



REPORT OF: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATES: 18th DECEMBER, 2018

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LCC PROCUREMENT UPDATE REGARDING PENDLE WOMEN'S REFUGE (PWR) AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Policy and Resources Committee of the progress of LCC Procurement plans in relation to women's refuges (inc Pendle Women's Refuge) and young people's services.

To inform Policy and Resources Committee of the recent successful pan-Lancashire bid for funding

RECOMMENDATION

That Policy and Resources Committee allow the women's refuge building be offered to the successful bidder for 'nominal rent', for the term of the proposed LCC contract (initial 3 years plus potential extension to no more than five years), subject to negotiation.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To ensure that a women's refuge service remains within the Pendle area following the LCC procurement process.

ISSUE

In November 2016, Executive agreed to a tender process being undertaken for future provision of Pendle Women's Refuge (PWR). In line with this, LCC were notified of the Council's wish to withdraw from direct management of the refuge service. However, the tender process was held back until 2018 when all other domestic abuse refuge contracts in Lancashire would be required to be re-tendered.

On 8th November 2018, LCC Cabinet considered the re-procurement of provision of domestic abuse refuge services in Lancashire (Appendix 1), and this was approved. It is anticipated that a

tender process will commence shortly, with provisional dates of W/c 25th March 2019 for outcome notification and W/c 17th June 2019 for when the new service will commence.

Potential Impact on Pendle

LCC have set a number of commissioning objectives (Appendix 2) which include:-

- To ensure that no woman currently living in the LCC area will need to travel further than 15-20 miles to the nearest refuge, within the LCC footprint
- To ensure the delivery of high quality, trauma informed support to women and children in a psychologically informed environment that supports recovery and independence
- To ensure that refuges are increasingly able to meet the needs of women and children who have more complex and specialist needs and may present more challenging behaviour
- To drive quality and cost improvements in refuge provision across Lancashire, eliminating duplication where possible and supporting innovation in the use of all resources.
- To ensure value for money in the use of our resources
- To be more inclusive by developing our service offer in the future to include males affected by domestic abuse in order to meet their specific needs

The procurement plan includes undertaking a single county-wide lot for domestic abuse refuge services. Thus bringing together all refuges under one organisation or via a consortium approach is likely to achieve significant economies of scale and contribute towards sustainment of services and potential improvement. Further, the successful tenderer is likely to hold charitable status and be able to bid for resources which the Council as a statutory body is unable to do.

However, the Lot does not specify that existing refuge buildings must be used. As such, it is possible that the successful tenderer's bid does not include a domestic abuse refuge in Pendle. Further, even if a refuge is continued in Pendle, the proposed contract would allow sufficient flexibility that the successful tenderer may at a later date, choose to discontinue providing a service in a particular area, subject to agreement from LCC.

In order to mitigate the risk of a service not being provided in Pendle, the tender documents are expected to contain a note advising that whilst the present refuge building has limitations in terms of space and layout, the Council would welcome a takeover of the service at the current accommodation with a longer term aspiration that the refuge be re-provided in the borough with improved facilities should additional capital and revenue funding become available. Further, it is proposed that subject to Member approval and negotiation, the refuge building would be offered to the successful bidder on a lease basis for 'nominal rent', for the term of the proposed LCC contract, subject to its use being restricted to a women's refuge.

Should the service be discontinued at the refuge building, whether as a result of the tender process or at a later decision following review of the service, there would be issues in relation to:-

- **Current staffing** – it would be assumed that staff would be subject to TUPE and may be redeployed in alternative refuge services but there is risk of redundancy if such redeployment isn't available.
- **The building itself** – the Council would need to negotiate with the successful tenderer if the building will continue to be used, or if not, its future would need to be resolved. As part of this, provision of office space provided for PDVI at the refuge building would need to be resolved.
- **Loss of refuge provision in Pendle itself** – there may be considerable concern from both the general public and agencies that Pendle is losing an important resource dedicated to supporting vulnerable women and their children at a time of crisis in their lives. In 2017/18, the average length of stay per household was 86 days.

- ***Whether the Council wishes to ensure a refuge continues to operate in Pendle*** – if so, a number of issues would need to be considered inc:-
 - the Council would minimally need to find additional funding to make up for the loss of the £88,730pa presently received from the LCC contract, which would no longer be available.
 - whether sufficient demand for the service would remain following the tender process
 - whether the Council itself would remain the service provider or seek an external partner to deliver the service

A further report will be submitted to Policy & Resource Committee once the outcome of the tender process is known and whether this includes provision of a women's refuge in Pendle.

LCC Procurement Plans - Young People's Services

On 3rd December 2018, LCC Cabinet will consider a report requesting approval to commence procurement exercises, which includes supported accommodation for young people (Appendix 3). Lots have been split by the type of supported housing and geographical area. In terms of current supported housing in Pendle:-

Safespace, Leeds Road, Nelson – is anticipated to be advertised as a single lot
Stepping Stone dispersed housing – although this is based across Pendle, Burnley, Rossendale and Hyndburn, this is also expected to be advertised as a single lot.
Supported lodgings – it is anticipated that this type of housing will be advertised as a single lot across Lancashire.

As all services are expected to be determined as single Lots which mirrors how these services are already commissioned, there is not expected to be any impact on Pendle, although service providers may change.

Successful bid for domestic abuse funding

Lancashire, which includes Pendle, has successfully submitted a joint bid for funding to MHCLG for domestic abuse services. Overall, LCC was awarded £1,249,947 of which Pendle will receive £80,290.66. Subject to procurement exemption, it would be intended that Positive Action in the Community (PAC) who were a partner in the overall bid, would be awarded the funding to provide the following posts:-

Complex Needs Worker - To provide support to women and children with complex needs and reduce barriers for those needing to access safe accommodation. To also support people residing in Pendle's Domestic Abuse accommodation services (PWR and PDVI's Safehouses), including resettlement support when resettling in the community.

Play Worker - To provide a programme of play therapy for children and young people residing in Pendle's Domestic Abuse accommodation services (PWR and PDVI's Safehouses).

IMPLICATIONS

Policy

There are no known policy issues arising from this report.

Financial

It is requested that Policy & Resources Committee to agree to the women's refuge building being offered to the successful bidder for 'nominal rent', which would as such, forego a potential rental

income. However in order to try and ensure that a refuge service continues to exist in Pendle, it is felt that the building ought to be offered at 'nominal rent'.

Legal

There are no known legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

There are no known risk management issues arising from this report.

Health and Safety:

There are no known health & safety implication

Sustainability:

There are no known sustainability issues arising from this report.

Community Safety:

There are no known community safety issues arising from this report. However, should there be loss of a women's refuge service in Pendle, this may prove detrimental to the Council's community safety provision.

Equality and Diversity:

There are no known equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Procurement of Refuge Services – Report for LCC Cabinet – Nov 18

Appendix 2 – LCC Commissioning Objectives for domestic abuse services

Appendix 3 – Procurement of Supported Housing – Report for LCC Cabinet – Dec 18