
CONTRACT FOR SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR TEENAGE PARENTS

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Bill Dixon, Housing Portfolio

Responsible Director(s) - Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services

Purpose of Report

1. To provide details of the new Supporting People service provided by Tees Valley Housing Association and to seek approval for a contract for housing related support service to be awarded.
2. To seek agreement to the waiving of Paragraph 3 (1)(a)(i) of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules with respect to the contract to enable the Supporting People arrangements to be confirmed.

Information and Analysis

3. The Council, as part of its work to implement Darlington's Community Strategy and Housing Strategy, supports bids by Registered Social Landlords to provide purpose built specialised accommodation to meet specific needs. These partnership arrangements often involve the development of support services to meet the specific needs of vulnerable people. As such, they rely upon the organisation's specialist knowledge, expertise and ability to provide support to future residents.
4. In terms of financial assistance for such support services, the Supporting People Programme is a working partnership between local government, service users, Health, Probation and support agencies. offering vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by enabling them to live more independently in the community. It has introduced a new system of planning, monitoring and funding for housing related support services, which is flexible, cost effective, reliable and complementary to existing care services.
5. However, with regard to the charges for supported living elements of specialist accommodation, payment arrangements sometimes need to be negotiated. For instance, where a service is directly related to specific purpose built accommodation, provided by a Registered Social Landlord. It is not, therefore, possible to undertake a tendering process for services. This report concerns such specialised accommodation and associated support services and seeks the Council's agreement to waive Paragraph 3 (1)(a)(i) of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in accordance with the Council's constitution, with respect to the Supporting People Interim Contract detailed in this report.

Tees Valley Housing Association

6. Tees Valley Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord, with an established record for providing high quality housing and support services to vulnerable tenants. In particular Tees Valley Housing Association have a high level of expertise in providing services for teenage parents.
7. In 2001, the Council supported a bid made by Tees Valley Housing Association to the Housing Corporation, for capital funding to develop a purpose built supported living scheme, specifically for 6 teenage parents. The proposal was developed in partnership with the Social Services Department and Darlington Primary Care Trust and was an integral part of the Action Plan of Darlington's Teenage Parent Strategy, as research had shown a need for such a service. Tackling Teenage Pregnancy was also a key priority for the Council in 2002/03. Significant consultation with elected Members, local residents and the teenage parents themselves took place during the development process.
8. Funding was approved and a suitable site was identified in Gladstone Street. The building was completed in early March 2004 and the first tenants moved in shortly after. Tenants are able to live in the project for up to 2 years and during this time will receive intensive 24 hour support to enable them to develop the skills to live independently in the future. The support service will be funded by Supporting People grant.
9. The cost of the service is £97,669 per annum. In this instance, as the support service is provided by the landlord, it has not been possible to undertake normal tendering procedures and instead it has been necessary to evaluate the service and relevant charges and to agree an appropriate charge relative to the service required.

Legal Implications

10. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

11. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

12. The issues contained within this report are required to be considered by the full Council.

Conclusion

13. This report details a support service that has been developed within a purpose built unit, to meet the very specific needs of teenage parents. It is not, therefore, possible to implement normal contract procedures. To enable a Supporting People Interim Contract to be issued, it will therefore be necessary for the Council to agree to waive Paragraph 3 (1)(a)(i) of the Contract Procedure rules.

Recommendations

14. Council are requested to :-

- (a) Approve the proposed service charge for 2004/05 at £97,669 pa.
- (b) Waive Paragraph 3(1)(a)(i) of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules with respect to the contract for this support service.

Reasons

15. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) This service has been developed as part of Darlington Borough Council's Teenage Parent Strategy and is considered to be an appropriate service.
- (b) The level of service and charges have been the subject of negotiation and are considered to be cost effective.
- (c) To enable a contract to be entered into for the provision of supported accommodation for teenage parents.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Background Papers

- (i) Darlington Local Teenage Pregnancy Strategy -March 2001

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