

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 27 March 2014

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Children and Enterprise

**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Young People and Families

**SUBJECT:** Retrospective waiver to standing orders for Play, Learn and Loan contract

**WARDS:** All wards

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To confirm approval of waiver of standing orders for the contract to extend from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) a waiver to Procurement Standing Orders is agreed in line with 1.8.2 (c,d,e) of Halton Borough Council's Standing Orders following approval from the Head of Procurement received on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014 in relation to the extension of the current contract for 1 further year.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The local authority has had a contract with Halton Play Council to deliver a Play , Learn and Loan service in 6 venues in the borough since April 2011 for £11,965 per year funded via the children centres budget.
- 3.2 The service is delivered on a fortnightly basis at Warrington Road Children's Centre, Ditton Library, Halton Lodge Children's Centre, Play Resource Centre, Halton Brook Children Centre and Kingsway Library and incorporates 1.5 hour sessions of Play activities as well as the toy / equipment loan service.
- 3.3 The service also supports a variety of Halton Borough Council and children's centre events during the year.
- 3.4 The contract completes quarterly performance management reports and receives quarterly performance management reviews and has been subject to service review during the last 6 months . Throughout theses processes the service has been found to deliver good value for money as well as high quality.

- 3.5 Parental and professional feedback regarding the service has been positive in terms of the availability of the service as well as the wide variety of items that are available within their service , particularly in relation to support disabled children both within their families as well as within private child- minders / nurseries.
- 3.6 The outcome of the review was that the service continued to be required ,was highly regarded by families and professionals , delivered good value for money to the local authority as well as families (loan fee of £1) , supported attendance within children’s centres and supported the OFSTED ratings of local private child minders and nurseries.
- 3.7 In order to commission the service from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 for a further year a “market test” exercise has been undertaken via the CHEST which outlined an indicative budget. This resulted in only 2 providers expressing an interest however only the current provider was able to demonstrate delivery based on the current budget , the other provider was significantly over budget and could only deliver access to approximately 10% of the current providers level of resources and then only if they were purchased by the local authority.
- 3.8 The current provider was also able to confirm the available resources , at no cost to the local authority to a value of approximately £40k which it has built up over the last few years from a variety of funding sources, this equipment covers a wide variety of needs and includes specialist resources for disabled children.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The waiver to standing orders is required under section 1.8.2 – specifically
- (c) where compliance with Standing Orders would result in a clear financial or commercial detriment to the Council; or*
- (d) where compliance with Standing Orders would result in the Council having to forego a clear financial or commercial benefit;*
- (e) where compliance with Standing Orders is not practicable because the Council’s requirements can only be delivered by a particular supplier;*
- 4.2 The service supports the OFSTED inspection judgements for child minders and nurseries as well as the broader childrens centres delivery.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**N/A**

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

- 6.1.1 The service promotes play as a positive activity for children and their parents /families.
- 6.1.2 The services supports OFSTED judgements of child minders and Nurseries.
- 6.1.3 The service delivers an affordable loan of equipment including specialist items that families would struggle to purchase.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

- 6.2.1 The service promotes learning through play for children and their parents / families.
- 6.2.1 The service also indirectly support employment in the borough by its services being available to child minders and nurseries.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

- 6.3.1 The service promotes active play for children and their parents /families.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

As outlined in the report the main opportunities are in relation to the financial benefit to the local authority , the positive impact in relation to the OFSTED inspections and the access to a significant amount of equipment including specialist items.

There are no significant risk factors associated with the proposal.

The proposal is not so significant as to require a full risk assessment.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

The service has a positive impact in relation to age , socio economic and disability.

The service does not have any adverse impact on any equality or diversity group.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.