



**CABINET**

**14 FEBRUARY 2017**

**DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION: LESLEY HAGGER**

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDRENS SERVICES:  
COUNCILLOR MATTHEW GOLBY**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Framework for Commissioning Children’s Services</b>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>Cabinet are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree the proposals for an open framework for the purchase of specific interventions for children and families.</li> <li>2. Agree that delegated authority is given to the Director for Children, Families and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children’s Services, to make the decisions required to implement these plans.</li> </ol>

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the plans to commission specialist or bespoke services for children and families that the new Alternative Delivery Vehicle (Children’s Trust) will be unable to deliver.
- 1.2 It is proposed that an open framework is set up to enable a fair and reliable purchasing system; and one that will ensure quality, value for money and significantly improved management information on the impact of outcomes for such services.
- 1.3 Cabinet members are asked to consider this approach and agree the plans for a framework.
- 1.4 To request that delegated authority is given to the Director for Children, Families and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children’s Services, to make the decisions required to implement these plans.

**2. How this decision contributes to the Council Plan**

- 2.1 The Council’s vision is to make Northamptonshire a great place to live and work. This is achieved through increasing the wellbeing of your county’s communities and/or safeguarding the county’s communities.

<p>This initiative specifically delivers increased wellbeing and/or safeguarding ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of all ages are safe, protected from harm and able to live happy, healthy and independent lives in our communities.</li> <li>• People have the information and support they need to make healthy choices and achieve wellbeing.</li> <li>• Resources are utilised effectively and efficiently, in coordination with partners and providers.</li> </ul>
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### **3. Background**

- 3.1 There are a number of interventions and assessments that are required as part of our work with children and families that Social Workers or other Council employees are unable to undertake. Historically, these services have been spot purchased on an individual basis and by social work teams, using budgets sitting across Children's Services.
- 3.2 Required services include both court-mandated and recommended interventions/assessments; and range from psychological assessments, drug tests and paternity testing for example, to cognitive behavioural therapy, filial therapy and art therapies.
- 3.3 From April 2016, Social Workers have been encouraged to liaise with Children, Families and Education Commissioning when identifying and securing additional support for families outside currently commissioned services to ensure that providers and their interventions meet certain criteria including having appropriate insurances in place and that staff are, for example, appropriately vetted.
- 3.4 The aim of this was to be able to centrally identify and analyse the requirement for services for unmet need, ensure that contractual arrangements and other due diligence measures (such as insurance and DBS checks) are in place between the Council and providers, and to track expenditure. It was also the aim that through this work the Department could identify interventions that work and thereby direct activity to evidenced based services.
- 3.5 In June 2016 it was agreed that all spot purchase arrangements relating to any casework needed to be put into place in order to reduce any unnecessary expenditure; and clear lines of authorising spending needed to be robustly implemented.
- 3.6 In the first instance, all requests for any additional provision for children and families being supported by the service, be it via Section 17 or any other need, had to be made via a centralised route into the Commissioning service.
- 3.7 In keeping with the Target Operating Model (TOM) being developed it is vital that how and what we commission evolves in parallel with the Trust's delivery of services to children and families.
- 3.8 In recognition of the ambition to achieve integrated locality-based teams and a drive towards in-house delivery, much of what will be commissioned through this framework in the future will be individual, bespoke and specialised provision.
- 3.9 To respond to this change in need and demand, operational commissioning will be key and therefore the systems, both contractual and administrative, are being developed as part of the Trust to enable this to happen. This will be implemented through the new Commissioning Restructure Action Plan which is being implemented in quarter 4 of this year.
- 3.10 In line with the need to commission services that cannot be delivered directly by the Trust it is recommended that a framework be established; as the best means of ensuring that essential services are available to the Council and the Trust, ensuring that appropriate checks have been carried out on providers and services are provided at known/agreed costs, and only the service used is purchased, therefore reducing any unused capacity.

#### **4. Framework Proposal**

- 4.1 The proposal is to develop a framework and, given the range of interventions sought, that we will divide the list into lots or types of providers.
- 4.2 New Potential Providers will be able to apply to be accepted onto the Framework Agreement, providing information around relevant experience, qualifications and approach to quality in order to develop a list of providers via an “open framework.”
- 4.3 Through this process, providers will be scored and ranked according to the award criteria score under each Lot and Category.
- 4.4 The framework will run for 4 years but as this is a Light Touch Regime Framework Agreement, the Contracting Authority intends to re-open the Framework Agreement on an annual basis to ensure we keep opportunities for new providers and competitive quotations.
- 4.5 The same selection and award criteria will be used when the Framework Agreement is re-opened.
- 4.6 We have also been liaising with external partners to add maximum value to this work.
- 4.7 Whilst discussions are still in their infancy, it is hoped that the Police and schools will be able to “call off” services from the framework. These plans are in development but the intention is that this will provide a robust mechanism for spot purchases in the County for a number of professionals working with children and families.
- 4.8 The list of providers will be maintained and monitored by Commissioning Managers; and arrangements for monitoring and call off will be determined with partners according to the services required.
- 4.9 Taking evaluation, moderation and implementation into account, it is hoped that the framework will be operational by the summer, with provisional timescales indicating possible go live by July 201

#### **5. Consultation and Scrutiny**

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with key colleagues across Children’s Services and with some partners to explore opportunities available and maximise the impact of this work.
- 5.2 We have also involved Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire (VIN) in the development of these proposals to ensure that the voluntary sector is represented and that any scoring mechanisms are informed by pre-existing criteria that have created and matured as part of third sector consortium arrangements.
- 5.3 Further consultation has been deemed unnecessary at this point as the interventions that will populate the framework are already being purchased albeit through different methods; and the framework therefore represents an opportunity to make this more robust and ensure maximum value for money and quality in these purchases.

#### **6. Equality Screening**

- 6.1 It has been identified that an Equality Impact Assessment is unnecessary for this work. Spot purchased interventions are currently taking place and this framework will not change their delivery; it will only impact the mechanism by which we select and provide interventions.

<b>Reason that no EqlA is required</b>	<b>✓ as appropriate</b>
The paper is for information only	
The proposal/activity/decision has no impact on customers or the service they receive	✓
The proposal impacts upon staff but the proposed staffing changes will not affect the service that customers receive*	
Other (please explain further)	

\* where a proposal affects staff, the appropriate HR processes will be followed, which have already been subject to the EqlA process and will be compliant with HR legislation

## **7. Alternative Options Considered**

7.1 The following options were considered before arriving at the proposal set out in this report:

7.1.1 Continue to spot purchase as we are.

Currently a great deal of time and capacity is being spent conducting due diligence on a range of providers to deliver the spot purchases requested. These arrangements are untenable and unsustainable; and represent poor use of resources. In addition, it is unclear whether we are sourcing the best quality services possible.

7.1.2 Cease spot purchasing.

This option has been rejected as we are unable to deliver this range of bespoke and specialist services in-house. Some of these are also mandated in court and ceasing to commission them would mean defying the instructions laid down by the judiciary.

7.1.3 Put alternative contractual arrangements in place.

Previously there was not sufficient data on what was being purchased to enable services to be more appropriately commissioned. Now that systems are in place to capture this, it is apparent that the range of services required would necessitate a large volume of contracts to be put in place; and therefore a significant amount of capacity to monitor these arrangements. Given the number of types of interventions and the relatively low demand for each, a framework has been proposed as the most appropriate and efficient method of purchasing what is needed.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 Whilst the total spend over the life of the framework is unknown and we will not be contractually obligated to buy services or spend any money, it is likely that overall spend will exceed £500,000 per annum.

8.2 Funding for interventions sourced through the framework will come directly from Children's Services budgets that are already being spent year on year; but will provide a more efficient and effective way of sourcing and selecting what provision to use.

8.3 This means that we will be able to capture demand and impact of such services more effectively and therefore understand and scrutinise spend even further.

8.4 It is also worth noting that the budget will be influenced by the development of the Trust model and what can be delivered in-house by the Trust. All purchasing will be

scrutinised on an ongoing basis to ensure that any demand is met in the most efficient way possible. Where this means developing the expertise in-house, this will be explored.

<p>What benefits will the proposal deliver?</p>	<p>The anticipated benefits of this approach include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust arrangements for ensuring quality and value for money for services currently spot purchased</li> <li>• Early adoption of the tools we will need as part of the TOM</li> <li>• Ability to tailor what we buy to individual children and families; both as bespoke and specialised options</li> <li>• Ability to tailor what we buy in response to changes in presenting needs and demand</li> <li>• Ability to tailor what we buy in response to the development of the skills base of internal staff</li> <li>• Timely management information regarding what we are buying, how much and for whom</li> <li>• Ability to save money on those things we have the skills to deliver ourselves</li> <li>• Risk mitigation for the upcoming decommissions; allowing us to spot purchase temporarily if and where we are unable to deliver directly</li> <li>• The contractual nature of the arrangement would also allow better tracking and monitoring of service provision and need</li> </ul>
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## 9. Risk and Business Continuity Management

9.1 There are some specific risks attached to this proposal; and in particular related to the method of commissioning being recommended.

a) Risk(s) associated with the proposal

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
<p>It is not guaranteed that we will achieve the lowest cost per intervention (as might be achieved through alternative contractual arrangements such as block purchase), as providers will have no assurance how much (or even if) we will call off a service during the life of the framework.</p>	<p>Ensuring effective ranking and scoring principles are in place (and include a focus on price as well as quality) as part of the evaluation process.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>The number of providers on the framework could be extensive, and given the range of the</p>	<p>We will need to have a system in place to be able to rank providers appropriately. This is in</p>	<p>Green</p>

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
interventions sought, this could make choosing the best provider and intervention difficult.	development and will be key part of the tender process.	
As above, if there are a number of providers on the framework scrutiny and monitoring of all providers could require significant capacity.	We will need systems in place to be able to apply different levels of scrutiny and monitoring according and relative to different levels of spend. This is also in development and will be implemented as part of the mobilisation of the framework.	Green

b) Risk(s) associated with not undertaking the proposal

Risk	Risk Rating
Continue spending with no robust mechanism to understand needs of our children and families and whether we are meeting them.	Red
Continue spending with no robust mechanism to capture demand to allow for commissioning intentions to be developed.	Red
Purchase services without thorough due diligence with little notion of associated quality; therefore not providing value for money.	Red

Author:	Name: Dr Rachel Sanson Team: Commissioning and Strategy
Contact details:	Tel: 01604 367093 Email: <a href="mailto:rsanson@northamptonshire.gov.uk">rsanson@northamptonshire.gov.uk</a>
Background Papers:	None
Does the report propose a key decision is taken?	YES
If yes, is the decision in the Forward Plan?	YES
Will further decisions be required? If so, please outline the timetable here	See below
Does the report include delegated decisions? If so, please outline the timetable here	Yes Indicative timetable is as follows: Agreement of tender documentation and to proceed with tender going live – by March 2017 Award and ranking of providers as part of the framework – during May 2017
Is this report proposing an amendment to the budget and/or policy framework?	NO

Have the financial implications been cleared by the Strategic Finance Manager (SFM)?	YES Name of SFM: James Smith
Have any capital spend implications been cleared by the Capital Investment Board (CIB)?	NO – none applicable
Has the report been cleared by the relevant Director?	YES Name of Director: Lesley Hagger
Has the relevant Cabinet Member been consulted?	YES Cabinet Member: Matthew Golby
Has the relevant scrutiny committee been consulted?	NO Scrutiny Committee:
Has the report been cleared by Legal Services?	YES – Laurie Gould Name of solicitor:
	Solicitor's comments:
Have any communications issues been cleared by Communications and Marketing?	NO Name of officer:
Have any property issues been cleared by Property and Asset Management?	NO – none applicable Name of officer:
Are there any community safety implications?	YES (please delete as appropriate) Some of the interventions included in the framework will be relevant to safeguarding and community safety. It is envisaged then that this proposal will assist in this duty and have a positive impact on reducing harm and making children and families safer.
Are there any environmental implications:	NO
Are there any Health & Safety Implications:	NO
Are there any Human Resources Implications:	NO
Are there any human rights implications:	NO
Constituency Interest:	

