

Decision Maker: EDUCATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Date: For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 8 July 2015

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: GATEWAY REVIEW :FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF THE CONTRACT FOR A FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Contact Officer: Mary Cava, SEN Implementation Manager
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Chief Officer: Jane Bailey, Assistant Director, Education, Care and Health Services

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report outlines the provision of the Family Support Service for children and young people diagnosed with autism and their families and the local community currently provided by Burgess Autistic Trust.
- 1.2 The report also provides details of the history and annual contract value of the service and provides an update on the performance of the service.
- 1.3 Approval was sought and agreed from senior officers for a further year's exemption from tendering the contract for a Family Support Service for 2015/16. However due to the cumulative value of the contract it is being brought to Member attention to alert them of this and to inform Members of the future testing of the market prior to this contract ceasing in March 2016.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 **The Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:-**

- i) **Note the contents of this report.**
- ii) **Note that this service will be market tested during 2015/16.**

2.2 **The Education Portfolio Holder is asked to:-**

- i) **Consider the comments of the Education PDS Committee; and**
- ii) **Agree to the market testing of this service during 2015/16**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Draft Education, Care and Health Services Plan and Government Directed.
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People: Enjoy learning and achieve their full potential; ensuring the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £35,000 in 2015/16;
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: 136568~3423
 4. Total current budget for this head: £35,000
 5. Source of funding: Within the Dedicated Schools Grant
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A – the Service is provided by an external provider
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Approximately 10 hours per annum Officer time to monitor the contracts.
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No legal requirement but viewed as a spend to save as parents will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of their child with SEN:
 2. Call-in: Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Approximately 130 children and young people per year diagnosed with Autism and their families. There are currently 1900 families on the Bromley Autistic Trust database.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

Family Support Service

- 3.1 Bromley Council Children's Services have provided a family support service for parents and carers of children & young people diagnosed with an autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) through a contract with Burgess Autistic Trust (BAT), formerly Bromley Autistic Trust for the last 10 years.
- 3.2 Workshops for parents, carers and professionals that cover topics such as Understanding Autism, Communication Strategies and Positive Behaviour Management Strategies have been commissioned through this contract. They are also commissioned to provide factual information regarding SEN processes and have been invaluable in disseminating information regarding the new Children and Families Act which encompasses the new legislation for Special Educational Needs and Disability. Continuous advice and support is delivered through activities/projects for young people, their siblings and extended families, offering a substantial depth of understanding, sharing knowledge and understanding. This ensures that all those living, learning and working with the young person with autism have an understanding of their needs and can support them through their lifelong learning.
- 3.3 BAT has successfully delivered the contract requirements and this service is regarded as an extension of the services provided by the statutory sector. They provide an early intervention service to support families and their young people who have a diagnosis of autism which may prevent more costly Local Authority interventions at a later date.

Contract History

- 3.4 The Family Support Service has been delivered by BAT and funded by Bromley Council since at least 2004. All contracts have been awarded via exemption – the service has never been competitively tendered. Whilst authorisation was sought and given by senior officers for the current year it was felt that due to the cumulative value of the contract this should be brought to Members attention for future consideration.
- 3.5 This contract is managed and monitored by the Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability Service. The delivery of the contract supports the thrust of the new Children and Family's Act 2014. This relates to empowering families in their understanding of autism and how it may affect their child and family and ensures early intervention through providing knowledge and skills for families to be as self-sustaining as possible. By informing and empowering families the aim is to reduce the demands placed on statutory services.

Performance

- 3.6 Council officers meet with the contract holders on a regular basis to monitor the level of service provided against the targets set out in the contract documentation. The service is highly regarded by families and other professionals and last year a total of 920 families used the Family Support Service. The volume of users continues to be monitored by Commissioners and Contract Compliance Officers during the Contract Period.
- 3.7 BAT has demonstrated that they can provide comprehensive services for children and young people diagnosed with autism and their families. They have the level of staff skills, experience, infrastructure and local knowledge required to provide the services specified by the Council.

Future Proposals

3.8 In light of the Information and Advice service requirements under the Children & Families Act 2014, it is intended to review this service during 2015/16 in order to ensure that it meets the Council's requirements with a view to testing the market place to ensure value for money and quality of service.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 In accordance with the Council's commitment to Building a Better Bromley to support children and young people to enjoy learning and achieve their full potential and ensuring the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Current contract value £35,000 per annum, which is funded from Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

5.2 The Cumulative Contract Value of this contract is approximately £420,000. This is an estimated value based on the contract being in place since 2004/05 at roughly the same annual value.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Service provided by BAT is subject to the application of the "light touch" regime under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

6.2 Rule 3.7 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules state " Where a Service is to be provided by a Voluntary Sector Organisation through an external Service Level Agreement the relevant Chief Officer, in consultation with the Director of Resources, can decide not to obtain competitive tenders or quotations provided that:

- The Chief Officer is satisfied that the Voluntary Sector Organisation is, or will be able to provide a satisfactory quality of Service and that the sums payable under any Service Level Agreement entered into represent Value for Money;
- The relevant Head of Finance keeps a record of all payments made and any Grants received under the Service Level Agreement;
- The Service Level Agreement is time limited and subject to renewal under the arrangements identified in this Rule.

Approvals have been obtained as provided for in Rule 13.1, as appropriate for the estimated total value of the intended arrangement.

Non-Applicable Sections:	PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	N/A