

**Report to:** Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012

**Lead Officer:** Head of Business Planning & Performance

**Report Author:** Commissioning & Evaluation Officer, Partnerships & Communities Team

**Title:** Tendering and award process for the Families First Programme funding from April 2012

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## **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1. To provide the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee with detail of the tendering and award process for the commissioning of services to support the Families First Programme in Denbighshire.
- 1.2. To update the Partnership Scrutiny Committee of the current position in relation to the commissioning of Families First Strategic Projects for the 2012-2014 financial period.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1 To offer assurance to the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee that an open and transparent tendering and award process has been undertaken.
- 2.2 To inform the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on the status of the commissioning process of Families First Strategic Projects for the 2012-2014 financial period, including detail of the successful providers thus far.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Committee supports the processes and decisions recommended by the Families First Project Board as endorsed at special meetings of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) and comments accordingly.

## **4. Report details**

### **TENDERING PROCESS**

#### **4.1. Cymorth – transition into Families First**

Denbighshire, through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) Board resolved to use the 2011-2012 financial period as a transition year to allow sufficient notice to recipients of the Cymorth funding to adapt project delivery if necessary to the Families First criteria. It was made clear to Cymorth providers that funding for their projects would cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

CYPSP agreed to commission the new Families First programme of services through an open tender exercise using Sell2Wales (a website set up to help small and medium-sized enterprises in Wales contact

public sector organisations, to promote themselves and find suitable tendering opportunities). Denbighshire is the only North Wales authority to have adopted this method of funding allocation, though other areas may follow suit in the 2013-14 financial year.

The intention was to provide a fair and transparent process for allocating the funding; that the best service provision and value for money was afforded, clarity needing to be shown as to how service users will be better off (through performance measuring by outcome based accountability). This is a significant change from the past when Cymorth funding was distributed through a much more informal grant process. A consequence was a tendency to 'roll over' funding from year to year, without fully re-assessing success or reviewing outcomes.

#### **4.2. Families First Action Plan**

The Welsh Government asked all authorities to produce an Action Plan outlining proposed provision and costings based upon learning during the 2011-2012 Pioneer Phase (Denbighshire has and continues to work with Wrexham and Flintshire in consortia on a regional basis), need assessments, and Welsh Government guidelines.

#### **4.3. Families First Project Board**

CYPSP established a multi-agency Project Board including health and third sector partners to manage a Commissioning Programme/Post Project Plan (including tasks e.g. Specifications, Tender documents, timescales) for Families First. The outcome for the Project Board was for Funding to be committed to align effectively to The BIG Plan/Families First criteria.

#### **4.4. Support and information for the Tendering Process**

To enable current providers to manage the transition, support was provided to help them adapt to the new criteria and also to encourage other potential providers to enter the market. A series of information sharing events and workshops were held in addition to direct support funded by the Partnership and delivered through DVSC. The support to potential providers included:

- Workshop – 'What is the Families First element of Outcome 4 of Denbighshire – The Big Plan and how can you contribute towards achieving it';
- Publishing draft Service Models to potential providers;
- "Tender Ready" – signposting to support with completion of tendering documentation, and information on the procedure.
- Publishing a clear procurement timetable – the Commissioning Process
- Workshop on 'Working as part of a Consortium' (i.e. association/syndicate), including developing, contacts for support, and potential partners.
- DVSC commissioned to provide support sessions, encourage and enable partners to work in consortia, signpost, and buy in consultants to work with emerging new consortia.

#### 4.5. Breakdown of the Tender Process

Milestone and date achieved detail can be viewed in **Appendix 1 Tender Timetable**.

Additional information:-

- 4.5.1. Tenders received and opened on 31 January 2012 by Commissioning and Evaluation Officer and Administrative Officer
- 4.5.2. All tenders were allocated a number used throughout the evaluation period to refer to each tender (anonymity purposes for the tender process)
- 4.5.3. Panels were appointed and agreed by the FF Project Board to consider tenders and included a Cabinet Member with lead responsibility, a member of the Families First Project Board, a representative with relevant knowledge, service users where available, and for consistency through the process, both the Partnerships and Communities Manager, and the Commissioning and Evaluation Officer.
- 4.5.4. Four panels met in February 2012 to consider tender applications within specific service areas, Panels were grouped into naturally linked areas as follows:

Panel 1: Young Carers, Childcare, Play, Disability

Panel 2: Income Maximisation

Panel 3: Parenting, Family Support, Family Resilience

Panel 4: Youth Support

- 4.5.5. Referees contacted for each preferred provider. At least three references for each applicant were obtained.
- 4.5.6. *Pause and Reflect* - an exercise took place looking at preferred providers to consider where there could be added value through strengthening links between elements, identifying any gaps. Areas identified included marketing and training (whereby funding from many of the applicants could be pooled to provide and deliver centrally).
- 4.5.7. *Invitation to meet with Panel* - where necessary clarification on some aspects of applications were required, applicants were invited to meet with Panel Members to go through their bid in more detail.
- 4.5.8. *Clarification and Pre-contract Meetings* - took place with all applicants who were considered preferred providers. Legal Services were represented at all meetings and legal additions to the final Contract highlighted. Contract supplementary information was shared to ensure clarity and agreement including Safeguarding, links to Genesis Wales 2, training and marketing, Contract Governance, lead time, performance links with Population Indicators. Confirmation of start date of project was also discussed. All preferred providers confirmed start date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.
- 4.5.9. Chair of the CYPSP was kept informed at each key stage of proceedings.

4.5.10. Contracts drawn up by Partnerships and Communities Team within Legal and Procurement guidelines.

#### **FAMILIES FIRST STRATEGIC PROJECTS 2012-2014 - COMMISSIONED**

**4.6** Attached in **Appendix 1** is the list of strategic projects and amounts allocated, together with detail on the status of the 2 unallocated service elements namely Family Support and Disability.

#### **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The Families First Programme is a key contributor to the Big Plan: “Outcome 4, Vulnerable families in Denbighshire are supported to live a life free from poverty, where they can be independent and flourish”.

#### **6. What consultations have been carried out?**

- Families First Stakeholder Group
- Families First Project Board
- Children and Young People’s Partnership Board
- Early and Extending Entitlement Group
- Senior Leadership Team
- Service Users – disabled children and young people
- Parents/Carers of disabled children and young people

#### **7. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

**7.1. Timetable slippage** – Timescales have been tight, but the implementation by the Families First Project Board of Project Management methodology has meant that 7 out of 9 service elements started delivery as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012. Interim arrangements have been made to support current service users until the remaining 2 elements are in place.

**7.2.** The decision to use **a more formal approach to commissioning** in order to improve the quality of outcomes, increased the level of work required by organisations tendering for the FF Programme and some smaller groups may have felt at a disadvantage. There is a risk that unsuccessful tenderers may feel that the tendering process has been unfair to them.

**7.3. Reduction on funding available for new service** – due to the delay of not allocating a provider for the Family Support Element, and having to put interim provision in place at a cost, the amount available for 2012-2013 has reduced. This may have an impact on potential providers wishing to tender.

#### **For further information please contact:**

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