



EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Children's Young People and Education
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Children's Services and Education
DATE:	20 th September 2019

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Children's Young People and Education
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WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
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SUBJECT:	Request to tender for the provision of supported accommodation for Care Leavers aged 16-18 at the Limes building, a property that is owned by the Local Authority.
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report outlines the need for children and young people who are or have been in the care of the Local Authority to be provided with supported accommodation within the Borough as a prelude to independent living.

The request is for the Limes building to be converted to provide supported accommodation for up to 4 Care Leavers aged 16 to 18 with an independent provider commissioned to deliver a 24 hour appropriate support service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member endorses the proposal to tender the service for supporting up to 4 young Care Leavers in supported accommodation at the Limes building.

3. BACKGROUND

The Children Act (Leaving Care) 2000 amended the Children Act 1989 and imposed duties (including accommodation duties) on Local Authorities to support certain categories of looked after children and care leavers.

The statutory guidance to the Act does not specify any particular type of accommodation for care leavers but states that it would be inappropriate for 16 to 17-year-old care leavers to live independently. The guidance states that Local Authorities should:

- Avoid moving young people who are settled
- Assess young people's needs and prepare them for any move
- Ensure that the accommodation meets the young people's needs
- Where practicable offer a choice of accommodation
- Set up a package of support in addition to accommodation

Blackburn with Darwen has approximately 218 Care Leavers aged between 16-25 of which there are 65 young people in the age range of 16 to 18.

The Local Authority has responsibility for providing placements for this cohort of young people, and current provision includes supported lodgings, support for young people to “stay put” in the homes of their former foster carers as well as supported accommodation within the Borough.

There is a need for an increase of supported accommodation available for this vulnerable group of young people mainly due to an increase in the number of Care Leavers requiring this type of support. The need to improve placement stability and greater placement sufficiency is a key area of development within the Children’s Services 2019/20 Department Plan.

The Limes building is a Local Authority owned building in the Darwen area which is currently vacant. The building has been previously used as a family support venue for children, young people and their families.

The Tender process will be undertaken as a full tender exercise given that the financial resource over a tender period of 5 years (3 plus 1 plus 1) would surpass OJEU threshold tenders for social services (£936,000). The opportunity will be advertised on The Chest and awarded using the MEAT (most economically advantageous tender) process. This would ensure a due diligence approach and secure services for a robust period of time to ensure stability and sustainability for any future provider.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Supported accommodation for this vulnerable group of young people provides the necessary strategies to manage the practical and emotional demands of living independently without compromising the young person’s future housing options.

The aim of the project is to encourage young people to learn the skills required to maintain their own tenancy and find employment. Staff will be available on site to provide young people with hands on support to carry out the skills necessary for independent living such as cooking, household chores, money management, self-care skills, employability skills, education and training, encouraging healthy living and keeping safe. Once the young person has achieved these skills they will then move on either to their own tenancy through our local housing provider or a private rented property.

This type of supported accommodation for Care Leavers enables the young person to make a successful transition to independent living and is a more cost effective use of placement resources and an alternative to agency residential placements.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The proposal supports the Children’s Services Departmental Strategic Priority for 2019/20 “To be ambitious corporate parents for our cared for children and care leavers so that they achieve their potential in every aspect of their care wellbeing, learning and future independence”.

To contribute towards this priority, the service has a specific action to develop sufficiency around accommodation for care leavers post 18 and raise awareness of need within the council and across wider partnerships. Additionally the support for Care Leavers in terms of Education, Employment and Training will also be reviewed.

The proposal supports Department for Education national performance indicators to provide the appropriate level of accommodation and support for Care Leavers:

- % of Leaving Care Young People in suitable accommodation
- % of Leaving Care Young People in Education, Employment & Training

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Provision of supported care at The Limes is expected to be approximately £900 per week per placement.

The cohort prioritised for placement within this supported accommodation provision will be young people currently in the care of the Local Authority and placed in agency residential care at a cost of between £2,000 and £3,000 per week. This will result in potential savings of between £1,100 and £2,100 per week for each individual placed.

The funding of the placements will be from the current Leaving Care budget which funds the housing costs of the majority of young people in care in supported accommodation aged 16-18.

There will be a rental agreement regarding the Limes building undertaken with the provider who is to be commissioned in delivering the service.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Leaving Care Service continues to have statutory obligations for accommodation and support for Care Leavers. The Service will be subject to Tender and procurement will be in accordance with the arrangements set out in this report.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposal would require a change of function for the Limes premises which currently is used as an office base for a team of support workers within Children's Services.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Voice Group of Care Leavers have been consulted regularly regarding the support needs of Care Leavers and have consistently highlighted the need for Care Leavers to have the necessary support and independence skills in preparation for leaving care.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION: 0.4

CONTACT OFFICER: Elizabeth Mannion

DATE: 15th August 2019

**BACKGROUND
PAPER:**