

<b>AWARD OF CONTRACT:PROVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES SERVICES IN PETERBOROUGH AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE</b>
Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University
<b>Deadline date: September 2020</b>

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Councillor Lynn Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director for People and Communities
Is this a Key Decision?	YES Forward Plan Reference Number: KEY/20JAN19/01
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	YES
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	N/A

<b>R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S</b>
<p>The Cabinet Member is recommended to authorise the award of contract to Barnardos Services Ltd for the delivery of children’s centre services, due to commence on 18 January 2021. This contract will be for a period of 5 years, with an optional 2 year extension followed by 3 further extension periods of 12 months.</p> <p>The contract price shall be £6,691,590, for the five year contract period from 18 January 2021 to 17 January 2026.</p>

**1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University to consider exercising delegated authority under paragraph 3.4.8(a) of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph 3.7(e).

**2. TIMESCALE**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	<b>N/A</b>
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### 3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

3.1 Children’s Centres are a core part of the Government’s agenda to improve outcomes for children – providing a place where families with children under 5 years of age can access a range of services. The purpose of the Children’s Centre Services are to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in:

- Child development and School readiness

Supported by improved:

- Parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills
- Child and family health and life chances

3.2 The Government has demonstrated its commitment to Children’s Centres by legislating to give them a statutory status. The Childcare Act 2006 imposes duties on local authorities to improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities, and to make arrangements to ensure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated way in order to improve access and maximise the benefits of those services to young children and their parents.

3.3 There are four Children’s Centre hubs in Peterborough.

- **South Locality** – the Children’s Centre is located at Orton Malbourne, based in the Jigsaw centre in Orton Malbourne.
- **North, West and Rural locality** – the Children’s Centre is based in Paston, the Honeyhill Centre. Some outreach services continue to be delivered in the locality including Watergall School, in Bretton.
- **Central Locality** – Children’s Centre hubs are located at First Steps Children’s Centre in Welland, with an outreach operating at Fulbridge School, and a second hub is based in East, at Durham Road, with outreach services delivered from a base at Gladstone Primary School.

3.4 This has been a joint commissioning activity with Cambridgeshire County Council and includes the South Fenland Child and Family Centres as follows:

District	Child and Family Centres	Child and Family Zones
South Fenland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chatteris</li><li>• March</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whittlesey</li></ul>

3.5 In Peterborough the services are known as Children’s Centre Services, whilst in Cambridgeshire the services are known as the Child and Family Centre Services. The term Children’s Centres will be used in this report, to reflect both Peterborough Children’s Centres Services and South Fenland Child and Family Centre services.

3.6 The service specification is based on the core requirements of children’s centre services. It has been updated to reflect local strategies. For example the children’s centre services are fundamental to the delivery of the Best Start in Life Strategy, and the specification reflects the need for the successful provider to work with key partners and the community to support the vision of an integrated service model across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.

### 4. THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

4.1 This service is classified in the Common Procurement Vocabulary under Schedule 3 of Public Contract Regulations 2015, Light Touch Regime. A competitive contract notice was issued as a result. The procurement utilized the Open Procedure in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and comprised of the following elements:

- A Selection Questionnaire including
  - Financial Standing
  - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
  - Modern Day Slavery
  - Insurances
  - Safeguarding
  
- A Quality Element – The maximum score available was 80 points. A weighting was given to each question ranging between 5% and 30%. The quality threshold score of 70% of the total was required from bidders. The questions [method statements] that were asked within the quality element related to the following areas:
  - The Service Model Proposed [30% weighting]
  - Mobilization and Implementation [15% weighting]
  - A Service Scenario [15% weighting]
  - Working in Partnership [10% weighting]
  - Community Engagement [10% weighting]
  - Staff Development [10% weighting]
  - GDPR and Data Security and added social value [10% weighting]
  
- Price – The most economically advantageous price of those bidders that scored equal to or above the minimum quality threshold

4.2 All bidder's that met the selection criteria within the Selection Questionnaire proceeded to the tender evaluation stage. Tenders submitted were evaluated on a minimum quality threshold then via the most economically advantageous price evaluation mechanism. This means that out of a maximum score of 80, bidders would need to score at least 70% (56 points) of the total available to have their price for the services considered. The bidder with the most economically advantageous price after having achieved at or above the threshold quality score would have submitted the winning bid.

4.2.1 The Quality element of the tender was evaluated and scored independently by a panel. This panel was made up commissioners from Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council including Public Health, and Children's Services professionals specializing in this type of service, all of whom were supported by the Peterborough Serco Procurement Service.

4.2.2 The panel members individually considered the bidders' responses and provided an initial score providing a rationale for the score awarded. A moderation of those scores was then led by the Procurement Service. A consensus score and rationale was determined following moderations held over a two day period.

4.3 A total of six tenders were received. The challenging nature of the service to be delivered across both local authority areas in a single contract, resulted in only two bids reaching the minimum quality threshold of 70%. Of these two tenders, the one with the highest quality score was also the most economically advantageous.

4.4 The overall summary of results was as follows:

Provider	Quality score	YES or NO (met or exceeded the minimum quality threshold of 70%)	Most economically advantageous price Rank
Provider A	83%	YES	1
Provider B	80%	YES	2
Provider C	67%	NO	Not Applicable
Provider D	61%	NO	Not Applicable
Provider E	59%	NO	Not Applicable
Provider F	41%	NO	Not Applicable

4.5 Prices submitted by providers were within the total published budgets available for these services.

## 5. CONSULTATION

5.1 In preparation for the retendering of the Children Centre services, market consultation via a soft market testing exercise was undertaken with existing and potential providers. This was in order to determine the best route to market and to ensure the requirements of the service could be achieved.

5.2 Engagement was undertaken with subject specialists, including Public Health, Early Years and Early Help Services etc. in the development of the specification.

5.3 Legal Services and Procurement have been fully engaged and provided support throughout every stage of the procurement process.

5.4 Community engagement is at the heart of successful children’s centre provision. It is a requirement for any provider of children’s centre services to ensure there is ongoing participation and engagement of all stakeholders which includes families, local community groups, partners [e.g. health, pre-schools, schools, Local Authority teams and so on], staff and volunteers. This requirement is included within the service specification, and was included within the evaluation criteria when evaluating the bids. There will therefore be ongoing engagement at a localized level to ensure services respond to local communities and their needs.

## 6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

6.1 The award of a 5 year contract with an optional 2 year plus 3 x twelve month extensions the successful bidder for the Children Centre Services as listed in 3.3 and 3.4 above.

6.2 The award of contract to a single provider for the Children Centre Services, will enable the provider to appropriately allocate resources and staffing across the geographical area, providing an equitable and consistent approach, whilst ensuring that localized community and individual needs can be met. The Children’s Centre provider will ensure that the overall outcomes of the service, [to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness, parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills, along with child and family health and life chances] will be met.

## 7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The delivery of Children Centres is underpinned in legislation. The Childcare Act 2006 imposes duties on local authorities to improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities. Local Authorities must make arrangements to secure early childhood services that are provided in an integrated way in order to improve access and maximize the benefits of those services to young children and their parents. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 included new provisions into the Childcare Act 2006 so that the Act now defines Sure Start Children's Centres in law. It places duties on local authorities in relation to establishing and running Children's Centres. The award of contract will ensure that the Local Authorities are meeting the statutory function in relation to the provision of the Children's Centre services.
- 7.2 The tender process was compliant with procurement legislation, and the service was procured in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The contract to be awarded is recommended as it represents good value for money and provides services that meets the quality standards.

## 8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The following alternative options were considered:
- **Bringing the service in-house** - This option was rejected as the cost of the funding model of the services would not transition effectively or efficiently into an in house delivery. In addition, the Local Authority does not have the infrastructure in house to manage the services effectively.
  - **Not to provide a service** – This is not appropriate as Local Authorities are required to secure Children's Centres services. As previously detailed, the Childcare Act 2006 imposes duties on local authorities to improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between them. It also requires Local Authorities to make arrangements to secure early childhood services which are provided in an integrated way in order to improve access and maximize the benefits of those services to young children and their parents. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 goes further. It includes new provisions into the Childcare Act 2006 so that the Act now defines Sure Start Children's Centres in law. It places a duty on Local Authorities in relation to establishing and running Children's Centres.
- 8.2 Public contracts must be exposed to competition when their current contractual arrangements end in accordance with the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 and indeed to comply with the Council's Standing Orders.

## 9. IMPLICATIONS

### 9.1 Financial and Contractual Implications

The Council will enter into a 5 year contract with the successful provider with the option to extend the contract for a further 2 years and plus 3 twelve month extensions.

The total contract price is £6,691,590, for the five year contract period from 18 January 2021 to 17 January 2026. The funding from Peterborough City Council is £4,827, 675 and from Cambridgeshire County Council is £1,863,915.

### 9.2 Legal Implications

Advice from Legal Services has been obtained throughout the procurement process. The procurement has been conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

### **9.3 Equalities Implications**

The core purpose of a Children's Centre is to improve outcomes for young children and their families **and reduce inequalities**. The Children's Centre provider will frame activities to identify, reach and help those families in greatest need – offering a targeted response based on needs of the communities and individual families. As such the provision of Children Centre Services will be delivered with the aim of reducing inequalities for young children and families.

### **9.4 Carbon Impact Implications**

Following completion of the Carbon Impact Assessment, there have been no specific implications identified

## **10. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED**

10.1 None.

## **11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

11.1 Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Children's Centre Statutory Guidance, April 2013



