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| Report to: | Cabinet | Date of Meeting: | 5th September 2019 |
| Subject: | Regional Supported and Independent Living (SaILS) framework | | |
| Report of: | Director of Children's Social Care and Education | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and Safeguarding | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | Yes | Included in Forward Plan: | Yes |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

This report seeks to agree the procurement of semi-independent living placements (SaILs) for young people (aged 16+) for the period September 2019 to March 2020 via the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) hosted by Tameside Council and to authorise the procurement for such services beyond April 2020 via the new North West Regional Flexible Purchasing System (FPS) hosted by Bolton Council.

Recommendation(s):

That Cabinet

- (1) approve that Sefton Council continue to purchase SaILs placements from the Tameside hosted DPS for the period 1st October 2019 to 31st March 2020.
- (2) authorise the Director of Children's Social Care and Education to participate in the development and procurement of the North West Regional FPS for supported and independent living placements for young people age 16+ to be hosted by Bolton Council scheduled to commence 1st April 2020 to replace the current DPS.
- (3) authorise the Director of Children's Social Care and Education to continue to purchase SaILs placements from the Bolton hosted FPS from 1st April 2020 for the duration of the FPS, providing the procurement is compliant with Sefton's Contract Procedure Rules.
- (4) that should it be identified that the purchasing systems do not meet Sefton's requirements that delegated authority is given to the Director of Children's Social Care and Education to conduct individual procurement exercises as and when required and is given delegated authority to award contracts following such exercises.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To ensure that the Council continues to have in place robust mechanisms to procure Semi-Independent Residential Placements (SaILs) for Young People age 16+.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

- (1) The Local Authority carrying out its own EU compliant tender exercise to put its own FPS in place was considered and rejected having considered the benefits and strengths of a regional approach.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The current annual budget for these services is sufficient to meet the business need. The costs associated with these procurement processes will be contained within this budget.

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications of the Proposals:

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| <p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</p> <p>Bolton hosting the procurement will reduce the burden on Local Authority resources.</p> |
| <p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>Children Act 1989: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.</p> |
| <p>Equality Implications:</p> <p>The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated.</p> |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

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| <p>Protect the most vulnerable:</p> <p>Semi-independent residential placements are the right choice for some young people who do not wish to live in a children's home or with foster parents.</p> |
| <p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities:</p> <p>Semi-independent residential placements are sometimes the right choice for some</p> |

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| <p>unaccompanied asylum-seeking Young People.</p> <p>Semi-independent provision is used only when it is in the Young Persons best interest as it will provide an environment where they can develop their confidence and resilience.</p> |
| <p>Commission, broker and provide core services:</p> <p>By commissioning SaLLs through the FPS the Council is creating an environment in which young people will become less reliant on our support and they can develop their personal confidence and resilience.</p> |
| <p>Place – leadership and influencer:</p> <p>Good quality provision can contribute positively to a local area, enabling the Young People placed there to remain as part of a community.</p> |
| <p>Drivers of change and reform:</p> <p>The new sub regional arrangement for evaluation, monitoring and market development will give the Local Authorities in the sub region better control, more ownership and drive improvements in the quality of the service provided to the Young People.</p> |
| <p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:</p> <p>Effective SaLLs placements can have a long-term positive impact on the Young Persons health and prosperity and contribution to the community.</p> |
| <p>Greater income for social investment:</p> |
| <p>Cleaner Greener:</p> |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5745/19) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4869/19) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Consultation has taken place with Young People; Commissioners; Service Providers; Strategic Leads for Safeguarding Vulnerable Children.

In 2018 North West Placements coordinated a review of the Supported and Independent Living Services (SaLLS) Dynamic Purchasing System serving 23 Local Authorities in the North West Region and recommended replacing the current SaLLS DPS with a Flexible Purchasing System with a higher specification and more rigorous evaluation. This report was taken to the Northwest Local Authority Strategic Leads for Safeguarding Vulnerable Children (Chaired by Sefton's Director of Children's Services) in November 2018 and was endorsed.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting.

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Appendices:

Background Papers:

1. Background

- 1.1 As a Corporate parent the Council supports young people in many ways including providing graduated needs led independent preparation for young people who are preparing to leave care services. These services are provided through semi-independent and group living placements. The Council also commissions this type of support for a small number of other young people.
- 1.2 Members will recall that in September 2015 Cabinet approved membership of a North West Regional Supported and Independent Living Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) hosted by Tameside and this arrangement remains in place today.
- 1.3 The current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) has been extended by Tameside Council and will expire on 31st March 2020. Sefton Council intends to continue purchasing Sails placements using this DPS.
- 1.4 Bolton Council have agreed to lead the procurement process for a Flexible Purchasing System (FPS) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 Light Touch Regime for Sails placements. The proposed FPS is scheduled to commence on 1st April 2020. The FPS will replace the current DPS hosted by Tameside Council. At the time of writing this report the contract duration of the replacement FPS has not been decided, the Director of Children's Services seeks delegated authority to agree the FPS duration that is decided by the collaboration of Local Authorities in consultation with Cabinet Member.
- 1.5 At the time of writing this report the final evaluation criteria have not been decided, therefore the Director of Children's Services will seek delegated authority to accept the proposed Criteria in consultation with Cabinet Member, Children, Schools and Safeguarding.
- 1.6 The existing Dynamic Purchasing System is due to expire on 31st March 2020 and be replaced with the Bolton hosted Flexible Purchasing System. If any delays are encountered to the procurement process and the Tameside hosted DPS needs to be extended further, then the Director of Children's Services seeks delegated approval in consultation with the Cabinet Member Children, Schools and Safeguarding to authorise Sefton to continue using the Tameside DPS for Sails placements to avoid unnecessary disruption to service delivery.

2. Developing Future Commissioning Arrangements

- 2.1 North West Placements conducted a review of the current Sails DPS in 2018 in preparation for commissioning a replacement for when the DPS expires and to establish if improvements could be made to commissioning arrangements going forward. It was anticipated that these arrangements would be in place by the end of September 2019, however, it is now anticipated that the planned change will not be available until April 2020.
- 2.2 As part of the review questionnaires were sent to the North West Commissioners and Providers listed on the DPS. Views were also sought from the Northwest

placements staff involved in monitoring the DPS and consultations that took place with young people were considered. The majority of Commissioners found the DPS helped meet placement needs by providing a route to market and access to a wide range of Providers over a geographical spread. Commissioners valued having a shared regional common service specification, minimum standards and terms and conditions.

- 2.3 In November 2018 the North West Strategic Leads for Safeguarding (SLSVC) considered a proposal that the future commissioning of SaILs provision would be developed via a new Flexible Purchasing System (FPS) under the 'light touch procurement regime' however as an improvement on the existing DPS the incorporation of the potential to develop local/sub regional responsibility for evaluation, monitoring and market development was included.
- 2.4 The benefits of revised sub regional arrangements for evaluation and monitoring include increasing local ownership which will lead to improved quality of placements. In addition the approach will enhance sub regional collaboration and development of local markets, promoting greater availability of supply and market stability. Sefton will be part of a sub-regional monitoring group with Wirral, Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley and St. Helens.
- 2.5 It has been agreed that Bolton Council will lead on the procurement of the new FPS and it is planned that the implementation of the change will be effective from 1st April 2020, replacing the Tameside's DPS. Bolton will be acting on behalf of 23 participating North West authorities, each of whom will be a named participant in the procurement and will have flexibility to use the FPS once in place.