

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and
Education Services

DECISION NO:

17/00102

For publication

Key decision: Yes

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

Subject: NEW CONTRACT FOR THE DELIVERY OF SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR OLDER CHILDREN IN CARE, CARE LEAVERS, AND HOMELESS 16 & 17 YEAR OLDS

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education Services, I propose to:

- AWARD** short-term interim contracts to continue to deliver Housing Related Support Services for vulnerable young people from 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018;
- AWARD** a new contract for a Supported Accommodation Service from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2023; and
- DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision: Historically Kent County Council has purchased accommodation based services and floating support services for vulnerable young people through the Housing Related Support (HRS) Programme. HRS Services have been focused on enabling vulnerable young people to avoid or recover from homelessness, and to acquire skills that they need to lead successful lives.

Separately, the Council has purchased accommodation based support for young people who it has statutory responsibility for (Children in Care and Care Leavers). This has largely been spot purchased through semi-independent provision in line with their needs identified through care plans.

A review of this accommodation based provision has been undertaken as part of a refresh to the Council's Sufficiency Strategy. The review has identified that there is an opportunity to improve the current accommodation offer for statutory young people through the creation of a new supported accommodation and floating support service to support them in their journey to independence.

The new service will also include provision for vulnerable homeless 16 and 17 year olds, in line with the Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board's Joint Homeless Protocol for 16 and 17 year olds.

The key aims of the newly configured supported accommodation provision will be to:

- Ensure accommodation and support is enhanced for Children in Care and Care Leavers in line with the Council's Corporate Parent statutory responsibilities
- Work with district councils to support homeless 16 and 17 year olds, in order to prevent young people coming into care and being placed in temporary accommodation, such as bed and breakfast
- Reduce spend by working with the market to deliver a new model, thus reducing the need for high cost, spot-purchased services.

Adult Social Care Services have also been working with their providers to support the development

of an all-age vulnerable homelessness strategy which will set out the commissioning programme for homelessness. This will make clear links with Children's commissioning intentions as detailed in the Sufficiency Strategy. Children's commissioners and adults commissioners will be working closely over the forthcoming months to ensure a seamless service model and that this approach ensures the best value for young people.

Existing HRS contracts for young people are due to end on 31 March 2018. Adult HRS services for homeless adults are due to end in September 2018. As part of this re-commissioning exercise there are a number of opportunities to put into place a pathway of provision to tackle homelessness through a joint procurement process between Children's and Adult's Services. It is recommended that the Council extends the current contractual arrangements with the existing HRS providers for young people through a Single Source Action for a six month period to align with the Adult's timeframe.

Legal Implications:

The Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable and safe accommodation that has the right level of support for Children in Care, in accordance with the Children's Act 1989.

The Council must provide Care Leavers (including former UASC) with support and financial support to assist in prompting their welfare, especially in relation to maintain suitable accommodation and helping them access education, training and employment.

Equality Implications

An EqIA assessment for the wider 16-25 Accommodation Programme has been undertaken. A supplementary EqIA which focused on this specific action has also been completed.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

This matter will be considered by the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 22 November 2017 and the outcome included in the paperwork which the Cabinet Member will be asked to sign.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Consideration has been given to doing nothing. Ceasing to commission these services is likely to disproportionately burden other operational services and directorates including Specialist Children Services, Mental Health and Safeguarding teams, as well as other commissioned services such as Adult HRS services and Live Well Kent.

Recommission existing services in their current framework was also considered. The current HRS service landscape has been identified as not being fit for purpose, not proportionally situated to meet the needs of the county. There is geographical inconsistency in the location of services (no accommodation services in Sevenoaks and Thanet), and a lack of flexibility to deal with increasing complexity of vulnerable young people who need the service. Spot-purchased provision has been identified as expensive, difficult to quality assure and is provider, rather than KCC led.

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

