

**Agenda Item No: 6 (n)****DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****16 November 2017****Report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services****Accommodation and Support Services for Children in Care, 16 and 17 year-old Homeless Young People, Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children – (Young People)****1. Purpose of Report**

To seek Cabinet approval to undertake a procurement exercise for the provision of accommodation and support services for Children in Care, Care Leavers, 16 and 17 year-old homeless young people and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The proposed contract will be for a period of 3 years with the option to extend the contract twice by periods up to 2 further years (maximum total 7).

**2. Information and Analysis**

The number of children in care is rising and costs are increasing as local authorities seek new placements to accommodate a national rise in the children in care population, particularly amongst teenagers. Most local authorities will also receive an initial cohort of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) who will be Children in Care and will subsequently become care leavers. An increasing percentage of placements for Children in Care are being made in the private and independent sector. There are currently 150 Children in Care in Derbyshire aged 16 and over.

The following table sets out the number of young people needing accommodation and support in Derbyshire per annum:

	Number of young people needing accommodation and support per annum
Care leavers	75
Late entrants	40
UASC (over 16)	Up to 30*
Total	145

\*If Derbyshire County Council took their maximum allocation from the Nation Transfer Scheme (NTS).

There are approximately 75 young people leaving care each year in Derbyshire who have a legal entitlement for a leaving care service. A proportion of these remain in their current placement under 'staying put' arrangements, while a further proportion move directly into independent living. The remainder need some further support to enhance their skills to enable them to move towards independence; and therefore need supported or semi-supported living arrangements to help facilitate this progression.

Derbyshire County Council has committed to care for up to a maximum of 108 UASC within the terms of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). Although the scheme is currently in a lull, and numbers of UASC transferring to Derbyshire has not been as high as expected, Derbyshire's Children in Care population is likely to rise as a result, with two thirds of UASC expected to be young people aged 16 and 17. Nationally, 50% of UASC aged 16 to 17 live in unregulated accommodation.

Derbyshire County Council takes approximately 40 late entrants into care each year. Late entrants are classed as young people coming into care after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. A proportion of these late entrants will require supported or semi-independent accommodation.

### Current arrangements

There are currently 2 contracts in place to provide supported housing to children in care and care leavers. These are:

- 1) Care leaver's accommodation contract which provides 45 units of accommodation in supervised hubs within Derbyshire. Due to issues in finding suitable accommodation and low levels of occupancy in some of the units, the total number of units currently being commissioned is 30. The contracts were initially for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for a further period of 2 years and is due to expire on 30 September 2018; and
- 2) Derbyshire Accommodation and Support Team (DAST) contract, made up of a consortium of three providers, known collectively as SAFE. The SAFE contract provides 43 units of accommodation. This contract commenced on 1 April 2017 and is due to expire on the 30 September 2018.

In addition to these contracts, there are 'spot-purchase arrangements' whereby Children's Services also spot-purchase accommodation from a range of providers for 16/17 year-old late entrants into care and care

leavers. However there is not always a supply of suitable accommodation in areas where care leavers want to live and spot-purchases tend to be more costly than contracted accommodation.

Children's Services also currently places a small proportion of 16 and 17 year-olds and care leavers in 'unregulated accommodation'; meaning accommodation which is not subject to Ofsted inspection. Children in care and care leavers aged over 16 can live in unregulated accommodation, provided prescribed standards are met.

### Needs Assessment

At its meeting on 24 May 2016, Cabinet gave approval to undertake a needs assessment and seek the views of care leavers, vulnerable adults and relevant stakeholders in preparation for a procurement process to supply accommodation and support to young people (minute number 157/16). The views of care leavers and other stakeholders (including aftercare workers, social workers, advocates, independent reviewing officers and housing officers) were sought about the current service and the arrangements for accommodation they would want to see in place.

The outcome of the needs assessment is that care leavers have said they want more of what is already available; self-contained units of accommodation, supportive and knowledgeable staff and accommodation in the areas where young people are in care and want to live. It is noted that there is currently a lack of suitable accommodation in the Amber Valley area.

### Commissioning Proposals

#### Accommodation

The young people for whom accommodation is sought comprise two groups:

- a) those who have been in care on a long-term basis and who are aged 16+. Many of these will want to "stay put" with their carers until they are at least 18 years old, however some will be determined to move into more independent arrangements as soon as they can. The choice for young people to "stay put" will not be affected by these proposals; and
- b) those who are aged primarily 16/17 and who enter care to prevent them becoming homeless – options for this group are placements in residential children's homes, foster care placements and some would require semi-independent living arrangements.

These needs tend to present as emergencies allowing little time to find suitable accommodation with the consequence that some are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation or expensive spot-purchase arrangements are required to be made.

In order to deliver the required accommodation, it is proposed that a procurement exercise is undertaken for a county-wide service with one provider or a consortium of providers to deliver the service.

The contract would include both supervised accommodation for young people with higher levels of need and, for those ready to move towards greater independence, individual tenancies for shared accommodation and individual unit accommodation. The level of demand is variable within each locality and the proposed contracts would include:

Locality	Supervised bed spaces	Semi-supported bed spaces
Chesterfield	5	11
North East Derbyshire & Bolsover	0	10
Erewash	5	8
Amber Valley	0	10
South Derbyshire & South Dales	5	8
High Peak & North Dales	5	8
Total	20	55

Organisations would be encouraged to work together to submit tenders as a consortium. Providers would be required to work with the social housing and independent sector accommodation providers to attempt to increase provision locally and in order to be responsive to the needs of young people in areas where accommodation is currently limited.

It will be necessary to give 6 months' notice to existing providers to terminate existing contracts. Existing providers will be able to bid for the new contract should they wish.

### Floating Support

In addition to commissioning accommodation and support for Children's Services, the provider will also be expected to deliver tenancy support to vulnerable adults aged 18 to 25 living in the community. This support will be funded by Adult Social Care budget.

The impact of these proposals on young people would be to improve the choice of accommodation located across all districts of the county

in accordance with projected local need. This would mean less necessity to move to where accommodation is available.

### **3. Financial Considerations**

The combined cost of the two current contracts (page 2 of this report) amount to £1.75m per annum.

The new contract will be £1.42m per annum and the total contract value over the 3 years will be £4.27m.

### **4. Legal Considerations**

The Council has a duty under the Leaving Care Act 2000 to support and promote the welfare of eligible care leavers by maintaining them in suitable accommodation and providing other support services.

The procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

### **5. Human Resources Considerations**

Where the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 apply information about existing personnel who currently carry out the services will be provided to all tendering organisations as part of the procurement process.

### **6. Social Value Considerations**

In considering the award of this contract, work will be undertaken with the successful supplier during the lifetime of the contract where appropriate to capture and deliver social value initiatives.

The service will be based within Derbyshire and will therefore employ local people and provide jobs in the local economy.

The provider will be expected to support young people to become independent as they approach adulthood and give them the necessary skills to be able to manage a tenancy of their own.

They will help young people to remove barriers they may have in accessing employment, education or training opportunities to enable them to achieve their potential and have the skills and confidence to enter the workplace.

**7. Equality Considerations**

The proposals have taken into account the views of care leavers as set out above.

**8. Environmental Considerations**

Accommodation will be provided in all districts across the county, minimising the need for young people to travel outside their district in order to access services.

**9. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder; and health and transport considerations.

**10. Key Decision      No**

**11. Call-in**

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No

**12. Strategic Director's Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the proposal to undertake a procurement exercise for the provision of accommodation and support services for Children in Care, Care Leavers, 16 and 17 year-old homeless young people and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children for a period of 3 years, as outlined in this report.

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