

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED* RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Cabinet Member for
Specialist Children's Services

DECISION NO:

17/00023

For publication
Key decision

Expenditure is over £1m

Subject: Future Commissioning Arrangements for External Fostering Placements

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

- a) **APPROVE** the approach to commissioning external fostering placements for children and young people aged 0–18 years; and
- b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to award the contract and implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The current commissioning arrangements, in partnership with Medway Council, for external fostering placements are due to expire in September 2017. This has provided an opportunity to carry out a detailed diagnostic of the current commissioning arrangements, along with market engagement. The results of this work has been used to inform the planned implementation of new commissioning and procurement arrangements for external fostering placements for children and young people aged 0–18 years

Financial Implications

The Director for Specialist Childrens Services budget line for external fostering for the year 2017/18 is:

Specialist Children's Services £6,576,000

Disabled Children's Services £944,000

Following the transformation of our in-house service and the implementation of a Recruitment Strategy for in-house foster carers, it is anticipated that spend with the external market will reduce throughout the lifetime of the new arrangement.

Equality Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed which indicated a low impact.

Legal Implications

It is anticipated that there will be no legal implications as a competitive procurement process will be undertaken.

KCC is obliged to fulfil its statutory responsibilities regarding fostering as set out in The Children Act 1989, the Sufficiency Duty and other regulations and guidance such as the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be discussed at the Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee on 23 March 2017 and the outcome included in the paperwork which the Cabinet Member will be asked to sign.

Kent County Council and Medway Council have hosted engagement events with the market in order to outline future demand, requirements and provide updates on service developments.

Any alternatives considered:

As part of the business case analysis other options were considered, but for the reasons outlined in the accompanying recommendation report, they were not considered to be the most beneficial to the Council.

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