

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
DECISION**

**DECISION OF: DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES
WITH ADVICE FROM: SECTION 151 OFFICER AND HEAD OF
STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT
DIRECTORATE: PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES**



DECISION NO: PC20 (18/19 Scheme)

SUBJECT: FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING SERVICE CONTRACT

KEY DECISION: YES

BACKGROUND:

Family Group Conferencing has been provided by North Somerset Council to families for over 13 years and mainly serviced the Childcare Social Work Teams.

Previous Executive Member approval was given in January 2017 (P&C53) to outsource the Family Group Conferencing Service and hold a competitive Open Tender exercise to find a suitable external provider.

Two bidders submitted applications for the tender exercise. Evaluation of the tender has been undertaken, both bidders exceeded the minimum threshold required to be awarded the contract. The successful organisation withdrew their bid on further negotiations around budget reductions. Negotiations have been held with the second bidder and a decision is now being requested to award the Contract to Community Foster Care (CFC), Registered Charity Number: 1084124, Company Number: 03719101, for a period of 3 years with the option to extend by a further two years. The staff member eligible to TUPE over to the service will be based at the North Somerset Council Office on Townshend Road.

DECISION:

To approve a contract award to Community Foster Care, Registered Charity Number: 1084124, Company Number: 03719101, for a period of three years with the option to extend by a further two years.

REASONS:

Both bids were evaluated for price and quality using a price/quality ratio of 50/50 as stated in the tender documents. The quality elements were assessed by a multi-disciplinary panel and the price elements were evaluated by Corporate Accountancy.

Both bidders were evaluated against the tender documents, Finance, Equalities & Diversity, Sustainability and Health & Safety.

The multi-disciplinary panel assessed CFC's bid as meeting all of the requirements of the service specification with a score of 74.6%. It is therefore recommended that the Contract be awarded to Community Foster Care.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

As per Decision P&C53 the only viable option is to externalise the service. A review of the in-house service found there was frequent overspending on the budget, largely due to the expense of training and retaining FGC Co-ordinators retaining the inhouse provision. Retaining this provision would require a further review of services and an increase in budget to meet the service needs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs

The Contract value is £270,000 across the 5 years with an annual contract value of £54,000.

There are no negative financial implications by completing the tender exercise, as outlined and approved in the previous Executive Member decision, furthermore the contract value has been reduced by £6000 annually.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

The legislation that promotes Family Group Conferencing and considers the wishes and feeling of children/young people includes:

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations - Volume 1 (revised) 2008:

"A family group conference (FGC) can be an important opportunity to engage friends and members of the wider family at an early stage of concerns about a child, either to support the parents or to provide care for the child, whether in the short or longer term. In either case, FGCs can reduce or eliminate the need for the child to become looked after. In presenting a care plan to the court in any application for a care order, the local authority will be required to demonstrate that it has considered family members and friends as potential carers at each stage of its decision making." (Paragraph 3.8).

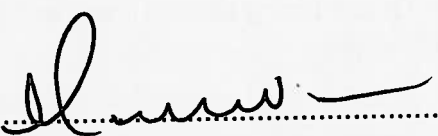
"Before reaching such a decision, (to apply for a Care or Supervision Order) the local authority should have taken such steps as are possible, perhaps through a family group conference or other family meeting, to explore whether care for the child can be safely provided by a relative or friend, have assessed the suitability of possible arrangements and have considered the most appropriate legal status of such arrangements." (Paragraph 3.24).

IN CONSULTATION WITH:

Signed: 

Title: S151 Officer

Date: 1.8.17

Signed: 

Title: Head of Strategic Procurement

Date: 1.8.17

Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable:

