

Open Report on behalf of Peter Duxbury, Executive Director Adults and Children's

Report to:	Councillor Mrs PA Bradwell, Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Adult Learning
Date:	16 January 2012
Subject:	East Lindsey - Provision of support to enhance early learning with the home (HELP)
Decision Reference:	02004
Key decision?	No

Summary:

Interim contracts were put in place for Children's Centres for 2011-12 pending the implementation of a 3 year procurement plan. Whilst a 3 year procurement plan was agreed in principle with Assistant Directors last year, work on implementing that procurement plan was subsequently put on hold pending a review of the core offer and delivery plan arrangements for Lincolnshire Children's Centres which is still ongoing.

The waiver of the contract regulations will enable the existing contracting arrangements to continue to deliver consistent services and ensure continuity of support whilst development work is completed.

During the period of this waiver, commissioning intentions will be explored further with a view to the development of a 3 year contract from April 2013, which will be open to competition.

In view of the fact that the service under the current specification will run for 12 months only, during which time work will be completed on the review of the Children Centre core offer and delivery plan, with the outcome of this informing the procurement plan, we do not believe that this service will be of interest to other Providers at this time.

Recommendation(s):

The Executive Councillor is asked to consider the report and approve recommendation to:

1) enter into a contract with the Birth to Five Service to continue to deliver the Home Early Learning Project (HELP) within East Lindsey from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. The value of this contract being £100,000

2) authorise the Director of Children's Services to take all decisions necessary to implement the contract

Alternatives Considered:

1. The current provider has experience of working in the area and this will enable continuity of delivery and support to the children and families within East Lindsey, alternatives in this instance have not been considered.

Advantages

The Birth to Five Service is currently providing the service in East Lindsey, with established relationships with locality teams and service users in place.

Disadvantages

Awarding the contract in this way, precludes competition, however, it is the intention to consider commissioning intentions during 2012, with a view to having a formal tender process following the completion of the development of the Children Centre core offer. It is therefore not considered viable to go out to competitive tender at this time.

Reasons for Recommendation:

It is the intention of the Director of Children's Services to expose this service to competition in the future. The timescale for this will be determined to enable a new contract to be in place by April 2013.

In the meantime it is important that the high standard of provision continues to remain with the Birth to Five services, who are known to Lincolnshire Children's Services.

1. Background

The Birth to Five Service is a well known experienced provider.

The need for this service was identified via the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and professionals within the locality team

The target group are those families where children are predicted to be within the lowest achieving within the profile, based on agreed indicators such as poor provision of a language rich environment in the home, and poor parental engagement in play activities.

Access to this service is via the SAF as an holistic assessment of need, with strength and difficulty questionnaires being developed as part of this project, based upon six areas of learning.

The expected outcomes from this service are:

Increased parental engagement in play and sustained involvement in their child's learning

Increase in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores, particularly in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Literacy

The outcomes are being measured via effective contract management on a quarterly basis, which includes data, evaluations and consented case studies

2. Conclusion

The current provider is well known to locality teams, children and families. By agreeing to this waiver of contracted regulations will mean continued provision of support to children and their families in East Lindsey.

3. Legal Comments:

This decision is within the remit of the Executive Councillor's decision-making powers.

4. Resource Comments:

The Council's Contract Regulations state the exceptional circumstances in which competition may be limited. Given the circumstances outlined in this report, it is considered that the recommendations offer the best value for money over the medium term, by allowing the current service to be safeguarded whilst a county-wide procurement exercise takes place.

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

n/a

c) Scrutiny Comments

n/a

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Lynn Brammer, who can be contacted on 01522 554076 or lynn.brammer@lincolnshire.gov.uk