

**Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	<b>Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell, Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Adult Learning</b>
Date:	<b>09 March 2012</b>
Subject:	<b>Provision of support to enhance early learning with the home (HELP) - East Lindsey and North Kesteven localities</b>
Decision Reference:	<b>02028</b>
Key decision?	<b>No</b>

**Summary:**

This waiver is supplementary to the earlier waiver of 22 November 2011 in respect of the East Lindsey HELP Provision.

Based upon the initial year's evaluations and the benefits to the families involved, it is proposed to further expand the current pilot project to include targeted families within North Kesteven and to consolidate the HELP contract to include delivery in both East Lindsey and North Kesteven accordingly.

The value of the combined and expanded contract will be £198,000 per annum, based on a one year contract commencing 1/4/2012 and ending 31/3/2013 with an original value of £100,000.

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. This will be dependent upon the evaluation of the pilot.

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. Furthermore, this would create a gap in continuity of services via the existing pilot provision.

**Recommendation(s):**

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

- 1) to work with the Birth to Five Service to expand the current HELP pilot being

delivered within East Lindsey (from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013) to include targeted families within North Kesteven and to consolidate the contract accordingly.

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 and the expansion of the service to targeted families within North Kesteven. It is the intention of the Director of Children's Services to expose this service to competition in the future with a view to a new contract being in place by April 2013. In this respect, therefore, no further alternatives are being considered at this time.

#### **Advantages**

The Birth to Five Service, which is part of CfBT and, therefore, existing contracted provision, are 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:**

This provision supports the objectives for early intervention and improved school readiness. The Governments vision for the foundation years "Supporting Families in the Foundation Years "states" Research has shown that language development at age two is very strongly associated with later school readiness, with early communication environment in the home providing the strongest influence on language at two - stronger than social background".

The expected outcomes from this services are:

- ~ Increased parental engagement in play and sustained involvement in their child's learning
- ~ Increase in Early Years Foundation Stage profiles scores, particularly in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and communication, Language and Literacy.

The evaluations from the initial year's pilot HELP project are sound and

extremely encouraging.

The pilot is also providing very good value for money with 75% of staff time being spent in direct contact with families and low management costs. This project supports the principles of Early Intervention, Narrowing the Gap and the redefined Core Purpose for Lincolnshire Children's Centres.

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 service, 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 Team Around the Child (TAC) as a holistic assessment of need, with strength and difficulty questionnaires being developed as part of this project, based upon six areas of learning.

## **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 and the expansion of the provision to include targeted families in North Kesteven.

## **3. Legal Comments:**

The requested exception to the normal contracting route is within the remit of the Executive Councillor under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

## **4. Resource Comments:**

The Council's Contract Regulations state the exceptional circumstances in which competition may be limited. The report explains the circumstances and indicates the intention to create a new contract from April 2013 which will be open to competition.

## **5. Consultation**

**a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?**

**b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?**

Yes

**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 Naomi Prendergast, who can be contacted on 01522 553344 or [naomi.prendergast@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:naomi.prendergast@lincolnshire.gov.uk)