

RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

Approval for award of Contract CS1729 for Family Hubs

Decision made

To approve the award of contract CS1729 to deliver a new Family Hubs service across Wiltshire to Spurgeons to take effect 1 April 2024.

Made by: Andy Brown, Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director for Resources and Lucy Townsend Corporate Director for People

Background

1. Pursuant to a decision of Cabinet at a meeting held on 13 June 2023 and referred to in the minutes of the meeting at number 50, we as the Corporate Director for Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and as the Corporate Director for People are authorised to make this decision in consultation with Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills. We confirm that in making this decision we have consulted with Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills.

Reason for decision

1. As the Corporate Director for Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and the Corporate Director for People respectively we have consulted with Perry Holmes, Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer, regarding the Cabinet resolutions made at the meeting held on 13 June 2023. An advisory note from the Monitoring Officer dated 11 July 2024 has been agreed which sets out that the Cabinet resolution of 13 June 2024 authorises us to enter into the Family Hubs Contract with Spurgeons on behalf of the Council under the terms agreed.
2. The existing contract for children's centres expired on 31 March 2024 and it was agreed by Cabinet following a public consultation to develop family hubs in Wiltshire offering an early help service for families with children aged 0-19 (25 with SEND)
3. An open procurement exercise was undertaken in September 2023 to secure a contract. There were five bids as a result. Following an evaluation and moderation exercise, the commissioners proposed to award the contract to Spurgeons.
4. The contract has an initial term of two (2) years with an option for the Council to extend the contract by a further period or periods no later than 28 March 2031 by giving Spurgeons at least twelve (12) months' written notice per clause 2.2 of the contract.
5. The cost of the contract over two years is £5,981,102.60
6. I confirm that in making this decision I have considered the following in line with Wiltshire Council's Constitution:

Key decision requirements	Yes
Views of relevant cabinet member(s), committee chair, area board(s)	Yes, Presented to Cabinet on 13 June 2023

Consultation with cabinet member(s), the Leader and Scrutiny (for Executive decisions taken under Emergency Powers)	No
Consultation with the Chief Executive OR Corporate Director where appropriate	Yes- Perry Holmes, Director of Legal and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Consultation with local members (as appropriate)	Yes- Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
Consideration of the area boards and delegated decision checklist for officers on the issue of when and how to involve local councillors and area boards in decisions about local services	Yes
Implication of any council policy, initiative, strategy, or procedure	Yes
Consultation in accordance with requirements and expectations of consultation with the public	Yes online 10 January 2023 to April 2023 Face to face February to March 2023
Range of options available	Yes, see table below
Staffing, financial, and legal implications	Yes
Evidence of due regard having been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty.	Supporting children and families with early help through an open access service
Risk assessment	Yes, see below
Involvement of statutory officers and/or directors	Yes
Regional or national guidance from other bodies	Yes consideration paid to Family Hubs and Start for Life programme: local authority guide
The council's constitution	Yes
Contract is suitable for execution under the e-signature process	Yes

Conflict of Interest

Not applicable

Options considered

Options considered:

	Benefits	Risks
Option 1 Commission all services	Consistency for all services across all areas of the county	The size of the contract could limit some smaller providers from bidding on their own

together from an external provider	The voluntary or community sector is able to bid for additional funding to support family hub work outside of the contract. Other organisations have the opportunity to seek additional investment when required.	ICT – can external providers use Liquidlogic for casework, and will systems talk to each other inside and outside the Council
	Staff costs are generally more favourable than Local Authority structure, and more value for money is possible.	All of the risk will be with one provider who may not have all the skills and experience required to operate a wide-ranging contract
	Performance monitoring and contract management only required for one contract	Provider may not be able to recruit and retain enough staff to deliver all services
	Clear expectations and accountability with specification and contractual arrangement	
	Parental reviews show they prefer working with an organisation outside the local authority	
	Greater agility of workforce, and greater ability to adopt new ways of working faster	
	Additional social value can be realised including the use of volunteers and experts by experience	
Option 2 Commission all services separately from external providers	Providers are able to deliver services which best reflect their strengths, skills, and experience	More providers to manage performance and contract monitoring
	Specifics of each lot will make them attractive to more providers	ICT – can external providers use Liquidlogic for casework, and will systems talk to each other inside and outside the Council
	The voluntary or community sector is able to bid for additional funding to support family hub work outside of the contract. Other organisations have the opportunity to seek additional investment when required.	Risk of communication challenges as more than one provider involved in service delivery
	Staff costs are generally more favourable than Local Authority structure, and more value for money is possible	Risk of inconsistent delivery as more than one provider involved
Clear expectations and accountability with specification and contractual arrangement		

	Parental reviews show they prefer working with a voluntary sector organisation	
	Greater agility of workforce, and greater ability to adopt new ways of working faster	
	Additional social value can be realised including the use of volunteers and experts by experience	
	Risks are spread across multiple providers	
Option 3 Commission some services from an external provider and deliver some services inhouse.	Clear contract management of commissioned services with external provider, and inhouse service	Risk of inconsistent delivery as more than one provider involved
	Shared risk across organisations	Risk of communication challenges as more than one provider involved in service delivery
	Ability to share best practice from across the various providers of services and sectors including the Council	Risk of a loss of value for money as local authority salaries and benefits are often greater than external providers
	Liquidlogic ICT could allow greater access to information between services and better integration	ICT – can external providers use Liquidlogic for casework, and will systems talk to each other inside and outside the Council
	Shared Training could be delivered across all organisations	2 providers to manage performance and contract monitoring
	Parental reviews show they prefer working with a voluntary sector organisation	
	Service Providers are able to deliver services which best reflect their strengths, skills, and experience	
	The voluntary sector is able to bid for additional funding to support family hub work outside of the contract enhancing value for money.	
	Staff costs are more favourable than Local Authority structure, and more value for money is possible from external elements.	
	Additional social value can be realised including the use of volunteers and experts by experience	

Option 4 Bring family hubs inhouse	Control over recruitment and the entire service delivery model	Current external staff may not wish to transfer to Local Authority, creating a disruption to the service for a significant period of time
	Greater alignment with Support and Safeguarding Service (SaSS) and Family Key Workers, both part of the same service.	The Local Authority will hold all of the risk.
	Clearer oversight and management structure	Less agile processes within the local authority to adopt and adapt to new service design and implementation
	Liquidlogic ICT would allow greater access to information between services	No contractual arrangements
		Unable to bid for additional funding
		Reduced support for vulnerable families and children in the community, is likely to increase the impact of specialist services as a result of the higher staff costs of the local authority
		There may not be the skills required within the local authority to deliver all elements of the service
		Need to implement a clear and robust Service Level Agreement and an expectation that performance would be monitored and improved throughout the agreement
Option 5 Do Nothing	Saving of over £2 million as no service would be commissioned to replace children's centres	More children are likely to need to come into the care of the local authority
		Long term costs would be likely to increase as a result of more children in care
		Poorer outcomes for families and children if they are not supported early

It was agreed to go with:

Option 1 for the reasons below

Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistency of service
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families prefer an external provider • More cost effective • Robust contract management
Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of communication and contract management challenges with multiple providers • Increased risk of inconsistent service delivery with multiple providers 	
Option 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of inconsistent delivery and communication issues 	
Option 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater risk for The Local Authority • More costly to employ staff due to terms and conditions 	
Option 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of not having an early help model was considered unviable, due to increased statutory intervention, increased costs, and poorer outcomes for families 	

Made by:



Andy Brown, Corporate Director for Resources and Deputy Chief Executive



Lucy Townsend Corporate Director for People

Date: 6 August 2024 and 16 July 2024