

**Bracknell Forest Council
Record of Decision**

Work Programme Reference	1098480
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1. **TITLE:** Procurement Plan for South Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework 2022

2. **SERVICE AREA:** People

3. **PURPOSE OF DECISION**

To seek approval of the Procurement Plan for the next South Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework. Bracknell Forest Council has been a partner in the South Central IFA Framework since April 2017, the current Framework ends on 31st March 2022.

4 **IS KEY DECISION** Yes

5. **DECISION MADE BY:** Executive

6. **DECISION:**

i. the recommendations contained in the Strategic Procurement Plan be agreed:

- a. That Bracknell Forest Council enter into a partnership agreement (the Partnership) with 15 LA's where Southampton City Council will be the lead procuring authority for the procurement of a new framework for IFA provision (4 year term commencing on April 2022).
- b. It is anticipated that the total expenditure by the Council through the South Central framework will be between £800,000 and £1,000,000 per annum, giving a maximum total for the four years of £4,000,000. Approval of this Strategic Procurement Plan therefore authorises all future call offs from this Framework that does not exceed £4,000,000 over the term of the framework.

7. **REASON FOR DECISION**

The Strategic Procurement Plan provides detailed reasons for the above recommendations. To summarise, the reasons for the recommendations are:

1. Continuity - the majority of the Council IFA placements are on the current Framework – BFC is very reliant on this Framework for IFA placements due to the challenging IFA Market.
2. Market management and engagement and choice – As a small unitary being part of a partnership with other Local Authorities, increases the Council's influence in a challenging IFA Market.
3. Financial value and collective market management opportunities for local authorities - the IFA Framework prices are fixed for 4 years, providing some stability in a market where costs are increasing annually.
4. Procurement and Contract Management functions (provided by Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole) help reduce the workload and risk for the Council
5. Quality and Outcomes – The IFA Framework placements meet the needs of our

children and young people. They offer high quality support and good outcomes for our children and young people.

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The Alternative Options are outlined in more detail in the Strategic Procurement Plan:

1. Do Nothing – spot purchase all IFA Placements. The Council previously spot purchased all its IFA placements and it is widely recognised that this approach isn't usually effective or offers value for money.
2. To join a different IFA Framework - Strategic Commissioning identified other IFA Frameworks, however, none of the other Frameworks offer a better geographic fit than the South Central Framework or such strong contract management support.
3. To only use the Council's in-house foster placements - The Council would prefer to use their in-house foster carers, however there are not enough in-house foster carers to meet demand.

9. **DOCUMENT CONSIDERED:** Report of the Executive Director: People

10. **DECLARED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** None

Date Decision Made	Final Day of Call-in Period
16 March 2021	24 March 2021