REPORT OF
The Strategic Director for Children’s Services
TO
Procurement Board
ON
8th March 2017

TITLE: Approval to Award the Contract for the Step Up to Social Work Initiative (Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work) for 23 students on behalf of the Greater Manchester Regional Partnership

RECOMMENDATION:
That Procurement Board

Approves the award of the Contract to Salford University for the period April 2017 – April 2019, as detailed in the table below:

There is provision to extend this contract beyond the life of the cohort. The Tender documentation makes reference to provision for an extension for a further cohort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail required</th>
<th>Delivery of Step Up to Social Work Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title/Description of Contracted Service/Supply/Project</td>
<td>Salford University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Successful Contractor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier Registration Number</td>
<td>RC000666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>Registered Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of Organisation</td>
<td>Non-SME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Value</td>
<td>£185,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Duration</td>
<td>Full Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the award of the above mentioned contract.

Step Up to Social Work is a Department for Education (DfE) initiative which started in 2010. Four cohorts of students have been through the programme with the Greater Manchester Regional Partnership. A successful bid for grant funding has allowed a fifth cohort to be progressed and the regional partnership to include seven Local Authorities (Salford, Manchester, Bolton, Wigan, Bury, Stockport and Oldham).

Salford City Council acts as Lead Agency in the partnership, holding and dispersing all funding and establishing the contract with an approved Higher Education Institution on behalf of the partnership. This report seeks to gain approval to award the contract.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Please also see Appendix 1
KEY DECISION: Yes

DETAILS:
Step Up to Social Work is currently in its fourth cohort, with seven Greater Manchester authorities currently participating. Students on Cohort 4 will complete in March 2017. The success of the programme means that almost all candidates are likely to be employed by their host authority.

The programme is delivered through the Greater Manchester Regional Partnership, formed when funding announcements were originally made in 2009/10. The programme is wholly funded by grant funding made available - originally by Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and subsequently by the DfE. Salford City Council currently acts as Lead Authority for the partnership. This involves amongst other things, receiving and dispersing the funding from DfE in line with the grant funding requirements.

Salford City Council also holds the contract – on behalf of the partnership - for the academic input which allows the award of Postgraduate Diploma in social work to be made to candidates – thus allowing them to be registered with Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and become practicing social workers.

Funding for a Cohort 5 was announced, and the Greater Manchester Regional Partnership was notified of its successful bid in January 2017. The partnership consists of seven participating authorities with 23 trainees.

Funding to be made available for the period April 2017 - April 2019 by DfE

- £19,833 per trainee this will be made available to the trainees as a bursary
- £1,750 per trainee this will be dispersed to each participating authority pro rata
- £11,667 per trainee available “to allow local authorities to procure the academic course from their chosen HEI”

In addition to the above, administrative funding is also paid to the local authorities involved in the project as follows:

- £38,000 to each regional partnership for establishing and administering the regional partnership of local authorities and their selected HEI provider.
- £10,000 to each regional partnership for making delivery arrangements with an HEI provider.

The Procurement Process

Invitation to tender documents (ITTs), were advertised on the Chest and the closing date was 16th January 2017.
In total there were 9 expressions of interest and 3 bids were submitted by the closing date.

Following an evaluation of the ITTs by a panel consisting of all members of the Greater Manchester Regional Partnership, the outcome of the total scores is shown in the table below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quality Score</th>
<th>Price Score</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>67.00%</td>
<td>19.41%</td>
<td>86.41%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>71.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>91.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>58.00%</td>
<td>13.98%</td>
<td>71.98%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore it is the recommendation that the contract is awarded to bidder T2 who scored highest and is the most economically advantageous tender.

Social Value

Bidder T2 has addressed social value within their tender submission and some of the key points included;

- Working within the city to enhance the lives of residents through research activity, links with industry and volunteering.
- Developing relationships with local business including promoting work experience for students across all sectors.
- Working with local housing, health and social care providers to develop projects promoting well-being.
- Organising events for the Salford Institute for Dementia with Salford City Council and the voluntary sector.

KEY COUNCIL POLICIES: N/A

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

The contract will have no negative impact on any of the communities within Salford. Recruitment to the Step Up to Social Work Programme is national and positively encourages applicants from a range of diverse backgrounds.

As part of the competitive process, it was ensured that the contract was awarded to providers who understood and could train participants to develop skills and knowledge on anti-discriminatory practice – essential social work skill requirements.
Therefore, the new award will have a positive impact on communities in Greater Manchester.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK:

Step Up to Social Work is assisting Children Services in all 7 participating Local Authorities to meet their social work staffing requirements. This is achieved by providing high quality staff able to ‘hit the ground running’. As a tailored children and families training programme, it allows trainees to work towards a Postgraduate Diploma in social work, alongside intensive hands-on experience. Failure to participate has an impact on the recruitment strategy of social workers.

SOURCE OF FUNDING: The Budget that will meet the cost of the scheme

The Step Up to Social Work initiative is 100% grant funded through the DfE.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS Submitted by: The Shared Legal Service

In awarding the contract for the delivery of the postgraduate diploma it is important that the Council complies with public procurement legislation and its own Contractual Standing Orders. Expressions of interest have been sought as part of an open tender process which has been advertised widely, thus ensuring that the process has been fair and transparent. It is also important that the Council can meet the timescale set by the Department of Education since the scheme is wholly funded by grant funding.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS Submitted by: The Finance Team

Salford City Council act as the Lead Authority for the Step Up to Social Work Programme.

The Programme is fully funded by a DfE grant and as such there is a Low Risk to the City Council.

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS: Submitted by: Emma Heyes, Category Manager x6243

Due to the total value of this contract (including available extension) exceeding the European threshold, this contract opportunity was advertised in the Official Journal of the European, and also Contracts Finder.
Tender documents were made available online through the Chest.

The procurement process outlined within the report complies with the requirements under Salford City Council’s contractual standing orders.

OTHER DIRECTORATES CONSULTED: N/A

CONTACT OFFICER: Chris Rourke TEL. NO. 0161 607 7174

WARD(S) TO WHICH REPORT RELATE(S): None
Appendix 1

Additional Information on Step Up to Social Work programme

The initial training of social workers remains almost exclusively a candidate/academic-driven process. Typically individuals apply for places on university courses (to a quantum determined by Higher Education funding and the ambition of HE Institutions, not the employment market for social workers), are trained (with significant placement input from agencies) and then may, or may not, enter the job market dependant on individual ambition.

From an agency point of view this process is wasteful. Despite engagement with universities in the design and delivery of courses, the agencies can remain junior partners and very much accidental beneficiaries.

Step Up to Social Work remains a tailored children and families training programme which allows trainees to work towards a Postgraduate Diploma in social work, alongside intensive hands-on experience. It is specifically designed as a new way for career changers to train to become qualified social workers.

The programme is designed to enable coursework and practical experience to happen simultaneously. Students are work-based rather than campus based throughout the period of their training. However, this means the demands on the individual are rigorous and the level of commitment expected from students is high. The course is also designed to be completed within a 14 month period as opposed to the usual 36 months.

A lot is expected of candidates, but they are fully supported throughout with one-to-one support within the workplace as well as having access to tutors in allocated universities. In addition, trainees will receive £19,833 for the 14 month period - to support them through their training.

On successful completion of the programme, trainees qualify as a social worker and are awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in social work

Applicants can only be considered if they have;

- A 1st or 2:1 degree in any discipline (except social work)
- GCSEs in English and mathematics at grade C or above (or equivalent)
- Experience of working with children, young people and families
- Emotional resilience (assessed in the selection process).

Experience from previous cohorts, is that the programme produces competent and motivated social workers who are able to ‘hit the ground running’. The shortage of good quality and experienced children and families social workers remains an issue, we anticipate that the employment of trainees through the SUTSW Programme with help to address this issue.
## Step Up to Social Work timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date to be completed by/between</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step Up to Social Work LA Bid Application window</td>
<td>October – December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfE appoints support contractor</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPs notified of Bid outcome</td>
<td>January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity – National and Local advertising</td>
<td>January – May 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Up to Social Work candidate application form goes live</td>
<td>Mid-March 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application window closes</td>
<td>Mid-May 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor begins sift of application forms</td>
<td>April – May 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful applications available to be accessed/requested by RPs for pre-assessment centre stage (electronic/paper format)</td>
<td>April – June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment centres</td>
<td>Mid-June – Mid-July 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful applicants invited to confirm place on course</td>
<td>August 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPs perform necessary checks on successful applicants</td>
<td>From late July 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local management of reserves within and between regional partnerships</td>
<td>August – September 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor manages the reserve pool of remaining eligible candidates to fill as many places as possible</td>
<td>October – November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships confirm HCPC approval for programme</td>
<td>By November 2017 latest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Up to Social Work programme starts</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DfE has made every attempt to confirm these timescales, but dates beyond March 2017 may be subject to change. DfE will give partnerships and HEIs maximum possible notice of any changes and will reissue the timetable periodically.