

**Report of Strategy and Commissioning**

**Report to: Director of Environment and Housing**

**Date: 15 July 2014**

**Subject: Extension of Leaving Care contract with GIPSIL**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. The Leaving Care contract is managed by GIPSIL and provides floating support to young people (aged 16-25) who are leaving care in order to help them make a successful transition from a care setting to independent living.
2. This contract forms part of the programme of Housing Related Support services commissioned by Strategy and Commissioning, Public Health on behalf of Environment and Housing and Children's Services.
3. The contract was put in place after a competitive tender and is for three years with up to two one year extensions available. The first extension period is due to expire on 31 August 2014. Approval is being sought for the second one year extension at a cost of £281,165.55 per annum.
4. There is a high demand for the service, which has consistently performed well over the contract period. The quality of the service is high with a recent validation visit assessing the service provided at Level A against the Quality Assessment Framework.
5. The service is strategically important, Children's Services are in agreement that the extension should be put in place and have confirmed an £80,000 contribution for the extension period.

## **Recommendations**

6. The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve the one year extension to the existing contract with GIPSIL for the Leaving Care Service with effect from 1 September 2014 up to a value of £281,165.55 per annum.

### **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that the Care Leaver Service provided by GIPSIL is continued through a one year extension to the existing contract.

### **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The contract, for three years with an option for up to two one year extensions, has been in place with GIPSIL for the Leaving Care Service since 1 September 2010 at a value of £281,165.55 per annum. The first extension period is due to expire on 31 August 2014 and approval is being sought to extend the contract for the second available extension period from 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015.
- 2.2 The contract is part funded by Children's Services who contribute £80,000 per annum. Children's Services have confirmed that they support extending the contract for a further year and will continue to part fund the service at the same level during this period.
- 2.3 The service provides city wide floating support for up to 60 vulnerable young care leavers at any one time to help them achieve independence. Care leavers are referred via Children's Services and they are supported for an initial period of 6 months providing an effective planned pathway into independent living. The service works in a very holistic way, working with young people to ensure the relevant support is in place to enable independent living and this approach has proved successful.
- 2.4 There is a high demand for the service, which has been consistently running at full capacity and performance has been excellent throughout the contract period.
- 2.5 The quality of the service provided is consistently high, the service was validated at level A against the Quality Assessment Framework in 2011 (the quality standards framework for housing related support) and a further validation has taken place in June 2014 which also confirmed a level A rating. The service puts the wellbeing of young care leavers at the heart of everything it does and this was clearly reflected in feedback from service users.

### **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 An options appraisal has been carried out that considered strategic fit, quality and performance alongside whether the best option for care leavers would be continuation with the current service, bringing the service in house, de-commissioning, re-tendering, merger into the FLAGSHIP service or use of the White Rose Framework. The result of the options appraisal was that continuity of provision was very important for the client group and that as the Leaving Care service is providing a high quality provision the best option is to seek approval for use of the available one year extension.

- 3.2 The service performance is excellent with positive outcomes being achieved for young care leavers ensuring that not only is stable housing achieved but that they have the skills and options available to achieve full independence through support around health, parenting, education and training, employment, benefits and maximising income.
- 3.3 A number of local authorities across the region have come together to form a consortium and are in the process of procuring a regional framework for 16+ Leaving Care services. This is the 'White Rose Children's 16+ Accommodation and Support for Care Leavers and Vulnerable Young People Regional Framework' and is expected to be in place around September. The extension period will ensure continuity of service provision for care leavers whilst the procurement of the regional framework continues and the new framework contract is embedded.
- 3.4 Discussions are ongoing with Children's Services to look at the future of the Leaving Care service after this extension period. Options currently being considered are whether the service can become part of the White Rose Framework, whether it should continue to stand alone as a separate service or whether it should be considered alongside the FLAGSHIP service for young people.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The service was subject to a quality assessment exercise undertaken by Strategy and Commissioning staff in June 2014, which included group consultations with staff and service users. The feedback from both groups was overwhelmingly positive and demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the service.
- 4.1.2 The consultations with staff and service users, together with interviewing the service manager and review of case files, policies and procedures has resulted in the service being validated at Level A against the Quality Assessment Framework which is the quality standards framework for housing related support providers.
- 4.1.3 GIPSIL also ensure that they engage with service users on an on-going basis, such as through representation on the organisation's Management Committee, service user groups and through satisfaction surveys. The voice and experience of young care leavers is consistently sought through the day to day work of the service and this was confirmed in consultation carried out with service users.
- 4.1.4 As part funder, Children's Services have been consulted on the service provided and the requirement for a further extension. They have confirmed that they are supportive of the service and are in agreement that the service should be extended for a further one year period.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening has been completed and included as background information to this report. The screening indicates

that a full assessment is not required because extending the contract will not involve any changes which would impact negatively on service users, staff or stakeholders.

### **4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 The Housing Related Support programme directly contributes to the delivery of the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030's aim to make Leeds the Best City for health and wellbeing where "people are supported by high quality services to live full, active and independent lives", and the Best Council Plan 2013/17 outcome of "improve the quality of life for our residents, particularly for those who are vulnerable or in poverty".
- 4.3.2 The Leaving Care Service specifically addresses the challenge within the Children & Young People Plan 2011-15 to focus on the needs of young people, including care leavers, with the most significant and complex barriers to progression. The primary focus of the service is housing needs, but also provides support around the other issues highlighted in the Plan, such as finance and mental health.
- 4.3.3 The service is also contributing to the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2013-15 by providing support, advice and guidance to care leavers in order to help them live safely in their own homes, minimise debt, achieve their potential through education and lifelong learning, and move into employment.
- 4.3.4 The Leeds Homelessness Strategy 2012-15 gives as one of its priorities the need to "prepare young people to leave care and/or making young people aware of what housing options are available if they become homeless" and goes on to describe a necessary action to establish 'taster tenancies' for young people leaving care. This action is one of the key aspects of the Leaving Care Service, along with a broad range of floating and pastoral support.

### **4.4 Resources and Value for Money**

- 4.4.1 As this is an extension to an existing contract, there is financial provision within the Environment and Housing commissioning budget for housing related support services managed by Strategy and Commissioning, Office of the Director of Public Health.
- 4.4.2 In addition to the £201,165.55 pa allocated from the housing related support budget, there is a contribution of £80,000 pa from Children's Services. Approval for this was given by the Head of Service for Looked After Children on 18 June 2014.
- 4.4.3 The service offers value for money, costing a comparable amount to other young people services that are currently commissioned.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 The recommendation within this report is in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules 21.1 and there is provision remaining for one further 12-month extension within the original contract.

- 4.5.2 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.
- 4.5.3 The total contract value is £281,165.55 pa. This is therefore a Key Decision as the value of the decision is over £250,000 and as such will be subject to a call in period. A notice was published on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 This 12 month extension period is required to enable continuation of the services provided by GIPSIL through the Leaving Care Service. It provides a key part of the city-wide housing related support services for young people. Decommissioning the service would leave vulnerable young people leaving care without the support which they require to live independently.
- 4.6.2 There is a very small risk of challenge from other providers if the service is not exposed to competition at this time. However, the original contract was awarded after a competitive tender exercise and provision for this 12 month extension was within the original approval and is being requested to allow continuity of service delivery.
- 4.6.3 The contract will continue to be performance managed by officers in Strategy & Commissioning. This includes regular reviewing of performance information and quarterly contract management meetings with the provider, at which any delivery issues are discussed. To date, however, the service has consistently delivered to the performance criteria outlined in the specification. Furthermore, a quality assurance exercise carried out in June 2014 showed that the service is delivered by a high quality, experienced and stable staff team who are committed to providing the best service possible for a vulnerable client group, and that this work is hugely appreciated by the service users.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Leaving Care Service, provided by GIPSIL, is a high quality and well performing service for young people which supports them to move from a care setting to independent living. The service is highly valued by young care leavers and stakeholders.
- 5.2 The current contract period expires on 31 August 2014 but there is provision for a further one year extension period and this report seeks approval to extend the contract from 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve the one year extension to the existing contract with GIPSIL for the Leaving Care Service with effect from 1 September 2014 up to a value of £281,165.55 per annum.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

### **7.1 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening document**

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.