

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet Member Delegate Decision Report

17 January 2011

Subject: Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy and Intentions - increasing contract extension period

Cabinet member: Lionel Grundy – Children’s Services

Key Decision: Yes

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines proposals for increasing the contract extension period for services provided by a number of voluntary sector agencies. The extension is being sought in response to concerns raised by Cabinet members. The decision is being made under Cabinet Members delegated authority.

Background

2. In November Cabinet approved the Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy and agreed to contract extensions for a number of services provided by voluntary sector organisations with contracts which end on 31.3.11. Cabinet also agreed to the development of a new family and parenting support service which would replace existing services currently provided by the voluntary sector. The contract for the new service will be let through a competitive tendering process
3. At the Cabinet meeting Council members questioned whether the timetable for letting the new contract was long enough to enable voluntary sector organisations to understand the requirements of the new service and prepare their organisations so as to be in a position to take part in the tender process.
4. Following the Cabinet meeting officers have considered the procurement timetable and in response to Council members concerns are seeking to increase the time period for contract extensions to allow more time for the procurement process for the new family and parenting support service.

Commissioning Intentions Agreed by Cabinet in November 2010 for Higher Level Targeted Services

5. The Family and Parenting Support Strategy makes the distinction between lower and higher level targeted support services. In November Cabinet agreed to develop a new service which will focus on higher level targeted services. This service will provide support to parents and families who have complex and multiple needs and who require long term support but who do not reach the threshold for social care intervention.
6. The Cabinet reported noted that the procurement process for this new service would begin in December 2010 with the new service commencing 1st October 2011. It is now proposed that the procurement process is extended with the new service starting on 1st April 2012. This will enable more time to involve providers in the procurement process and for providers to prepare to tender for the new service. With this additional time some providers might seek to tender for the new service in partnership with others. There will also be more time to plan for transition arrangements.
7. In response to the extension of the procurement process it is proposed that contract extensions for the services noted in table 1 below are also increased. These services are operating at the higher level 2 level and are likely to be working with families who will receive the new service.
8. Cabinet has already agreed a 6 months extension at a reduced rate which takes into account 6 months savings required. It is now proposed that this extension is increased and that contracts for the services listed in table 1 are extended to the 31.3.12 with a 10% reduction on the current annual contract value. After this date contracts will end.

Table 1

Service Provider	Current Annual Contract Values
Barnados Family Group Conferences	£60,515
Barnados Tapestry	£73,572
NSPCC Calne Family Centre	£32,280
NSPCC Ashdown Family Centre	£45,754
Action for Children Wessex Children's Services	£53,771
Ask Parenting Wiltshire	£120,689
Total	£386,581

Commissioning Intentions Agreed by Cabinet in November 2010 for Lower Level Targeted Services

9. As there are significant resources invested in lower level 2 services through the Children's Centres Cabinet agreed to cease purchasing a number of lower level 2 services and use this funding for the new family support service. These services and the current annual contract value are noted in table 2 below.

Table 2

Service Provider	Current Annual Contract Values
Home Start Kennet	£49,031
Open Blue Trust	£10,284
Home Start South Wiltshire	£23,325
Scrapstore and Wiltshire Play Resource Centre (2 contracts to end)	£196,423*
Total	£279,063

*combined annual value of both contracts

10. In order to allow time for organisations to adjust to this loss of funding Cabinet agreed to phase the de-commissioning process with a 50% reduction in funding from 1st April 2011 to 30th September 2011. In order to allow sufficient time for these organisations to consider alternative sources of funding it is proposed that these contracts are also extended to 31.3.12 at the 50% rate. After this date contracts will end.

Environmental and climate change considerations

11. None

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

12. The family and parenting support commissioning strategy provides a framework for developing family and parenting support services. This framework will ensure a co-ordinated approach which will ensure that the needs of all parents and families are addressed.
13. Families are diverse and have a range of needs. The implementation of the strategy and commissioning intentions will enable them to more easily access the services they need. The strategy acknowledges and considers the needs of services for groups at a potential disadvantage such as travelers, teenage parents and service families.

Risk Assessment

14. Budget savings will be required in 2011/12 and in future years. The strategy facilitates these savings being achieved in the most effective way.

15. The increase in period of contract extensions mitigates some of the risk highlighted in the November report to Cabinet. More support can be offered to these agencies on seeking alternative sources of funding. There will also be more time for developing transition plans for parents and families receiving services through contracts which will end.

Financial Implications

16. Funding is available to support the contract extensions noted in this report.

Legal Implications

17. None

Options Considered

18. The main alternative option considered was:

Stick with the original timescales noted in the November Cabinet report –
This was an option but on balance officers felt that an increase of the contract extension period and in the procurement process for the new service better reflects the Cabinet's commitment to supporting the development of the voluntary sector.

Conclusions

19. The increase in time for the procurement process for the new family and parenting support services and the consequent increase in the contract extension period will enable voluntary organisations more time to seek alternative sources of funding and/or more time to prepare their tender submission.

Name of Director Julia Cramp
Designation Service Director Commissioning and Performance (DCE)

Report Author: Jane Shuttleworth

Name, title and contact details Jane Shuttleworth, Interim Head of Joint Commissioning,
jane.shuttleworth@wiltshire.gov.uk
01225 718221

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Background Papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None