

**From:** Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

**To:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

**Decision No:** 17/00102

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

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** Children, Young People and Education Senior Management Team - 1 November 2017

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Cabinet Member decision

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** Historically Kent County Council has purchased accommodation based services and floating support services for vulnerable young people through the Housing Related Support programme. Housing Related Support 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 Children in Care and Care Leavers 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. This joint Protocol was approved by the Joint Policy and Planning Board on 4 October 2017 and is due to be launched at the end of November 2017.

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.

Adults 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 adult's 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 Housing Related Support contracts for young people are due to end on 31 March 2018. Adult Housing Related Support 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 Housing Related Support providers for young people through a Single Source Action for a 6 month period to align with the Adult's timeframe.

Recommendations: The Cabinet Member is asked to:

- a) **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;
- b) **AWARD** a new contract for a Supported Accommodation Service from 1 October 2018 to September 2023; and
- c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council has a number of strategies to ensure adequate provision of accommodation based support for Children in Care and Care Leavers. The key strategy is the Council's Sufficiency Strategy (2015- 2018) which has recently been refreshed due to the high and unprecedented demand for accommodation based provision in 2015-16, which significantly affected the availability and the cost of provision across Kent.
- 1.2 Whilst clear pathways exist for a number of services, supported accommodation for young people has become disjointed. Currently three types of supported provision exist: Housing Related Support, Floating Support and Semi-independent provision.
- 1.3 Former Supporting People Services now known as Housing Related Support (HRS) and Floating Support for Young People are primarily available to vulnerable service users many of which are referred/signposted by District and

Borough Councils. It has been agreed that future services need to be refocused to prioritise the Council's statutory service users.

- 1.4 Semi-independent accommodation for the Council's statutory service users is spot-purchased on a case-by-case basis. These placements are typically significantly more expensive than other alternative accommodation options for this age group of young people.
- 1.5 HRS and Semi-independent accommodation are currently commissioned separately and therefore operate in isolation, are not networked together and lack the flexibility to offer new and innovative interventions and approaches for those with the most complex needs. The recently revised Sufficiency Strategy has identified how demand in the range of provision can be changed to ensure more suitable and more cost efficient placements.
- 1.6 A review has been undertaken and concluded that this provision needs to be recommissioned to:-
  - Meet future demand. The Sufficiency Strategy sets out the future demand for children and young people that will require these services annually for the next three years: a range of 170-190 accommodation-based units and 170-220 floating support units
  - Ensure accommodation and support is enhanced for Children in Care and Care Leavers in line with the Council's Corporate Parent statutory responsibilities and to support them in their journey to independence
  - Provide Floating Support Services to maintain independence wherever appropriate
  - Support the revised Joint Homeless Protocol for 16/17 year olds and improved joint working with District and Borough Councils to prevent young people becoming homeless and to prevent young people coming into care and being placed in temporary accommodation, such as bed and breakfast
  - Reduce the use of expensive spot-purchased Semi-independent accommodation
  - Improve the approach to the monitoring of quality standards and performance.
- 1.7 Adults Social Care Services also commission HRS and have been working jointly with Specialist Children's Services, HRS providers, Kent Housing Group, Joint Policy and Planning Board (JPPB) and wider stakeholders to develop a new pathway to ensure vulnerable service users over 18 continue to receive support through newly commissioned Adult Social Care Services.
- 1.8 Existing HRS Service contracts for young people are due to end on 31 March 2018. Adult HRS Service contracts 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 and Adult Services. Current contractual arrangements with the existing HRS providers for young

people will need to be extended through a Single Source Action for a six month period to align with the Adult's timeframe.

## **2. Contractual arrangements**

- 2.1 The contracts for the HRS Services for young people are currently due to expire on 31 March 2018. New services are planned for October 2018. It is therefore recommended that a Single Source Justification for the young person's services is undertaken for up to six months to run from 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018 in order that the commissioning for a new pathway of provision is aligned. During this time a competitive procurement process will be undertaken which will also allow for a mobilisation period. The procurement process will enable a new contract to be put into place for a new Supported Accommodation and Floating Support Service from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2023.
- 2.2 Both Adult and Children's opportunities will be advertised on the Kent Portal against the timescales provided in Section 7 of this paper. The Children's contract will run for a five year period to provide for longer term stability of placements and costs although this will include break clauses.

## **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Semi-independent Services are currently funded from Specialist Childrens Service budgets, whilst HRS is funded from the former Supporting People budget for both adults and children.
- 3.2 A savings target of £1.3 million has been agreed for 2018-19 against the overall HRS budget for both adults and young people's services. The new all age homelessness model will deliver this saving through the new commissioned model and a joined up pathway of provision.

## **4. Policy Framework**

- 4.1 At the heart of 'Facing the Challenge' is the need to change the way the Council works, not only to improve services, but also to reflect the changing shape of wider public services.
- 4.2 The Council's Sufficiency Strategy sets out our approach to providing secure, safe and appropriate accommodation to Children in Care, Care Leavers, and Homeless 16 and 17 year olds.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 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.

- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The Treaty of Rome, EU directive and UK legislation require that competition will be part of the overall procurement approach to securing work goods and services. However, a number of special circumstances exist where this may not be applicable or possible, e.g. the purchasing of adult and children services is required by law under the National Assistance Act 1948 and the Children Act 1989.
- 5.4 There is a risk of delaying compliance with the OJE procurement process; however, this will be minimised through communication with the market within the timescales for the planned procurement.

**6. Equality Implications**

- 6.1 An EqIA assessment for the wider 16-25 Accommodation Programme has been undertaken.

**7. Next Steps**

- 7.1 A timetable of the key activities to award a new Supported Accommodation is detailed below:

Proposed Timetable	
Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee	22 November 2017
Analyse and Consultation Phase	November – December 2017
Joint Draft Procurement Plan	January 2018
Joint Market Engagement	January – March 2018
Joint Procurement – Tender Publication and Evaluation	March – June 2018
Contract Award	June 2018
Mobilisation Period	July – September 2018
Contract Commencement	1 October 2018

**8. Recommendations**

8.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to:

a) **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;

b) **AWARD** a new contract for a Supported Accommodation Service from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2023; and

c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

## 9. Background Documents

9.1 Proposed Changes to Kent's Supported Accommodation and Floating Support Services

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/SupportedAccommodation/consultationHome>

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