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Update June 2023: Please note, the new financial threshold for publishing a record of operational decision **has been returned to its original threshold of £50k**

Update April 2022: All records of officer decisions must be published on a Thursday ONLY no later than 12pm. Where a decision is to be published ensure that before you publish you have shared the record of officer decision with your director and the [communications team](#).

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to award the contract for the provision of Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS)
Date of decision:	23/02/2024
Decision maker:	Hilary Hall Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	As part of the cabinet member decision to recommission the Herefordshire Placement Support Service,(Decision - Recommissioning of Herefordshire Intensive Support Service (HIPSS) - Herefordshire Council) delegated authority was provided to award the contract: b) That the Corporate Director Community Wellbeing be authorised to award the contract for the Intensive Placement Support Service up to the value of £2.2M
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	The Council has consulted with the existing service providers, key stakeholders, Children and Young people, Foster Carers and Social work staff whom have experience with the service. The decision to re-procure was also taken to the following meetings Commissioning Programme Board 25/04/2023 Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) 31/07/2023 Political Groups Consultation 24/10/2023 Cabinet Member Decision 31/10/202 Legal, finance and commercial colleagues have been consulted and their advice has informed this commissioning process.
Decision made:	To award a contract for the provision of the Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) to Meadows Psychology Service (MPS), for a contract period of up to 5 years from 1 st April 2024, with a full contract value not exceeding £2 million.
Reasons for decision:	Herefordshire Council, as a corporate parent, aims for its looked after children to benefit from stable family-based placements. To achieve this, the Council's fostering service requires confident, capable and well

supported carers, to successfully accommodate children and young people with a range of needs. The specialist expertise provided by Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) therapeutic approach helps to enhance the confidence and capabilities of the council’s foster carers.

Following the Cabinet Member decision to re-commission the HIPSS service (link to original decision above), a full and open procurement process took place between November 2023 and January 2024

Of the three eligible tenders submitted and evaluated, Meadows Psychology Service (MPS) was the successful bidder. This was confirmed in writing on 31st January 2024, and following a 10 day ‘standstill’ period, MPS commencing with the mobilisation phase on 10th February 2024.

The contract with MPS will commence on 1st April 2024

Equality Considerations

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.

The Equality Act 2010 ensures that children and young people in care have the same rights and protections as their peers. It prohibits discrimination in various areas, such as education, healthcare, housing, and access to goods and services.

The provision of the HIPSS service to support foster carers and the young people they care for, helps greatly with improving stability in accommodation and education, and through the provision of a stable and nurturing home environment the children and young people are supported to develop strong and resilient physical and emotional wellbeing.

Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	Risk		Mitigation	
	There are decreasing numbers of foster carers available in Herefordshire.		Work is being undertaken by the Fostering and Adoptions Service to increase the numbers of people becoming foster carers.	
	The current HIPSS service may		The existing service specification for	

		not be meeting expectations around engagement and support activities.	HIPSS service is being reviewed and revised to ensure clarity of purpose, that monitoring reflects our expected outcomes and that closer working relationships between HIPSS and Children's Services are developed to improve knowledge and communication
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing and allow the current contract to end in March 2024. This is not recommended. The implications of doing nothing would be that the existing contract would expire on 31 March 2024 and the service would cease. This would immediately reduce clinical support for the children with complex needs and increase the risk of placement disruption among the HIPSS cohort. Consequently, there will be a greater risk of placement breakdown and the need to accommodate children in residential placements, potentially out of county, and at a significantly higher cost. 2. Develop an in-house specialist therapeutic service. This option is not recommended. It would require a significant long term investment by the council, but at the current time, challenges remain with regards to staff recruitment and retention. However, as this situation improves, the council may wish to consider this option in the future 		
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None		

Signed

Date:

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