

People and Families Scrutiny Committee. 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

## Summary paper

### **Proposal for a new contract for ECL day opportunities and inclusive employment: 'LIVE' service: Learning, Innovation, Volunteering and Employment**

#### **1. Background and current position**

In order to meet its' duties under the Care Act 2014, Essex County Council (ECC) currently commission a range of services known as 'day opportunities'. These services provide opportunities for adults with disabilities and older people to take part in activities outside their home, as well as enabling a break for family carers.

Essex Cares Ltd (trading as ECL) are the largest provider of these services in Essex. Engagement with adults with disabilities has indicated that the current services are popular with some but not all and are not what the next generation want. Alongside this, ECC's strategic direction of travel is to focus on increasing the number of adults with disabilities engaged in meaningful employment.

The current commissioned arrangements are restrictive with ECL funded per adult per attendance at a day centre.

#### **2. Overview of national and local strategic direction**

Our local strategic ambition is to increase the number of adults within meaningful paid employment which is aligned with national policy and legislation.

The British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) are championing employment and recognise the role that local authorities have to support this agenda. In May 2018, BASE and ADASS published Top Tips on Supported Employment which set out that:

*"Councils can play an important role in helping people with a disability who are in receipt of social care to find and maintain a job if they want one, at the same time managing future demand for council-funded social care and helping employers to benefit from a more diverse workforce."*

#### **3. ECC Meaningful Lives Matter programme (MLM)**

Employment is a key focus area of ECC's Meaningful Lives Matter (MLM), our four year transformation programme for people with a learning disability and/or autism. MLM is the priority programme in Adult Social Care (ASC). This is for several reasons including high financial spend, when compared to other Local Authorities, and great opportunities to improve people's life outcomes. One focus area within MLM is employment. Essex performs well compared to other local authority areas (2019/20 data return showed 16% of 18 to 64 year olds with a learning disability known to ASC in employment, compared to a national average of 6%) but this is not good enough to reach our ambitions.

Many young people and adults who currently attend day opportunities have told commissioners that they want paid jobs in a variety of industries but that support and

opportunities for them to access this employment is currently limited. This is a systemic issue covering education, adult learning, social care, local employers as well as societal expectations and understanding.

#### **4. 100 Day Challenge**

Between April and July 2019 the MLM programme ran a “100 Day Challenge” for adults with learning disabilities and autism in three of ECL’s day centres. The broad focus of the challenge was to explore more meaningful activity for those adults attending the centres, particularly to progress them into employment.

Within the 100 days, 9 adults secured paid employment, which reduced the use of commissioned services. A further 14 adults accessed volunteering as a step towards paid employment. This provided further evidence for ECC, ECL and partners that there are adults known to our services who are ‘job ready’ and opportunities for progression and employment do already exist in Essex and can be achieved when facilitated.

#### **5. Overview of proposal to seek approval from Cabinet to award a new day opportunities and inclusive employment contract to ECL**

Officers wish to go to Cabinet in February 2020, to seek approval to directly award an outcome focused contract to ECL to allow ECL the flexibility in service delivery to effectively respond to individuals’ wishes and aspirations now and in the future.

We wish to seek approval to award a new contract to ECL:

- to deliver an improved model of care for building based day opportunities for adults with disabilities and older people;
- and to deliver an inclusive employment service for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism who currently attend ECL building based day opportunities;

The new contract would require ECL to provide for adults with disabilities and/or older adults across Essex:

- meaningful activities;
- support for individuals to develop new skills;
- support for individuals to maximise their independence;
- support for individuals to travel safely and independently;
- support for individuals to access their local communities, including social, leisure and health opportunities.

#### **6. Why ECL?**

ECC have worked with ECL as a strategic partner throughout and since the 100 Day Challenge and the recommendation to Teckal award to ECL is for a number of reasons:

- 1) ECL have evidenced that their staff could work in a way that focusses on increasing people’s skills and independence to employment.
- 2) as the lead provider of day opportunities in Essex, ECL are well positioned to work with the adults who attend their centres who could be supported into employment. The wider day

ops market is fragmented and would not be able to deliver this system change at scale, for all cohorts of service users, without a long period of market shaping and procurement.

3) This would be a transformational contract reflecting our strategic intention to work with ECL on innovative and transformational projects.

4) this continues to develop the investment into the progressive and outcome focused service ECL have started to establish over the last two years.

5) this service would not be starting from scratch; ECL have already invested in training for their staff and the cultural shift to focus on employment across the organisation has already started as it's recognised that the traditional model does not fit our collective ambitions.

6) ECC can commission these changes within the existing financial envelope of the ECL contract, rather than investing new money into a new service.

Having these services within a single contract would allow for adults to seamlessly move to and from different offers depending on their needs and wishes. For example, an adult with Down's Syndrome may currently be attending a day centre three a days a week but may have the unrealised potential to be able to work. ECL could support this adult to gain the skills and confidence to obtain employment thus reducing the need to attend the day centre. The same adult may develop dementia later in their life and ECL would be able to assess and respond to their changing needs and move them to attend an appropriate older person's day centre where they could socialise and be mentally stimulated and continue to live a good life.

## **7. New contract duration**

Officers would recommend to Cabinet in February 2020, that a five plus two year contract is awarded to ECL, giving ECL sufficient time to work with key partners, individuals and families to achieve real transformational change.

Built into the contract would be a formal review point at the end of year 2, clear outcomes measures and a payment mechanism to incentivise performance.

## **8. Future opportunities**

ECL currently run their day opportunity services from 25 buildings across Essex, 20 of which are owned by ECC.

A new contract would potentially reduce the number of buildings needed as it would be expected that ECL would see a decrease in the number of adults accessing day centres ongoing and an increase in adults moving from day centres and into employment.

Subsequently, decisions on the future use of the building(s) would be taken by ECC on a building by building basis and could achieve future savings and/or opportunities for other community based provision and partnership work.

## **9. For consideration and discussion by Scrutiny Committee**

Officers welcome discussion and thoughts from Scrutiny Committee in relation to the above outlined proposal to attend Cabinet in February 2020 to seek approval to directly award the contract to ECL to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

To summarise and conclude, our proposal is made for several reasons including that:

- the proposed service offer aligns with our vision for MLM, ASC including the Essex Business Plan for Adult Social Care and ECC's Organisation Strategy;
- a high proportion of adults with disabilities do not want building based activities ongoing and would welcome support to realise their potential and to access employment;
- ECC and ECL have worked together for several years as strategic partners, including with the 100 Day Challenge;
- The current contract pays ECL for attendance of each adult at a buildings based service and we wish to move to outcome based commissioning. ECL have been evolving their day service model for the last two years to support this. This transformation will continue for older people and adults with profound and multiple disabilities using building based centres to develop meaningful activities, new skills, maximise independence, travel training, community engagement to facilitate adults to become active members of their local community.
- the proposed new contract would be in fitting with the Prevention agenda and demand management for adult social care services. People in employment are more likely to experience positive mental, social and financial wellbeing, and to prevent, reduce or delay their need for statutory care and support. Adults not in employment are at greater risk of social isolation, financial hardship, poor mental and physical health which can result in a reliance and increase in demand for statutory care and support.