

Forward Plan reference number: *Not applicable*

Report title: <i>Contract award for Inside Out Coaching Service</i>	
Report to: Councillor Beverley Egan – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Early Years	
Report author: Chris Martin - Commissioning Director – Children, Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism	
Date: 3 rd March 2022	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Clare Burrell - Head of Strategic Commissioning and Policy Strategic Commissioning & Policy - clare.burrell@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Everyone’s Essex

- 1.1 Everyone’s Essex, our new organisation strategy, sets out four strategic aims and 20 commitments. Within the strategic aim of Family, it includes a commitment to family resilience and stability, safety and outcomes for vulnerable children.
- 1.2 Consistent with achieving these commitments, this paper sets out the proposed contract award for the Inside Out Coaching Service, which has been operational across Essex, Hertfordshire and Norfolk County Council areas since 2018, grant funded through the Department for Education (DfE) Innovation Programme to June 2022.
- 1.3 The benefits of awarding the contract for this service are that the intensive coaching approach delivers good outcomes for young people with more complex needs, who have a history of placement instability and can prevent or reduce periods of time that young people are placed in long-term, secure accommodation or residential care.
- 1.4 The contract will deliver additional Social Value in Essex through the employment of local people and through spend via local SMEs in the supply chain.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the recommended option as set out in section 5 to award the contract for delivery of the Inside Out Coaching Service to The Children’s Society, with an annual contract value as set out in section 6.1.1.
- 2.2 To agree to enter into a Collaboration Agreement with Hertfordshire County Council for the purposes of jointly overseeing the monitoring and delivery of this service.

3 Background and Proposal

- 3.1** Essex County Council has an ambition that children and young people are in residential care for the shortest time possible, receive high-quality provision and are supported to achieve a sustainable exit from care. The provision of intensive coaching support ('Inside Out') for young people in care contributes to this aim. The Inside Out programme has been evaluated and proven to deliver good outcomes for young people in care, by enabling a young person's stability through positive support.
- 3.2** Agreement to launch the tender was granted by Cabinet in July 2021 (FP/082/06/21) with amendments agreed via a CMA in December 2021 (FP/249/12/21).
- 3.3** ECC advertised this opportunity via the government's Find A Tender portal, Contracts Finder and on ECC's opportunities listings website. There was a single-stage, open tendering process via ECC's e-sourcing portal within the published timescales.
- 3.4** Two bidders submitted tenders in response to ECC's procurement, The Children's Society and Accounting and Information Services LTD.
- 3.5** The first stage of the tender evaluation process consisted of reviewing the Bidders' responses to ECC's Standard Selection Questionnaire (SSQ) including pass/fail questions, verification that the Bidders comply with the minimum standards and mandatory and discretionary rejection criteria such as financial appraisals, legislative and insurance requirements.
- 3.6** Both submissions passed and were deemed to have satisfied the minimum 50% scoring threshold for the SSQ and progressed to the second stage evaluation of technical responses described below.
- 3.7** The high-level Evaluation Criteria of Part 2 were as follows:
- Commercial response (price) – 30% weighting
 - Technical response (qualitative) – 70% weighting, of which 10% was assigned to Social Value.
- 3.8** Each of the bids were evaluated against the published scoring criteria by the evaluation panel. Subsequently, a moderation meeting was convened to determine the consensus scores for this tender. The panel reached a consensus score for each bid.
- 3.9** The Bidders were asked to submit their Social Value offer by completing the Council's standard TOMs (Themes, Outcomes, Measures) Social Value Calculator along with a supporting statement which was evaluated as set out in the Bidder's guidance.
- 3.10** As part of their technical response, the Bidders were required to respond to questions that had been developed and tested with representatives of Essex and Hertfordshire young people. The scores from this section accounted for 12% of the total evaluation and were evaluated by a panel of care-experienced young

people This has ensured that the evaluation of this service captured the voice of young people.

3.11 The outcome of the evaluation stage resulted in one bid satisfying ECC's minimum quality criteria for this service, which was to achieve the published minimum pass score on every technical question. The Children's Society was the successful bidder and had submitted the most economically advantageous tender with a score of 79.03% which exceeded the minimum pass score. The other tender was disqualified as failure to meet the published minimum pass score resulted in disqualification.

3.12 ECC's procurement was on behalf of ECC and Hertfordshire County Council. It is proposed that ECC enter a collaboration agreement with Hertfordshire County Council to detail the pass through of contractual obligations to Hertfordshire County Council and to ensure payment by Hertfordshire County Council for the services that it uses. The collaboration agreement also sets out the arrangements for management and monitoring of the contract. Entering into the collaboration agreement means that ECC are able to effectively ensure that the terms of its contract with The Children's Society are met and payment is received from Hertfordshire County Council.

4 Links to our Strategic Ambitions

4.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision

- Provide an equal foundation for every child

4.2 There are no direct climate change or environmental implications associated with this decision.

4.3 This report links to the following strategic priorities in the Organisational Strategy 'Everyone's Essex':

- Family Resilience and Stability: By working directly and intensively with young people on a 1:1 basis, the service works to re-establish and strengthen the relationship with either their birth family, carers and peers where this is appropriate.
- Safety: For young people, having the coach can be a lifeline and with their support, allowing them to lead safe and healthy lifestyles whilst taking responsibility for their own decisions.
- Outcomes for vulnerable children: the service works to ensure young people make a successful transition to adulthood, living in stable accommodation, equipped with life skills and moving towards employment and training.

5 Options

5.1 Option 1 (recommended): To award the contract to The Children's Society for an initial 3-year contract term from 1 July 2022, with a 1 year plus 1 year option to extend to 2027 The benefits of awarding this contract will be improving outcomes

for some of the most vulnerable young people in care through the provision of intensive coaching support. The intervention model has evidenced cost avoidance and has been proven to deliver good outcomes for young people in care, by enabling a young person's stability through positive support.

- 5.2** Option 2 (not recommended): To make no contract award and for the grant-funded service to cease on the 30th June 2022. The benefit of this option is that there would be a cost saving of £333,855 annually; however, this option is not recommended due to the risks of poorer outcomes for young people through the loss of a proven programme of intervention, increased longer term costs through young people continuing in high support placements, a likely increase in missing episodes of young people and increased pressure on social care teams.

6 Issues for consideration

6.1 Financial implications

6.1.1 The tender from The Children's Society is at a value of **£333,855** per annum, which falls within the financial envelope budgeted for in the Medium Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) of **£340,000** from 2022/23 onwards. The budget has been funded by reprioritising existing placement budgets.

6.1.2 ECC will act as lead commissioner for the Inside Out coaching Programme on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council. The total contract value is **£673,097** per annum, of which **£339,242** will be recharged to Hertfordshire County Council.

6.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 ECC are a contracting authority for the purposes of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR). It is required to carry out a compliant procurement exercise to award services.

6.2.2 ECC have undertaken a PCR compliant procurement process and can award the services to The Children's Society.

6.2.3 ECC will need to enter into a contract with The Children's Society to set out the terms of service provisions.

6.2.4 As the procurement exercise was also on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council, it is important for ECC to enter into a collaboration agreement to pass through the terms of its contract with The Children's Society and secure payment for the Services used by Hertfordshire.

7 Equality and Diversity Considerations

7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful

- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8 List of Appendices

EQIA

9 List of Background papers

N/A

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date 30/03/2022
Councillor Beverley Egan, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Early Years	

In consultation with:

Executive Director, Corporate Services (S151 Officer)	11.03.2022
Stephanie Mitchener on behalf of Nicole Wood	
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	03.03.2022
Laura Edwards on behalf of Paul Turner	