



Report to Cabinet	Forward Plan reference number: FP/418/02/16
Date of Cabinet Meeting: 21 June 2016	County Divisions affected by the decision: All Divisions
Title of report: Housing Related Support: Post 16 services	
Report by Councillor Dick Madden – Cabinet Member for Adults and Children	
Responsible Director: Nick Presmeg, Director for Commissioning - Vulnerable Adults	
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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. Essex County Council (ECC) commissions Housing Related Support (HRS) services for young people. This report asks the Cabinet to agree to re-commission HRS services to meet the needs of priority cohorts of young people and to reduce the revenue spend by about £1 million per annum.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Agree that HRS services should support the following priority cohorts of young people at risk:
- Vulnerable teenage parents (up to the age of 19yrs. with an additional need or where the baby/child is known to Family Operations);
 - Care leavers (18-21 years old, and up to 25 years old in special circumstances); and
 - 16-18 year olds at risk of homelessness (up to their 19th birthday if known to ECC).
- 2.2. Agree to establish a Single Point of Access model within ECC as the gateway for any vulnerable young people to access HRS services, liaise with District/Borough Council housing and support partners, and allocate appropriate support to eligible vulnerable young people.
- 2.3. Agree that the total budget for HRS services about £2.7m per annum, with the exact expenditure dependent on successful provider bids.

- 2.4. Agree to invite tenders for Housing Related Support: Post 16 Accommodation Support Services to focus on improving outcomes for priority groups of young people at risk across Essex, on a quadrant basis.
- 2.5. Agree that contracts, awarded from the tender process, operate for three years commencing 1 December 2016, with options to extend for up to two years at the sole discretion of the Authority.
- 2.6. Agree that the Director for Commissioning - Vulnerable Adults shall have delegated authority to determine the evaluation criteria in compliance with the principles set out in this report.
- 2.7. Agree that the Executive Director for People Commissioning has delegated authority to approve the award of the contracts to the successful bidders.

3. Vision for new service

- 3.1. ECC intends to commission a quadrant-based model of service provision which will be outcome focussed for priority groups of young people and which will align more closely with our operational services.
- 3.2. A single provider (or consortium of providers) in each quadrant will have a suitably trained workforce in order to deliver a range of flexible service responses which will include prevention and intervention support; access to appropriate accommodation and assessment and support planning which will build resilience and independence. The providers will be asked to better plan and manage move-on opportunities including how they best utilise voids across the county.
- 3.3. Each provider will be required to demonstrate that they can deliver a range of services and have access to suitable and emergency accommodation when required. This will encourage them to develop arrangements with current service providers and retain some of the current provision.
- 3.4. Entry to the services will be managed by two new posts within a single point of access (further described in 4.12) within the Council which will ensure that access is given to those in the key priority groups. They will work closely with Operational Teams and also work with district partners to take a strategic partnership approach to improving the accommodation support system for young people.

4. Background and proposal

- 4.1. ECC has a duty to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children, such as care leavers, and youth at risk of homelessness where they have had a statutory Child in Need assessment or assessed as very vulnerable and at risk of becoming a Child in Need.

- 4.2. However, District/Borough/City Councils are required to house homeless people of all ages in certain circumstances. ECC provides housing related support which does not cover accommodation costs, but does meet the cost of support provided to people as a result of their housing need.
- 4.3. HRS services for young people include advice and guidance on basic life skills, as well as helping young people manage social isolation, education and training, and employment.
- 4.4. HRS services are usually 'tied' to units of accommodation, with the intention that young people will be supported for up to two years. Some people have remained longer due to lack of 'move on' accommodation, or they have been allowed to stay longer as they are settled or do not cause trouble. The Current ECC contracts with eight providers expired in March 2016. Providers have continued provision on an agreed monthly roll-over basis.
- 4.5. HRS support services are currently prescribed in hours, which are based on their assessed needs. However, there is significant variation in the support provided across the county. Current arrangements prevent providers taking a flexible approach to delivering support to young people. Importantly, young people have reported that they are not having all of their support needs met in ways that will enable them to develop the skills they require to achieve their ambitions.
- 4.6. The young people who currently receive support from these services include care leavers up to 21 years old (up to 25 in special circumstances), those aged 16 to 25 at continuing risk of homelessness and vulnerable teenage parents, as shown below.

Table 1. Young people receiving HRS services as at October 2015.

	Teenage Parents			Young people at risk			Young people leaving care	
	16 -17	18-21	22-25	16 -17	18-21	22-25	16 -17	18-21
Number placed:	24	82	12	21	87	11	7	38

- 4.7. Young people aged 19 to 25 years old who have been accommodated in HRS post16-funded places often have low support needs and are easier to manage in placements. This has meant that the more vulnerable 16-18 year-olds, with medium to high level needs and whose placements are more difficult to manage, have not been able to access places. These young people have been placed in more costly emergency or bed and breakfast type accommodation, which is unsuitable.
- 4.8. Currently, young people can only access accommodation through the support of a Joint Referral Panel (JRP); a panel set up and managed by each district council. It is difficult for ECC to use this process because:
- Not all districts have a JRP, and so other more *ad hoc* arrangements are in place for decisions to be made there are many access routes to the JRP

including district councils, other young people and adult services, children's services including the YOS;

- a multiagency approach is not consistent across Essex, which means young people can be allocated unsuitable accommodation and support or decisions can be delayed;
- Some vulnerable young people do not get placed as they are seen as too complex for accommodation in favour of older and more settled clients;
- There are delays in cases being dealt with due to the frequency of JRP meetings which differ across the county;
- Young people with low needs are more likely to be accommodated than more vulnerable young people with medium to high needs.

4.9. Current services have never been competitively commissioned, as they were legacy agreements under the national Supporting People programme.

4.10. The Council currently has contracts with eight organisations providing HRS services to young people, as shown below

Table 2. Current HRS providers.

Provider Name	Primary Client Group	District/Locality	No of units
Circle Support	Young people at risk (16-25 yo)	Brentwood	40
Colchester YMCA	Young people at risk	Colchester	43
Colne Housing	Homeless families	Maldon	4
East Living	Teenage parents	Epping Forest	13
East Living	Young people at risk	Harlow	116
Family Mosaic Housing	Young people leaving care	Basildon, Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Harlow	40
Family Mosaic Housing	Young people at risk	Braintree, Chelmsford and Colchester	70
Family Mosaic Housing	Teenage parents	Braintree, Colchester and Tendring	36
Nacro Community Enterprises	Young people at risk	Basildon, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon, Rochford, Tendring	215
Nacro Community Enterprises	Teenage parents	Castle Point, Chelmsford and Rochford	28
Salvation Army	Young people at risk	Braintree	14
Swan HA	Teenage parents	Basildon	24
Swan HA	Young people at risk	Basildon	16

Proposal for new services

4.11. HRS services will need to:

- Meet the needs of priority cohorts:
 - Vulnerable teenage parents (up to the age of 19yrs. with additional needs or where the baby/child is known to Family Operations);

- Care leavers (18-21 years old, and up to 25 years old in special circumstances);
 - 16-18 year olds at risk of homelessness (up to their 19th Birthday if known to ECC);
 - Be flexible and adaptable in terms of how the support is provided; and
 - Support the achievement of outcomes for vulnerable young people.
- 4.12. A Single Point of Access will be established to sit within ECC's People Operations. Two positions will be created to manage all admissions and liaise with district housing and support partners, and to:
- ensure all assessments are complete and comprehensive to enable them to understand the needs of young people to make sound matching and placement decisions;
 - prevent delays in young people being placed in appropriate accommodation and linked support;
 - work with referrers to ensure young people's expectations are managed; and
 - oversee and better influence the management of empty units to prevent them standing empty for too long and accruing increased costs.
- 4.13. The positions will not manage individual cases but will take a strategic partnership approach to improving the accommodation support system for young people. These posts will be funded within the available budget and will be reviewed in line with the contract end date.
- 4.14. Improved move-on accommodation will be increased and made available for young people when they have been assessed as ready to live more independently, rather than waiting the two years that some young people need in supported accommodation before they start to look, which is often the case currently.
- 4.15. Accommodation support will be delivered to young people with medium to high assessed needs and the workforce will be better able to manage complex and challenging needs and behaviours which will lead to reduced numbers of young people being evicted or from disengaging from support offered. This will mainly be due to the new outcome focused contract that offers opportunities for suppliers to be more flexible and creative with young people.
- 4.16. By having an improved referral and assessment process that prioritises the key groups for ECC (identified above) the number of places required will be reduced because some 19-25 year-olds will not be accommodated within this programme.
- 4.17. HRS services will be structured, outcome-focused with clear goals including:
- Building resilience;
 - Developing living and functioning skills;
 - Emotional wellbeing interventions;

- Building healthy relationships; and
 - Addressing risk behaviours.
- 4.18. In order to achieve these goals, it is anticipated that providers will need to demonstrate:
- Prevention and early intervention support;
 - Access to appropriate accommodation;
 - Supported by a competent skilled workforce;
 - Assessment and Support Planning;
 - Risk Assessment/Management;
 - Integrated Working/Partnership Working;
 - Wraparound Service/floating support type provision;
 - Support/interventions;
 - Peer support;
 - Education/training/peer support and volunteering;
 - Move-on approach, including family reunification;
 - Emergency placements;
- 4.19. All young people currently receiving HRS services will have their cases reviewed and those who are not in one of the priority groups (as described at paragraph 2.1) will transition into other more appropriate support.
- 4.20. Other support includes ECC's Single Homelessness with Support Needs Service that provides accommodation for 18–25 year olds and Floating Support, which is generic support provision for young people and adults with low level assessed needs. It is anticipated that some young people/adults will also return home or to family members.

Procurement approach

- 4.21. The proposed ECC commissioning model is to commission a single contractor for each quadrant-based service which uses the ECC's Family Operations quadrants. The contract will require the provider:
- To focus on the outcomes and the ambitions young people need or want to achieve;
 - Not to tie support to particular accommodation, although the successful provider will need to have access to accommodation;
 - To be flexible and responsive;
 - To provide support as allocated by ECC rather than by an external panel. ECC will allocate using eligibility criteria so that the service can only be accessed by the priority groups set out in paragraph 2.1; and
 - To ensure young people to transition into universal services as they become more independent.
- 4.22. ECC will require providers to continue to build relationships with District/Borough/City Councils and housing providers to ensure that they continue to provide housing to young people who meet the criteria for this new contract, and support a process whereby issues and challenges of existing placements can be resolved quickly and easily along with agreeing

improved management of voids and securing move-on accommodation to meet the needs of priority cohorts.

- 4.23. Indicative funding for HRS services is about £2.7m per annum, which is a reduction of £1m from the current budget. ECC will continue to support vulnerable young people in the priority groups specified at paragraph 2.1. Those young people not in these priority groups may have access to other ECC HRS services, and will be signposted accordingly through ECC's proposed Single Point of Access approach.
- 4.24. A lead provider model is the preferred approach for each quadrant, with the expectation that the lead provider works with other providers in the same quadrant. This will maintain the opportunity for more specialist providers to bid either in their own right, or as part of a consortium, to ensure that we have the right level and mix of support provision in place.
- 4.25. Contracts will be procured via a single stage process. The award criteria will be based on the most economically advantageous tender based on 70% Price and 30% Quality, with a further split down into a 60% mark for quality.
- 4.26. The Director for Commissioning Vulnerable People will determine the award criteria.
- 4.27. Contracts will be for three years initially, with ECC having the right to extend. ECC will not extend beyond 5 years.
- 4.28. Housing providers should not rely on HRS budgets to support the general running costs of their accommodation, and should adjust their cost base accordingly.
- 4.29. Providers will need to ensure access to accommodation needed to provide support services.
- 4.30. ECC will work with providers to determine appropriate transitional arrangements for young people moving into the new provision, and for those moving on to other types of support (if they are not within the priority groups), to be completed within two months from the award of contracts.
- 4.31. ECC will apply a robust performance management approach which will include closely monitoring, evaluation and reporting of young people accessing HRS services and the outcomes they achieve through their support. Providers will be required to prepare reports on a quarterly basis which will include safeguarding and evictions measures, as well as case studies to demonstrate the impact HRS is having to young people. Reporting will inform the agenda for quarterly reviews led jointly by ECC commissioners and commercial contract managers.

4.32. An indicative timeline is set out below.

Date	Task
21 June	Cabinet Report considered
29 June	Invitation to tender published
4 Aug	Tender closes
5 Aug – 5 Sept	Evaluation
5 – 30 Sept	Award
Oct – Nov	Transition
1 st Dec	New contracts commence

5. Policy Context and Outcomes Framework

- 5.1. The best place for young people to thrive is within a family home environment and ECC is committed to ensuring this is the first choice where possible.
- 5.2. However, where this is not possible ECC supports District/Borough/City Council's responsibilities to provide housing for the homeless by way of Housing Related Support - Post 16 Accommodation Support.
- 5.3. The young people supported by these services include Care Leavers; vulnerable teenage parents, and other young people at risk. The support services include budgeting, building resilience and improving the readiness for living independently.
- 5.4. When properly targeted, and monitored to ensure outcomes are delivered for priority groups of young people, these services will form an important part of supporting vulnerable young people, and help deliver the following ECC Corporate outcomes:
 - Children in Essex get the best start in life
 - People in Essex enjoy good health and wellbeing
 - People in Essex live in safe communities and are protected from harm
 - People in Essex can live independently and exercise control over their lives.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The 2015/16 outturn for these Housing Related Support (HRS) Post 16 Accommodation Support services was in line with budget at £3.74m.
- 6.2. The 2016/17 budget is £2.94m as full year procurement savings, which were expected at the point the budget was set, cannot be realised. Given that the new contract will not be let until December 2016 only a part-year effect of the contract saving (£333,333) is expected to be secured in 2016/17.

- 6.3. This falls short of budgeted ambition by £466,667 so now commissioners will explore all opportunities to help mitigate the shortfall. These will be brought forward in July 2016.
- 6.4. The proposal is to award a 3 year contract with the possibility of further extensions for a further two years, subject to funding being identified and a review of the outcomes.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Broadly speaking the Council is under no statutory duty to provide accommodation support for young people identified in this report but has historically done so, although it has other duties under the Children Act 1989 and subsequent guidance in relation to care leavers. The proposal is to maintain the budget for these services but procure in a way which seeks to better meet the needs of Essex young people. It also has the duty to prevent care needs from arising. These services can contribute towards those duties.
- 7.2. This service is a social services contract which comes under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 light touch regime. It is proposed the procurement process will be conducted using a single stage open tender advertised through the OJEU and the Council's opportunities website.
- 7.3. Bidders will be required to achieve a minimum of 60% of the total quality score. If this minimum quality is not achieved ECC will reserve the right to exclude the bidder from further consideration. The full evaluation criteria will be set by the Director for Integrated Commissioning and Vulnerable People Director.

8. Staffing and other resource implications

- 8.1. ECC officers will prepare and run the tender under business as usual and will be responsible for monitoring the performance against the contract once it has been awarded.
- 8.2. The providers of the existing services have staff employed to provide similar service provision and whose posts largely match those required for this service. It is the view of ECC that TUPE may apply to these posts and providers will be advised to seek their own advice on this matter. ECC will ensure all TUPE information will be obtained and included in the tender documentation.
- 8.3. These proposals will see the creation of two additional posts within Family Operations to manage the allocation of placements, to oversee and guide the countywide operational processes on a day to day basis and to support the ECC contract management function on a quarterly basis.

9. Equality and Diversity implications

- 9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when ECC makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (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.
- 9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 9.3 The equality impact assessment is attached at appendix 4 and indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.
- 9.4 The specification for the service will specifically require that the provider will be able to deliver a service for the cohorts of young people identified in this report regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexuality or disability.

10. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

11. List of Background Papers

None.