

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 11 July 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Re-commissioning of the Provision of Childcare for Flying Start in Colcot, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan.
Purpose of Report:	To seek authority to re-commission an existing contract relating to the provision of childcare for the Vale of Glamorgan Flying Start Programme within Colcot, Barry. To seek delegated authority to award the contract to the successful provider.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member, Social Care and Health.
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services.
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Natalie Eddins, Team Manager, Commissioning; Louise McGowan, Senior Contracts Officer; Shannon Purdey, Contracts Officer; Kathryn Clarke, Flying Start Manager.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by the Cabinet.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of this report is to seek authority to re-commission an existing contract relating to the provision of childcare for the Vale of Glamorgan Flying Start Programme within the current setting in the grounds of Colcot Primary School, and to enter into a contract with the successful provider. • The contract is to be awarded for 2 (two) years initially, with an option to extend for up to a further 2 (two) years in negotiation with the successful providers subject to the ongoing award of the Flying Start grant by Welsh Government. • The contract is envisaged to commence in January 2025, subject to the successful provider's completion of CIW registration requirements. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet authorises the Director of Social Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health to undertake a competitive tender process for the provision of Flying Start services in Colcot, Barry.
2. That Cabinet authorises the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health to award the contract(s) for this service for an initial period of two years with an option to extend for up to a further two years, following the completion of the tender process.
3. That Cabinet grants delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services to prepare, complete and execute a contract with the successful bidder.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To enable the Directorate to undertake a tender process that will provide Flying Start childcare within Colcot, Barry in a cost-effective way that meets the requirements of Welsh Government Flying Start Guidance and the required standards of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
2. To ensure that the service is in place for the next two years with the potential to extend it for a further two years if required.
3. To ensure that the appropriate authority and documentation are in place to complete the contract.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Flying Start programme in the Vale of Glamorgan is a Welsh Government initiative, providing families with children aged 0-3 years with a range of intensive prevention services.
- 1.2 The provision of high-quality childcare for children from 2-3 years of age is the centrepiece of service delivered under the Flying Start initiative. The quality childcare provision focuses on children living in disadvantaged communities and aims to improve their outcomes in preparation for school and in the long term.
- 1.3 One of the overarching priorities of the Flying Start initiative is that 'all children should have a good start in life, including good early years services and support for parents or carers.' The Welsh Government has committed to continued support for the Flying Start childcare programme since September 2022 by delivering a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two-year-olds, referred to locally as the 2-year-old childcare offer.
- 1.4 The childcare unit on Colcot Primary School unit will support those children within the geographical areas eligible for Flying Start childcare as well as supporting children under the 2-year-old childcare offer.
- 1.5 There will be an opportunity for up to 16 places for children aged 3+ not eligible for the Childcare Offer. Commissioning up to 16 sessions from an external

provider will provide an opportunity for wider partnership involvement and make available to family's broader provision of quality, sustainable childcare in a high-quality environment within walking distance of their homes.

- 1.6** There is currently a contract in place for this provision, awarded in 2018 for a period of 2 (two) years with an option to extend the contract for a period of a minimum of 2 (two) years. The initial two-year contract was commissioned for 24 childcare places, 16 of these being for Flying Start provision, at a cost of £34,320 per annum.
- 1.7** Quality childcare contributes to the acquisition of skills and abilities, socialisation, and the ability to play and concentrate. These are crucial, not only to a child's subsequent ability to learn, but also to participate effectively in groups, whether in the classroom, the labour market or society. Research suggests that quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) leads to improvements in children's development in later years, such as enhanced language skills; better educational performance in mathematics and reading; and an increase in positive behaviour/outcomes. Children who attend quality early years settings are more independent, concentrate on their play for longer and, on entry to school, are more co-operative and better prepared for the challenges they meet [Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) (2003); Schweinhart et al (1993), Love et al (2005)]. One of the findings of the EPPE study is that high quality pre-school care is linked to better intellectual attainment and improved social relationships. The Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education Project (EPPSE) findings, published in 2014, further emphasises the significance of high-quality pre-school experiences and the longitudinal impacts these experiences can have on educational attainment.
- 1.8** A focus on high quality provision should therefore underpin all aspects of Flying Start childcare. Flying Start childcare should not only aim to be of the highest quality but should strive to be the benchmark for quality childcare throughout Wales.
- 1.9** There are three key measures of quality in a successful Flying Start childcare setting:
- Enabling Adults
 - Engaging Experiences; and
 - Effective Environments
- 1.10** Enabling adults, effective environments and engaging experiences all contribute to the provision of quality childcare and provide the foundations on which all future development will be built.
- 1.11** Flying Start is based on the following expectations:
- Staff working with young children should be suitably trained and qualified, understand how children develop and learn, and be sensitive and responsive to their needs and feelings.
 - The role of the adult within the setting is to support and enrich children's learning, rather than to direct it.

- Children need a caring, stimulating environment.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The tender process will be managed by a project group which includes representatives from Flying Start and Social Services Procurement and Commissioning teams. The group has been meeting frequently to allow timely discussions to be held with regards to issues that may occur within the tender process. Informed debate and discussion will be allowed for decisions to be agreed, ensuring continued progress of the tender process within required timescales.
- 2.2** Following advertising of the tender process, organisations will complete an Invitation to Tender (ITT).
- 2.3** The quality element of the submission will be evaluated through several means and will cover areas that have been weighed appropriately in accordance with importance.
- 2.4** All bidders will be asked to provide written submissions against quality questions included within the ITT document. Their written submissions will be assessed by an internal evaluation panel.
- 2.5** Providers will also be evaluated on their quality through an interview process. Bidders are to be asked to present their proposals and answer a series of formal questions to the evaluation panel. These responses will be evaluated and scored by the panel.
- 2.6** Parents will also be involved in the quality element of the process, with them asking direct questions of the potential providers during the interview stage.
- 2.7** Following the evaluation of overall quality, this will be combined with the bidder's due diligence responses within their Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) to identify the preferred provider for the service.
- 2.8** The contract is to be awarded initially for 2 (two) years with an option to extend for up to a further 2 (two) years in negotiation with the successful bidder.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 3.2** To make sure we are all working towards the same purpose, the 2015 Act places seven well-being goals on the Council. The 2015 Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two, these being:
 - A prosperous Wales

- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

3.3 By embedding the five ways of working, the Council is working in a more sustainable way. The Council aims to meet these as detailed below.

Long Term

3.4 The Council's commitment to providing the service within the Flying Start Childcare scheme represents a focus on the long-term wellbeing of children, by promoting and fostering a culture of independence.

3.5 The delivery of the Flying Start Scheme aims to support the Welsh Government's commitment to provide high quality childcare, which supports children's development and school readiness as well as enabling more parents to access education or training or who are on the edge of work.

Taking an Integrated Approach

3.6 The Council expects that the successful bidder will build upon existing relationships with other professionals and agencies to avoid duplication and to maximise positive outcomes.

3.7 There is an opportunity for teams across the Council to work closely and in an integrated manner to achieve the delivery of Welsh Government's commitment to expand Flying Start provision in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Involving People

3.8 Each parent using the service is supported to participate in decisions affecting their children and be involved in planning, reviewing, and designing services. This ensures they are safe; have a say; experience new activities and feel involved, secure, and confident in the service provided to them.

3.9 Involvement of parents will also be central to the commissioning process, whereby a parents' panel will ask questions to bidding organisations at the interview stage of the procurement process. The scores of these questions will be given equal weighting to those posed by the Commissioners' interview panel.

Collaborating with Others

3.10 Service provision is not effective without collaboration with the parents using the service, but also partner organisations. The Flying Start scheme has and will continue to involve collaboration with internal officers across Directorates of the Council, third sector organisations and the successful childcare provider.

Prevention

- 3.11** The aim of Flying Start is to improve outcomes for children in the most deprived communities across Wales. Targeted investment is used to offer free, part-time, high-quality childcare for two- to three-year-olds; enhanced health visitor support; parenting programmes; and early language development, thus aiming to reduce the demand for additional services. There is evidence to show a good start in life leads to better outcomes in later life.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** In December 2020, the Climate Change Committee published its progress report “Reducing Carbon Emissions in Wales”. This is the first report on Wales’s progress towards meeting its emission reduction targets, as required under Article 45 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 4.2** The progress report and advice recognise the actions taken in Wales to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - including achieving some of the highest national recycling rates in the world, taking a proactive role in supporting the large-scale deployment of renewable energy generation, and integrating responses to the climate and nature emergency throughout its priorities for the reconstruction of the economy following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.3** The implications of the proposed development will encourage those who use the facility to commute via active travel, being a local childcare provision for local people. The facility will engage with staff, parents, and care givers to use alternative modes of transport to reduce the environmental impact of the new facility.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** It is the intention of the Vale of Glamorgan Council to undertake a procurement exercise to identify a suitable provider for the services set out above.
- 5.2** Services for Vale of Glamorgan service users will be funded from within the Social Services budget. It is envisaged that the total annual cost of the service provision will be in the region of £43,680 per annum, based on 16 spaces.

Employment

- 5.3** The process of monitoring the service will be undertaken by staff within the Social Services Directorate, making appropriate use of corporate expertise and processes in areas such as procurement, finance and HR where required.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.4** Any change of service provided as a result of a tender process may result in TUPE being applied. If this occurs, Legal Services will be consulted as appropriate.

- 5.5 The review of all working arrangements between the Council and other agencies will ensure that services are provided through robust contracts that fully reflect the responsibilities of the Council and the provider.
- 5.6 The procurement will be compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Code of Practice.

6. Background Papers

Report to Director of Social Services, August 2018

Signed Delegated Authority Form, 2018