

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Cost and Volume for Fostering Contracts
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 29 April 2014
Cabinet Member: Councillor Williams
CMT Member: Carole Burgoyne (Strategic Director for People)
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Ref: EC/CV
Key Decision: No
Part: I

Purpose of the report:

Cabinet is asked to approve the re-procurement of the Cost and Volume for Fostering contracts. These are framework contracts which aim to ensure the sufficient supply of independent sector foster placements for children and young people in the care of Plymouth City Council. The contract places significant emphasis on the quality of provision, but also aims to ensure good value for money is achieved.

The framework contracts have been in place since 2007, although they have been re-procured twice during this time. The current contracts expire on 31 January 2015.

The framework contract is procured in partnership with Devon County Council and Torbay Council, with Plymouth City Council as lead commissioner. It is proposed to re-procure the contracts using a Restricted procedure.

The spend on independent sector foster placements at £6.34 million for 2013/14 represents a significant proportion of the Children's Social Care budget and as such requires the approval of Cabinet to proceed with the re-procurement. For reasons of commercial confidentiality the full detail of the proposed re-procurement is included within a separate Part II report which contains the outline business case.

The Brilliant Co-operative Council Corporate Plan 2013/14 -2016/17:

The re-procurement of the Cost and Volume contract aligns with the Corporate Plan in the following ways:

Co-operative Values	How the Cost and Volume tender will align with the Corporate Plan
We are Democratic – Plymouth is a place where people can have a say about what is important to them and where they can change what happens in their lives.	The re-tender will take into account the views of children and young people in care, as well as those of providers and their foster carers to ensure the new contract is representative of their views and allows their voices to continue to be heard.

We are responsible - we take responsibility for our actions, care about their impact on other and expect others will do the same.	We will act as lead commissioner to ensure we lead the tender process responsibly and set good examples to those involved.
We are fair – we will be honest and open in how we act, treat everyone with respect, champion fairness and create opportunities.	We will run an open tender process in line with Contract Standing Orders, to ensure that opportunities are equal for all.
We are partners – we will provide strong community leadership and work together to deliver our common ambition.	We will work in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to design and procure the new contract. We will also work closely with the independent fostering market to ensure we commission a service that meets the needs of our most vulnerable children. We will ensure that partners feel they have contributed to the process.

Corporate Objectives	How the Cost and Volume tender will align with the Corporate Plan
Pioneering Plymouth – we will be pioneering by designing and delivering better services that are more accountable, flexible and efficient in spite of reducing resources.	The tender will include proposals to improve the performance of the contract both in terms of the quality of provision and the use of resources to ensure maximum value for money.
Growing Plymouth – we will make our city a great place to live by creating opportunities for better learning and greater investment, with more jobs and homes.	The re-procurement of the contracts will encourage providers to recruit, train and support more foster carers in the city, providing them with the confidence to contribute fully and enjoy life in the city.
Caring Plymouth – we will promote a fairer, more equal city investing in communities, putting citizens at the heart of decision making, promoting independence and reducing health and social inequality.	The new framework contracts give great emphasis to the caring task, and the necessity to treat children and young people in care with equal respect and kindness, helping them to develop into contented and responsible adults.
Confident Plymouth – we will work towards creating a more confident city, being proud of what we can offer and growing our reputation nationally and internationally.	The framework contract states very clearly how we expect our children and young people to be treated in foster care. It also seeks to encourage foster carers to operate within the city boundaries and work with a local authority which has much to offer them.

Corporate Outcomes	How the Cost and Volume tender will align with the Corporate Plan
The Council provides and enables brilliant services that strive to exceed customer expectations.	We will endeavour to work with providers who are graded Good or above by Ofsted, and work closely with those graded adequate to support them to improve the quality of their provision.

A Council that uses resources wisely.	The tender aims to improve value for money through increasing competition through the re-tendering of the framework, which has already demonstrated substantial savings.
Children, young people and adults are safe and confident in their communities.	Through the specification for the contract we will work to ensure good outcomes for children in the care of the Local Authority through placing them with agencies with a good track record, where their interests, education, emotional stability and futures are priorities.
People are treated with dignity and respect.	As above – contract monitoring processes including site visits will ensure that this is a priority.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land:**

Finance

The spend on independent sector placements represents a significant proportion of the budget for Children’s Social Care. The re-procurement of the framework contracts will aim to continue to achieve good value for money. Monitoring against the Children’s Social Care budget will continue to be carried out by the Finance team as it is currently.

Human Resources,

There are no implications for Human Resources as a result of the re-procurement.

IT

There are no implications for IT as a result of the re-procurement.

Land/Buildings

There are no implications for Land/Buildings as a result of the re-procurement.

Equality and Diversity:

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? Yes (please refer to the Background papers)

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that the re-procurement of the Cost and Volume for Fostering framework contracts is approved, in line with the detail in the Business Case in the Part II Report.

Reason:

These framework contracts aim to ensure the sufficient supply of independent sector foster placements for children and young people in the care of Plymouth City Council

Alternative options considered and rejected:

The alternative options considered are outlined in the Part II report.

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Equality Impact Assessment	✓									

Sign off:

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Originating SMT Member Alison Botham, Assistant Director, Children's Social Care							
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes							