

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE:



REPORT OF: MRS SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS & PUBLIC HEALTH

MRS JULIE ILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL-AGE LEARNING

LEAD OFFICER: ADULT SOCIAL CARE ANNA WATERMAN HEAD OF DISABILITIES COMMISSIONING

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR COMBINED SENSORY SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The current contract for Children's Vision and Sensory Loss Support and Adults' Combined Sensory Services is due to expire on 31 March 2021 and a new contract is required to enable continued provision of these services.

Cabinet approved the Annual Procurement Forward Plan and reserved for review the commissioning and procurement strategy for the new contract(s). This is set out below.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet gives:

1. Approval to the commissioning and procurement strategy developed by Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Procurement for the re-procurement of Children's Vision and Sensory Loss Support and Adults' Combined Sensory Services contract or contracts.
2. Approval to procure the sensory services contract(s) to commence on 1 April 2021. The new contract will be in place for three years with an option to extend for up to a further 36 months.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

We are requesting approval of the commissioning and procurement strategy for the contracts for

- Children's Vision and Sensory Loss Support, of value £132,000 from the Vulnerable Learners element within the Education budget, and
- Adults' Combined Sensory Services, of value £1,376,004.

This will enable Adult Social Care and Children's Services to continue providing the services required in accordance with the relevant regulations.

This strategy incorporates publishing a Prior Information Notice (PIN), which will allow us to test the market with regard to the provision of these services. The outcome of the PIN notice will determine the actual procurement route: if there is no interest in the services other than the incumbent provider, SCC might consider whether a direct award to the incumbent provider might be desirable rather than continuing with a full re-procurement.

The new contract(s) will ensure continued delivery of these services to the adults and children in Surrey who require these support services and addressing SCC's responsibilities under the Children Act 1989, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014.

DETAILS:

BACKGROUND

Children

1. The Children's Vision and Sensory Loss service is for children and students that have '*...any level of visual impairment that has an effect on education, mobility and the ability to live independently*'.
2. CFLLLC (Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture) has specific duties under the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014 to provide services to children and young people with sensory impairments and awarding a new contract will enable these duties to be met.
3. Services for children and young people with sight impairment and severe sight impairment, will include:
 - Holding the register of children and students that are resident in Surrey with sight impairment and severe sight impairment;
 - Training for 0-19 centred on personal mobility and navigation/orientation – to use their compensatory skills with the aim of maximising their independence; and
 - Training for 0-19 centred on the acquisition of independent living skills – which includes cooking and food preparation, personal care and management of clothing, personal organisation, purchasing goods and money management.
4. The services therefore play an important role in preparing children with sight loss for adulthood.
5. These services are for children and young people with sight impairments only. Deaf and hearing-impaired children and young people are provided with education support specialist services provided directly by SCC.
6. The Children's Vision and Sensory Loss Contract was let on 1 February 2016 for a term of three years with the option to extend for up to two further years. The final extension year has been utilised and the contract will expire on 31 March 2021. A new contract will need to be put in place to ensure that the key outcomes for children and young people with sight impairment and severe sight impairment continue to be met in relation to personal mobility and navigation; and independent living skills.

Adults

7. The Adult Social Care Combined Sensory Services contract was let on 1 February 2016 for a term of three years with the option to extend for up to two further years. The final extension year has been utilised and the contract will expire on 31 January 2021. A new contract will need to be put in place to ensure Adult Social Care continues to meet specific duties under the Care Act 2014 (s.78) to provide services to adults who are

Deaf, or who have sight and/or hearing impairments. Awarding a new contract will enable these duties to be met.

COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

Children

8. Our Community Vision is that by 2030, we want Surrey to be a uniquely special place where everyone has a great start to life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community and no one is left behind.
9. Our vision for children and young people is that they will be happy, healthy, safe and confident about their future.
10. In order to meet both our vision for the community and for our children and young people, we need to continue to deliver this vital service so that children and young people with a sight impairment can live independent, fulfilled lives and not be left behind.
11. This service helps children and young people to reach a range of outcomes which are linked to the key areas for training:
12. Personal mobility and navigation: this supports emotional wellbeing and resilience as well as opening more doors for children's futures; and
13. Independent living skills: supporting children to live independent lives with confidence.
14. These support many Surrey priorities, especially preparation for adulthood and independence for children and young people. This is facilitated by children's and adults working together on the re-commissioning of this contract.
15. As part of the engagement in the re-commissioning process, CFLLLC will be speaking to service users and their families, as well as shadowing service delivery, in order to gain an in depth understanding of needs, behaviours and the experience of receiving habilitation services. This will ensure that the service specification is refreshed accordingly.

Adults

16. The Joint Commissioning Strategy for People with Sensory Impairments provides an overview of the services for adults living in Surrey who are profoundly deaf, are Deaf and use BSL, who are hearing impaired, sight impaired, severely sight impaired or who have dual sensory loss.

Feedback

17. As part of this strategy the aim of all services is to provide sensory impaired people with appropriate support and resources to maintain and/or improve their health and wellbeing, enabling them to continue to live as independently as possible.
18. Combined sensory services for adults will include, but are not limited to:
 - Advice and information
 - Maintaining a register of blind and partially sighted adults on behalf of SCC
 - Undertaking specialist assessment and support planning on behalf of SCC (by specialist workers with specific training and expertise) in relation to equipment, mobility, communication, daily living skills and ICT/assistive technology as occasioned by hearing impairment

- Access to equipment and daily living aids
- Provision of communication support
- Rehabilitation and reablement plans to enable independent living.

NEED AND DEMAND

Children

19. There are currently 246 children and young people on the register for those with a sight impairment or severe sight impairment.
20. There is an ongoing demand for the children's Vision and Sensory Loss service. In 2018/19, 20 additional children and young people received habilitation training than the previous financial year. At the time of writing this report, there were 75 open referrals. Habilitation training is delivered against personal objectives for the young person around specific life milestones, meaning that it is not a continuous service but a targeted and bespoke package of support that they will dip in and out of.
21. The Physical and Sensory Support Service within the Education Directorate includes a team of Specialist Teachers and Specialist Teaching Assistants for Deaf and Hearing-Impaired children, who provide education support from Early Years through to Post-16. This includes interpreters and specialist note-takers as well as technicians who support the provision of specialist equipment¹. Having this in-house support means that we do not need to commission external support for children with hearing loss.

Adults

22. There is ongoing demand for the Combined Sensory Services. They support a much larger population of adults, who have either hearing and/or sight loss, than the children's service that focuses exclusively on sight loss. Current demand on the adults services during the reporting period 2019/20 was, on average per quarter, as set out below:
- Contact volumes (mainly helpdesk)
Per quarter reporting period: 6,803
Including:
 - General information and advice: 2098
 - Equipment: 977
 - Rehab support: 210
 - RNIB talking books: 190
 - Other services: 724
 - Welfare support: 179
 - Visual Impairment registrations
Per quarter reporting period:
 - Number of new registrations: 95
 - Number on the register: 4,423
 - People supported during per quarter reporting period on average: VI and dual-sensory loss: 355

¹ Further details of this service can be found on the SCC website and the Surrey Local Offer.

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

23. The preferred option is to initially publish a PIN notice as a call for competition to allow us to test the market. This hasn't been done since 2014/2015 for either the Adults or the Children's Services. This will enable us to see if there are any other providers who have an interest in delivering either service. The responses to the PIN will determine which procurement process is followed. If there are clear expressions of interest from providers who can deliver this service, a tender under the Light Touch Regime will be carried out. If there are no expressions of interest from providers in delivering this service, we can consider a direct award to the incumbent provider, taking into account feedback on performance against the current contract. Both options allow for the opportunity to review the service specification in order to reflect the feedback of users and look at new and innovative ways to improve the service. The services will be redesigned accordingly whether taken forward as one or two contracts.
24. The new contract will be split into two lots. These are:
 Lot 1: Adult's Combined Sensory Loss Services
 Lot 2: Children's Vision Impairment & Sensory Loss
25. The new contract(s) will be awarded for three years, with the option to extend up to three times, each for a period of up to twelve months.
26. As is integral to all Local Authority procurement, the recommended provider(s) will commit to a range of Social Value benefits as part of the award process. These might be, for example:
- local employment, work experience, training and apprenticeship opportunities for Surrey residents;
 - raising awareness and understanding of disabilities throughout Surrey;
 - reducing the carbon footprint of support SCC commissions.
27. It will be the role of the contract manager(s) through contract monitoring meetings to ensure the Social Value commitment is delivered over the life of the contract alongside performance against outcomes for the users of the services. Demand for the services should not impact on the organisation's ability to deliver its Social Value commitment, as this relates to the organisation's role in Surrey rather than the individual services.
28. Feedback from service users on the current service has been sought by Adult Social Care through Surrey Coalition and forums including Long Term Neurological Conditions Forum, Hard of Hearing Forum and Surrey Vision Action Group. This feedback will allow Surrey County Council to review and redesign the current specification; improving the service requirements and updating it to reflect changes in innovation and technology.
29. Further engagement with adults, children and young people who are users of the current service will be carried out as part of the recommissioning process. This will ensure that we are able to deliver a service that is fit for purpose, supporting service users and their families.
30. In the event that SCC progress with a tender under the Light Touch Regime, we will hold market engagement events to inform providers of our intentions for this service and discuss how we intend to run the tender.
31. Relevant legislation, policy or other guidance:
- Procurement and Contract Standing Orders
 - Public Contract Regulations 2015
 - Care Act 2014

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children Act 1989

CONSULTATION

32. The decision to publish a PIN was made in consultation between Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Procurement. All parties are in support of using the outcome of the PIN notice to inform the route used to progress the procurement.
33. Surrey Coalition have collated feedback on the adults' service from a number of forums and this will inform the development of the new service.
34. As part of the recommissioning process, there will be further engagement with the service users in order for us to capture their feedback and develop the service.
35. CCG and health care provider colleagues attend the user groups and forums referred to above and have been involved in the review of the service specification.
36. The services provided are not health services and are therefore not jointly commissioning with health. Where children or adult service users raise concerns about health services e.g. counselling, diagnosis, access to clinical specialists, access to specialist equipment (hearing aids, etc) we highlight these to CCG colleagues.
37. SCC staff from Adults Social Care, Children's Services, Orbis Procurement, Finance and Legal and Commissioning have all shaped the Procurement and Commissioning Strategy.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS

38. The agreement will include a three months' notice termination clause.
39. The winning provider will have satisfied financial checks as well as checks on competency in delivery of similar contracts during the evaluation of the tenders. The Contract Manager will be carrying out financial and insurance checks regularly in order to ensure that the individual contractors meet the minimum criteria during the life of their contract.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

40. The expected contract value over the maximum six-year validity of the contract is approximately £9million. This is based on the annual budget and cost of the current contracts, which are £1,376,004 in Adult Social Care and £132,000 in Children's Services.²

² The disparity between the contributions of the two departments stems from the fact that the services that CFLLC commission are more discrete and support a significantly lower number of children and young people, as can be seen on page 4. In addition, while the ASC commissioned services support people with hearing impairment as well as people with visual impairment, the children's services are focused exclusively on sight impairment, as presented at the top of page four.

41. The current contract is let at 2015 values. Should the annual cost of the new contract exceed £1,376,004 in Adult Social Care and £132,000 in Children's Services this will create a budget pressure for the services. Any reduction on the current contract values will result in a cost efficiency.
42. Demand for the service is increasing, as is the cost of supplying specialist equipment. The number of people in Surrey aged 75 or over and predicted to have a moderate or severe visual impairment when the current contract was let in 2015 was 12,020. For 2025, the equivalent figure is 17,393, an increase of 45%. The number of people in Surrey aged 75 or over and predicted to have a moderate or severe hearing impairment when the current contract was let in 2015 was 73,071. For 2025, the equivalent figure is 100,910, an increase of 38%.³ While every procurement process seeks to secure value for money, it is not anticipated that there will be scope for savings.
43. As referred to in paragraph four, we will be able to obtain additional value through the Social Value charter which will allow the successful bidder to make social, economic, innovative and environmental commitments whilst delivering this contract.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY

44. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook is uncertain as it is heavily dependent on decisions made by Central Government. With no clarity on these beyond 2020/21, and given that the COVID-19 pandemic is placing significant additional financial pressures on the Council, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the commissioning and procurement strategy for the new Sensory Services contract(s), in order to achieve best value for money for Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER

45. The procurement strategy of issuing a Prior Information Notice will help to test the market to see if there is likely to be any competition for a combined adults and children contract for the work. In the absence of competition, and following careful consideration, the contract is likely to go to the existing supplier given the positive feedback received both regarding the children's current services and the adults' current services. These approaches are in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

46. All procurement and commissioning tasks undertaken will be compliant with the Equalities Act 2010. The Contract Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the winning contractor delivers on Equality and Diversity as part of their overall performance duties.
47. Bidders will be required to deliver social value in accordance with the Orbis Social Value Measurement Charter. The Contract Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the winning contractor delivers the agreed level of social value as part of their overall performance duties.

³ <https://www.surreyi.gov.uk/jsna/long-term-conditions/#header-the-level-of-need-in-the-population>

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

48. The following dates are an indication of the proposed procurement timeline. For information, they are pending waiver approval for the new contract to start on 1 April 2021, in line with the new financial year.

Action	Date
Approval from Cabinet	28/04/2020
PIN start	01/07/2020
PIN end	31/07/2020
Decision on tender or direct award	03/08/2020
Engagement event	Early Sep
OJEU notice	10/09/2020
Publish tender	17/09/2020
ITT submission deadline	19/10/2020
Evaluation	26/10/2020
Standstill	09/11/2020
Contract Award	19/11/2020
Mobilisation starts (4 months)	03/12/2020
Contract starts	01/04/2021

Contact Officer (Adults): Sarah Ford – Senior Commissioning Manager,
Email: sarah.ford@surreycc.gov.uk Tel: 020 8213 2578

Contact Officer (Children’s): Sarah Rajendram - Commissioning Officer CFLLLC,
Email: sarah.rajendram@surrey.gov.uk Tel: 07970761308