation and become homeless. KCC will be required to provide the majority of existing service users with alternative accommodation which is likely to be unaffordable through the Home Office grant.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date