



Report of Commissioning Officer

Report to Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire

Date: 11/03/2018

Subject: Request to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 in order to enter into a 12 month agreement with Link Maker for the provision of the Link Maker online portal for the One Adoption West Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency at an annual value of £53,000

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 type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" 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 purpose of this report is to seek permission from the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 to enter in to an agreement for the provision of the Link Maker service which assists adoption agencies in identifying prospective adopters for children and young people.
2. One of the work streams undertaken in preparation for the creation of a regional adoption agency has looked at the adoption support related services commissioned by the West Yorkshire local authorities. These services have been mapped and it has been agreed that the services across the West Yorkshire region will be re-commissioned on an interim basis whilst a review of commissioned activity takes place in the context of a regional adoption agency. This will ensure consistency of service whilst the regional agency is established.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire approves the waiver of Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 to enter in to a 12 month arrangement with Link Maker at a value of £53,000.pa with an option to extend for a further 12 months.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek permission from the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 to enter in to an agreement for the provision of the Link Maker service which assists adoption agencies in identifying prospective adopters for children and young people.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Education and Adoption Act 2016 is clear about the regionalisation agenda and government is clear that all local authorities will be part of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) or will have delegated their adoption functions to a RAA by 2020.
- 2.2 The Yorkshire and Humberside Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies have been part of an adoption consortium for many years and have worked pro-actively to develop the best arrangements as we move towards a regionalised approach for the delivery of adoption services in the region. This has been assisted with transitional funding from the Department for Education (DfE).
- 2.3 There will be three groupings as Regional Adoption Agencies within the wider Yorkshire and Humberside (Y &H) region; South Yorkshire, North and the Humber and West Yorkshire. The West Yorkshire councils are Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield.
- 2.4 One of the work streams undertaken in preparation for the creation of a regional adoption agency has looked at the adoption related services commissioned by the West Yorkshire local authorities. These services have been mapped and it has been agreed that the services currently commissioned across the West Yorkshire region will be re-commissioned on an interim basis whilst a review of commissioned activity takes place in the context of a regional adoption agency.
- 2.5 There are a number of varied commissioning arrangements across the West Yorkshire Local Authorities. Local authorities across the region have previously held individual arrangements with Link Maker. This report brings together these individual arrangements under one arrangement held by One Adoption West Yorkshire.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The responsibility for adoption support across West Yorkshire transferred to Leeds City Council on 1st April 2017 as the local authority hosts the regional adoption agency. Therefore the responsibility for commissioned adoption services also sits with Leeds City Council.
- 3.2 The web based Link Maker service provides a range of functionality including a portal which assists in finding prospective adopters for children and young people.

Strategic Context

- 3.2.1 The provision of the Link Maker service assists will assist the One Adoption West Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency in ensuring the best possible change of matching children and young people with prospective adopters.
- 3.2.2 The Link Maker service is also currently used by a number of Local Authorities across the region to assist in identifying suitable prospective adopters therefore continuing to commission this service will ensure continuing of provision during the transition to a regional agency.
- 3.2.3 A number of other commissioned services are also in place across the West Yorkshire area that supports the work of the regional adoption agency to be hosted by Leeds. A strategic review of all adoption related commissioned services will be undertaken in 2017/18 with the intention of informing future commissioning and ensuring a clear and consistent service offer in the context of a regional adoption agency for West Yorkshire.

3.3 Consultation and engagement

- 3.3.1 Significant consultation has taken place through the project to develop a regional adoption agency. Further consultation specifically in relation to future delivery of commissioned adoption services will take place during the review to inform future commissioning.

3.4 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 3.4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening document has been undertaken and there is no impact in respect of equality and diversity as the new contract will continue on the basis of the existing provision.

3.5 Council policies and best council plan

- 3.5.1 The outcomes these services are commissioned against are those within the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 2019. This contract will contribute to a number of the outcomes and priorities within the plan including the outcome to ensure all young people are safe from harm and the priority to help children live in safe and supportive families.

3.6 Resources and value for money

- 3.6.1 The award of these contracts does not create any additional budget pressures; it is a continuation of services currently commissioned & delivered in West Yorkshire.
- 3.6.2 The budget for these services is held within the regional adoption agency budget. Work has taken place with the regional adoption Project Manager and finance colleagues to ensure the regional agency budget reflects the costs of these commissioned services. The Head of Service for the RAA has confirmed approval for establishing these contracts with Leeds City Council.

3.7 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 3.7.1 This report seeks approval to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 & 8.2 to enter into a 12 month agreement with Link Maker at a value of £53,000 p.a with an option to extend for a further 12 months.
- 3.7.2 The decision requested is a significant operational decision and is therefore not subject to call in. This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information under the Access to Information Rules.
- 3.7.3 Giving the work to this provider without competition could leave the Council open to a potential claim from other providers, to whom this contract could be of interest, that it has not been wholly transparent. In terms of transparency it should be noted that Contracts Procedure Rules suggests that contracts of this value should be subject to a degree of advertising. It is up to the Council to decide what degree of advertising is appropriate. In giving the work to this provider without competition there is a potential risk of challenge from other providers who have not been given the chance to tender for this opportunity.
- 3.7.4 These risks may be mitigated to a degree as no additional work is being created as a result of awarding these contracts. Local Authorities across the region already use Link Maker and this report seeks approval to bring these together under one arrangement for One Adoption West Yorkshire.

3.8 Risk management

- 3.8.1 In mapping the commissioned adoption support services across West Yorkshire and agreeing relevant actions to ensure continuity of service for children and families the Commissioning and Market Management service has worked closely with the regional adoption Project Manager, Finance, Legal, Procurement and other local authorities across the region in addition to the providers of adoption support services across the region.
- 3.8.2 In the event that the actions required in order to establish these contracts are not approved, continuity of service for children and families currently receiving these services would not be possible. This could therefore have an impact on the council's priorities as outlined in the Child and Young People's Plan 2015-2019 and could detract from the successful implementation of the regional adoption agency.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 The continuation of the arrangement with Link Maker is required as part of the regional adoption agency arrangements to ensure continuity of provision.
- 4.2 The Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire is requested to note the contents of this report and to approve the waiver of Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 in order to enter into a 12 month arrangement with Link

Maker at a value of £53,000pa with an option to extend for a further 12 months.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire approves the waiver of Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 in order to enter into a 12 month arrangement with Link Maker at a value of £53,000 pa

6 Background documents¹

- 6.1 None

¹ 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.