

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 June 2019

Report Title: Children's Homes Mobilisation Update

Portfolio Holder: Dorothy Flude Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Dave Leadbetter, Head of Children's Commissioning

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update to Corporate Parenting Committee on the mobilisation of the children's homes commission.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
- 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. Corporate Parenting Committee plays a key role in scrutinising and challenging performance to improve outcomes for cared for children and young people. The commission of children's homes supports cared for children to have a safe and stable home and a basis for our children and young people to flourish.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. None; this is an update report.

5. Background

- 5.1. Cabinet agreed a commissioning model to put in place sufficient accommodation of a good quality that is local to the cared for children's home community.
- 5.2. The Commissioning Question we posed as we went out to tender was:

‘As Corporate Parents how do we ensure that Cheshire East Council consistently commissions high quality residential care for our cared for children that is safe, stable and delivers outstanding outcomes. The commissioning approach needs to create a strong partnership with providers, support permanency planning and provide value for money.’

5.3. An outline of the procurement process we undertook is as follows:

Following market engagement and senior officer consideration of the best model of service delivery to achieve outstanding outcomes for our cared for children, a transparent and compliant tender process was undertaken that included:

- 1) A written submission that was scored against the quality questions we set on the following themes:
 - Mobilisation
 - Key attributes for an outstanding service
 - Assessment and matching
 - Continuous improvement
 - Safeguarding
 - Social Value
 - Child Centred Service Development Plan
- 2) A face to face negotiation / clarification stage
- 3) Presentations followed by a question and answer session to a young people panel (two of our cared for children who have lived in a residential setting) and a separate evaluation team panel
- 4) Assessment and scoring of the financial submissions

5.4. The above culminated in the following lots awarded based on a cost / quality evaluation:

Safe Places for Children awarded:

Lot 2 – 3 bed Children’s Home in Crewe – with property available (Broad Street)

Lot 3 – 3 bed Children’s Home in Macclesfield – with property available (Victoria Lodge)

Horizon Care awarded:

Lot 4 – 3 bed Children’s Home in Crewe – property to be sourced

Lot 5 – 3 bed Children’s Home in Macclesfield – property to be sourced

Lot 1 (the current operational home – **Claremont**) - was not awarded as the price submitted (£677,820 pa) was significantly beyond that expected (even after taking into account the legacy Cheshire East pay and conditions that

remain across the staff group at Claremont). Hexagon were the only bidder for Lot 1 and their quality score was lowest of the three final bidders. We have agreed to continue with the current contract with **Bettercare Keys** to run Claremont (cost £403,586 pa). Bettercare Keys have confirmed that they will honour the existing contract terms for the duration of the contract (three year initial period running to 31 March 2020, with 2 x 12 month extensions available) which, from a cost perspective, is extremely positive. From an operational point of view the Registered Manager and staff group at Claremont have moved from Cheshire East Council systems, recording and management oversight to Bettercare Keys just over two years ago and another significant change and re-registration so soon after could be very disruptive for the home.

5.5. Did we meet the commissioning question posed:

- Our specification and direct contact with bidders during the tender process (including young peoples views) has provided the successful bidders with a clear understanding of our expectations / standards, focus on excellent outcomes for young people and direction of travel re a 'No Wrong Door' type model of service delivery ie multi-agency approach to supporting plans to return to family / friends or step down to fostering.
- Safe Places for Children and Horizon Care demonstrated their focus on excellent outcomes for our children, resilience through difficult times and a strong partnership ethos.
- The price submitted and agreed for both providers was very similar and provides the Local Authority with good value for money that is secured for a period of seven years. The prices secured through the tender are below the current market rate, which continues to increase at a rapid pace.
- The proof of the above positive position will be in the actual delivery and this will be assured through close partnership via Resource Allocation Panel, Permanence Forums , effective contract management and the inclusion of the providers as an integral element of the new Care Hub arrangement that we are planning.

6. Update on mobilisation progress since award of contracts

6.1 Safe Places for Children

- We have appointed a Registered Manager for Crewe (Broad Street) and she joined the last mobilisation meeting with LA commissioners. Safe Places have submitted their registration pack to Ofsted however the complete registration process can take between 12 - 16 weeks and sometimes longer depending on volume of applications and Ofsted capacity. Safe Places should take possession of Broad St next week as Housing clients have now move out and a programme of refurbishment will then commence.

- The Registered Manager for Macclesfield (Victoria Lodge) has just been appointed and Safe Places expect to take possession of Victoria Lodge by the end of June. A programme of refurbishment will start and Ofsted registration pack submitted.

6.2 Horizon Care

- Have sourced a home in Willaston and a planning application has been submitted, with an expected decision on the 5th July. Following the planning decision an 8 week refurbishment programme will start and Ofsted registration will commence; the complete registration process can take between 12 - 16 weeks and sometimes longer depending on volume of applications and Ofsted capacity.
- A Registered Manager has been appointed and her application with Ofsted will be ready to submit on the 15th June. Advertisements are out across the region to recruit the wider staff team.
- Horizon Care are still trying to source a property in Macclesfield which should be done by mid June.

6.3 It was agreed at the last mobilisation meeting that the two providers would arrange to meet to plan an agreed approach to community engagement and correspondence / engagement with elected members.

6.4 Given the good progress detailed above, and with the caveat of timescales for Ofsted registration, an indicative timeline for the homes opening would see Broad Street open in October 2019, followed by Victoria Lodge and the new Horizon Care home in Willaston in November / December 2019. The second Horizon Care home in Macclesfield is likely to open early 2020. Staggered opening dates will help with the capacity required to mobilise effectively and for good planning for the right children to transition to their new homes.

6.5 Heads of Service and Service Managers in Children's Social Care are currently working to identify those children currently in residential placements that should move into the new homes as they open. This requires careful consideration of the following:

- Young persons' views
- Outcomes
- How far the young person is currently placed away from their local community
- Improved ability to move back to family / friends or step down to fostering
- Stability of placement and recent history of moves

- Cost efficiency

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1. Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications of this report.

7.2. Finance Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

7.3. Equality Implications

There are no equality implications as a result of this report.

7.4. Human Resources Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

7.5. Risk Management Implications

The main risk is that the Children's Homes do not mobilise within the required timescales and the Local Authority has to revert to purchasing from Framework Contracts or spot purchasing. This could have financial consequences, impact negatively on the initiative to establish a Cheshire East Care Hub and could impact on cared for children being able to live local. The mobilisation is being co-ordinated by commissioning and service managers and the progress of our two new providers to date is positive.

7.6. Rural Communities Implications

None.

7.7. Implications for Children & Young People

- 7.7.1. The contents of this report should have positive implications for cared for children as the aim is to provide good quality, local homes for our cared for children.

7.8. Public Health Implications

- 7.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

8. Ward Members Affected

- 8.1. The commissioned Children's Homes are to be located in Crewe & Nantwich and also Macclesfield.

9. Consultation & Engagement

9.1. None.

10. Access to Information

10.1. None.

11. Contact Information

11.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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