

Childrens Services Commissioning Autumn Briefing

Report of Commissioning Liaison Scrutiny Member Cllr Richard Hoskins

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Commissioning Liaison members meet regularly with Officers to review the current and future childrens services commissioning activity. This is in line with the recommendations of the 2016 'Scrutiny in a Commissioning Council' Scrutiny Task Group. Cllr Hoskins is the Commissioning Liaison champion for Childrens Services. Members are provided with a forward plan of commissioning activity for the year ahead and in addition consider the detail of specifications and commissioning strategy documents.
- 1.2 The principles on how commissioning activity will be reviewed are agreed to be:
 - 1.2.1 the opportunities for scrutiny will be greater when there is need for service redesign through changing need or issues with the current delivery model/service, than when a service which currently works well is being recommissioned
 - 1.2.2 Scrutiny involvement in commissioning at the earliest stage will allow Members to help shape delivery models, services and outcomes
 - 1.2.3 Scrutiny have a key role in bringing the voice of the service user to commissioning
- 1.3 The role for Commissioning Liaison is set out in the Protocol at Appendix A. As agreed at the time of the spring briefing Commissioning Liaison will report to Scrutiny twice a year in the Spring and Autumn. Allowing opportunity in the Spring to signal progress on tenders and expected contract award dates and in the autumn to outline opportunities for pre-procurement activity ready for the following financial year.

2. Disabled Children: Short Breaks

- 2.1 There has been significant focus over the last period on the Community Health and Wellbeing Contract including pre-procurement preparations and then tender. With briefings during the Autumn 2017 and Winter 2018. This has considered the changes in commissioning for Public Health Nursing, ROVICs, Portage and Residential Short Breaks.
- 2.2 The preferred bidder for this contract was reported to Cabinet in October 2018 as the Torbay and South Devon Foundation Trust as prime provider leading a group of providers as an alliance.

2.3 This contract will include the Councils commissioning of Occupational Therapy and CAMHS Services alongside the CCG's commissioning of community health services. The total funding for the contract is £28.3m with £1.6m from the Council.

2.4 In the paper to Scrutiny January 2018 on Services for Disabled Children the future direction of travel for short breaks was set out.

Some of our short breaks offer to families has resources committed in long term contracts for residential short break provision, which affords families very little choice or control. Families and children are choosing residential short breaks less and less and looking for choice in more flexible community-based packages. We reviewed our commissioning intentions in 2016 and have been making changes to contracts in line with need.

2.5 Cabinet decision in October 2017 resolved the undertaking of work for the consideration of Devon County Council becoming the Lead Commissioner for the Residential Short Breaks service and, if the Council becomes the Lead Commissioner, for the undertaking of an options appraisal for the provision of the Residential Short Breaks from April 2019 onwards, also be approved. The Impact Assessment has been undertaken and set out the considerations of the options and recommendations.

2.6 The re-tender of the residential short breaks service has been undertaken. These are only the residential short breaks services within the ICS Contract currently delivered by Virgin Care. A single contract has been offered to provide residential short breaks from the four homes. Members reviewed the specification for this service in the Spring and noted the key considerations in the planning for this future contract have been:

- ensuring continuity of care for children currently receiving this service
- maximising the use of excellent resources of the four homes which has received significant capital investment and are purpose built for the needs of the children
- demand for residential short breaks has reduced therefore building flexibility of delivery into the contract so that providers can offer a range of services from these local bases to meet the needs of the local population of disabled children.

2.7 This service is currently being re-tendered during October/ November 2018 following a failed initial tender process during the summer.

2.8 Planning ahead a review of the delivery of community and family based short breaks is underway with a plan to implement a community based short breaks framework contract during 2018/2019 and re-commission family based short breaks during 2019 for award 2020. This will increase capacity to meet the needs of children in their communities and at home. Engagement of Members alongside the engagement of parents and children in the design of these services during the autumn/ winter 2018 will support the championing of disabled children in the commissioning re-design.

3. Sufficiency

3.1 The paper to Scrutiny in March 2018 set out the crisis in sufficiency and the market strategies to increase choice and availability were presented. Scrutiny received a briefing note at the September meeting on the progress in developing the Sufficiency Strategy. This sets out commissioning intentions for the next two years. The two tenders detailed here for Residential Childrens Homes and Supported Living Options (16+) will update the existing approved supplier list. As part of the tender, bidders are put through selection questionnaire and quality evaluation process. A quality threshold must be achieved to be successful.

- 3.2 Our performance in providing suitable accommodation for Care Leavers has substantially improved, as detailed in report to Scrutiny in September and Ofsted letter received following their two-day focused visit. Detailed work with District Councils has been effective and the new joint working protocol is in place in response to changes in Homelessness Duties. Both pieces of work informed the re-commissioning of the Homeless Prevention Contract for 16/17-year olds which provides supported accommodation and floating support. The contract is split into two service types; accommodation-based and move-on support and floating support for prevention. The contract for accommodation and move on support has been awarded to the following providers: Keychange, Stonewater, Westward Housing, Young Devon and LiveWest. Floating support for prevention has been awarded to Young Devon. Both have a contract start date of 1st November 2018.
- 3.3 Re-tender of the Supported Living Options framework contract. This is the provision of accommodation and support for young people aged 16 and above who are children in care and care leavers; these services are unregulated by Ofsted. This has previously been a Peninsula contract for the last five years. Tender Launch was 15th October 2018, tender closing date 6th December 2018. Implementation and site visits happening February and March, contract commences 1st April 2019.
- 3.4 Re-tender Residential Childrens Home framework contract. This is the provision of regulated Childrens Homes. This is a continuation of the collaboration between Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Somerset under Peninsula arrangements. This is a live tender currently out to the market deadline for submissions were 5th October 2018. With a contract start date 1st February 2019.
- 3.5 As per the spring report to Scrutiny plans are progressing to secure residential beds in Devon for exclusive use with retained beds with one provider now in place. The business case for block purchasing residential beds has been agreed and the procurement process will commence in December 2018.

4. Regional Adoption Agency (RAA)

- 4.1 The RAA launched on the 1st October 2018.
- 4.2 Devon County Council childrens commissioning team have taken the lead commissioner role for the RAA as from May 2018. Adopt South West Commissioning plan has been developed and is reviewed on an ongoing basis through the Steering Group and Peninsula Commissioning Board.
- 4.3 The first piece of tender activity was to secure an open framework contract for multiple low value spend from the Adoption Support Fund. This is a collaborative contract between Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay for the delivery of bespoke and creative therapy services for adopted children this supports emotional wellbeing and prevention of adoption breakdown. Adoption Support Fund Framework Contract went live from 5th July 2018. In addition, a service to provide DVD and photography services has been tendered and awarded went live from 1st October.
- 4.4 Non-Agency adoption service will be tendered November – December 2018. Non-agency adoption occurs where the plan to adopt was not made by a registered adoption agency, such as Adopt South West. For example, step-parent adoption is described as non-agency because is a private application to adopt a child already living with the step-parent.
- 4.5 The future commissioning plan is currently under review. With service elements reviewed at appropriate points in time.

5 Recommendations:

- 5.1 Members are involved in the engagement processes for disabled children, families and professionals in advance of the community based short breaks tender.
- 5.2 A programme of involvement and oversight of new contracts is determined. With opportunities for Members to visit services and shadow commissioning officers.
 - 5.2.1 Services that were re-commissioned in 2017/18 such as Advocacy, Young Carers and Childrens Centres can be considered for quarter 3 and 4 of 2018.
 - 5.2.2 Following this, that services commissioned in 2018 can be considered in Quarter 1 and 2 of 2019 such as Homelessness Prevention and Residential Childrens Homes Framework Contract.

Fiona Fleming

Head of Commissioning

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Skills: Councillor James McInnes

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Commissioning Liaison Member Protocol

Summer 2017

This is a guidance document prepared by the scrutiny team to support the effective working of the nominated Commissioning Liaison Member/s from each scrutiny committee. The role was established following a recommendation made by the 'Scrutiny in a Commissioning Council' Task Group 2016. The full report and recommendations can be viewed [here](#).

Purpose:

The task group felt that nominating a member from each committee to develop positive relationships with Cabinet Members and Lead Officers to find out about commissioning activity would strengthen the effectiveness of scrutiny. The Commissioning Liaison Member will undertake to:

1. Understand the Council's commissioning processes and priorities;
2. Act as a link between Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee and bring to the attention of the Scrutiny Chair and Committee:
 - significant commissioning activity
 - performance or service delivery issues relating to services commissioned through external providers
3. Support the Scrutiny Committee to examine the commissioning of services within the wider context of the Council's strategic vision and purpose

This does not affect the legal duties around commissioning and provider relations particularly in relation to health scrutiny.

Approach:

To carry out this role in the most effective way the Commissioning Liaison Members from each committee have agreed to meet as a group on a regular basis to:

1. Receive commissioning training
2. Ensure a consistent approach is taken to the Scrutiny of commissioning
3. Champion the approach to Scrutiny's involvement in commissioning across the Council and Health

The group will also use receive details of forthcoming commissioning activity and individually take this back to each scrutiny committee to report at the work programme with suggestions about how the committee might be involved in commissioning activity.

Review and development

It is proposed that the effectiveness of this role could be reviewed in line with the task group recommendation after six months of operation.

In future there may be the opportunity to undertake specific scrutiny investigations relating to commissioning as directed by each relevant scrutiny committee.