

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	28 April 2021
Executive Member:	Councillor Ged Cooney – Executive Member (Housing, Planning and Employment)
Reporting Officer:	Emma Varnam – Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods
Subject:	HOMELESSNESS COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS
Report Summary:	The report details Homelessness commissioning intentions for 2021/22. The report sets out specific details on service developments that will allow the Council to meet its obligations to deliver a holistic and integrated response to preventing homelessness and increasing the resilience of vulnerable people.
Recommendations:	<p>Subject to public consultation in respect of the proposed changes to service delivery that the Executive Cabinet be recommended to approve in principle the following interim arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Development of a short term accommodation model from current contractual arrangements to an enhanced housing benefit model. (ii) Tender for a framework to support call off arrangements for specialist accommodation services outside of the enhanced housing benefit model. (iii) Enter into a contract for the provision of a Tenancy Support and Compliance Service for Offenders subject to MAPPA and PPO where there is no provision in the contract to do so to 30 September 2023. (iv) Enter into a contract with preferred provider following the tenders, subject to compliance with the Council's Procurement Standing Orders, to provide a floating support and activities service for people at risk of social exclusion where there is no provision in the contract to do so to 30 September 2022.
Corporate Plan:	<p>The proposals will support the locality plan objectives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve health and wellbeing for all residents • Address health inequalities • Protect the most vulnerable • Promote community development • Provide locality based services
Policy Implications:	The recommendations will ensure continued access to services in preventing homelessness and increasing the resilience of vulnerable people in the borough.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	The various contract values detailed within the report are included within the 2021/22 baseline directorate revenue budget. However, it should be noted that the £ 0.100m 5 unit contract provision stated within section 3.21 of the report (via ANEW) will require a carry forward of grant funding received in the current financial year to support the contract value to 31 August 2021. The related value for carry forward will be included within the directorate 2020/21 outturn

revenue monitoring report for approval by the Executive Cabinet. Any additional provision commissioned to the 5 units stated will be subject to available funding.

Contracts that are proposed to be extended beyond the 2021/22 financial year will be subject to available funding in those years and should therefore include break clauses where appropriate.

Members should note that an additional net £ 1.112m has been allocated to the service budget in 2021/22 on a non recurrent basis to support the estimated accommodation related costs that are currently not recoverable via housing benefit. This net cost is currently reported within the Housing Benefits service of the Exchequer Services directorate. However it has been determined that it is more appropriate to report this cost within the related service where the provision is commissioned. This has been included on a non-recurrent basis (for 2021/22 only at this stage) to enable the service to review the provision commissioned during the year and related costs and to also improve related processes to reduce the estimated net liability to the Council. The outcome of this review will be reported to Members during 2021/22 and will be included in the Council's medium term financial plan for Member approval.

It is essential that STAR provide related procurement advice for the contracts and service provision included within this report to ensure compliance and that value for money is evidenced.

In addition savings should be realised where feasible against these contract values to contribute towards the Council's ongoing financial gap as reported in section 2.8, table 2B of the 2021/22 Council budget report approved on 23 February 2021.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the Borough
Solicitor)**

The proposals set out in this report are short term to enable the essential services to continue to be delivered whilst there is a period of review in relation to service delivery generally and also to consider the impact that covid may have on the demands for the service both short and long term.

To cover the interim period a number of contracts will require either modification or be awarded directly. There may be risks associated with this especially where a direct award is being made. It is therefore critical that the project officers engage with STAR to explore any exemptions which may be available and to manage the risk if not.

As part of this review period engagement with the market and also the service users and other interested groups will be critical.

Risk Management:

Risks are being monitored and mitigated via regular meetings of the Community Safety & Homelessness Team, Commissioning Teams and STAR Procurement. Risks will be identified and managed by the implementation team and through ongoing performance monitoring once the contracts have been awarded or extended.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting John Gregory, Head of Community Safety and Homelessness:

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's Homelessness Service utilises a range of services to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Borough. The service has undergone considerable transformation over the last 2 years and uses a broad range of different approaches in order to fulfil the aims of the Council's Preventing Homelessness Strategy.
- 1.2 The strategy reinforces the Council's commitment to prevent homelessness and to intervene at the earliest stage before households reach the point of crisis. It promotes increasing the resilience of vulnerable people and providing targeted support to prevent homelessness.
- 1.3 These priorities are also aligned with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Homelessness Strategy, which is currently under development. The overall aim to address the wide range of factors that could contribute to homelessness in Tameside borough are considered through the following priorities:
- A holistic and integrated response to preventing homelessness
 - Proactive information management and provision of advice
 - Raised awareness of the causes of homelessness and services and a shared understanding that preventing homelessness is everyone's business
 - Early intervention before a crisis
 - Increased resilience and targeted support
 - Preventing rough sleeping
 - Access to a wide range of affordable, permanent accommodation options
 - Identifying, cultivating and empowering untapped resources in the community
- 1.4 Tameside Council has a history of providing a quality homelessness service across the Borough and experience in developing contractual relationships through market engagement with providers to support the delivery of both local and national key objectives.
- 1.5 This report details Community Safety and Homelessness commissioning intentions for 2021-2023 and seeks authorisation for the development, tender and extension to contracting arrangements that will allow critical service delivery and continuity to the borough's most vulnerable residents, as well as allowing the Council to meet its statutory obligations.

2. CURRENT SITUATION

- 2.1 In 2018, Tameside Council was successful in its bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for additional resources to provide new services to prevent and relieve rough sleeping. The funding has enabled the Council to develop and review delivery in order to meet the continued demands on services.
- 2.2 In order for the Operations and Neighbourhoods directorate to properly review the impact of the funding, permission to extend a number of contracts was approved on 28 October 2020. The approved extension was for a 12 month period to 30 September 2021 and has allowed a continued review of services to be undertaken. Without this extension, it would have been necessary to launch a procurement exercise in early 2020, which would have reduced the time available to fully understand the impact of the funding.
- 2.3 The Covid-19 pandemic has also had an impact on both commissioners and providers and services have responded flexibly in making adjustments to deliver Covid-19 safe services. The rapid response to the pandemic has allowed the service to explore the learning and best practice from the crisis to adopt as part of the service review. As lockdown eases further and the services start to adapt and return to normal, it is expected that there will be a significant increased demand for homelessness services as lockdown restrictions are lifted and peoples' accommodation situations may change, particularly where temporary stays with friends/families have been supported through in the main throws of the pandemic.

- 2.4 Additionally, the pandemic also brings some unknowns – specifically the impact on homelessness once the moratorium on evictions has been lifted. The Authority could potentially be facing a significant increase in the number of people and families presenting as homeless from April 2021 onwards and it is important that appropriate contracts are in place to support those in the most need.

3. SERVICE STRATEGY & PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Homelessness service has a range of contracts which enable the delivery of services to support the homelessness agenda within the borough. The service review has identified those contracts that are due to end and therefore require a decision in terms of future delivery. The service is seeking authorisation to develop, procure and extend those contracts identified as follows;

Contract for Short Term Accommodation and Support

- 3.2 There are three contracts delivering short-term accommodation and support which are being considered as part of the review and future procurement to meet service needs:

Contract	Service Delivery	Provider	Contract Price
Short-term Accommodation and Support	15 units	Foundation	£133,887.00
Short-term Accommodation and Support; 4 extra units	4 units	Foundation	£58,576.00
Short-term Accommodation and Support - Younger Clients	15 units	Jigsaw (Threshold)	£117,780.00

- 3.3 These short-term accommodation contracts are based on a supported living model where the provider delivers a combination of housing and support services at a designated site to identified individuals.
- 3.4 The Homelessness Service is looking to develop a model of service delivery which will improve outcomes for individuals. The current situation sees the local authority fund both support and accommodation costs within the contract and removes the responsibility of managing a tenancy from the individual.
- 3.5 The recently launched Supported housing: national statement of expectations states that:
- “Good quality supported housing is vital: providing a safe, stable and supportive place to live can be the key to unlocking better outcomes for vulnerable people, from tackling poverty and disadvantage to managing crises, rehabilitation or maintaining people’s independence”*
- 3.6 The proposal is to discontinue these outdated contracts to an enhanced housing benefit model (EHB) which will fully support the expectations above.
- 3.7 The current provision effectively keeps individuals in short-term accommodation, in the care of the local authority, with no clear defined pathway to support them into their own long-term homes and independent, self-supported living.
- 3.8 An enhanced housing benefit model, however, utilises a support package designed by statutory agencies, based on the individual’s needs, to support them on their next step to independence. Personalising the service to the individual, rather than offering a general

service, has proven to be much more effective in helping people to live their lives independently over the long term, whilst creating less demand on support services.

- 3.9 The social housing provider will, as part of an individual's licence agreement, offer intensive housing management support of around four to five hours per week.
- 3.10 This new model allows the individual to remain in the care of the authority whilst living a semi-independent life, as part of their journey to independence. They will make a small financial contribution to their accommodation each week with the balance being made up from enhanced housing benefit.
- 3.11 This model enables staff to support individuals in their accommodation in sustaining their licences / tenancies. This additional support, which an individual will receive directly through their licence /tenancy, takes the costs away from the Commissioners and passes them to the registered provider.
- 3.12 The model also has benefits in supporting service users to manage their licence / tenancy and build skills towards moving on to full independent living within a short period and re-establishing a positive role within the local community, adding to the gross economic benefit through gaining employment and accessing local amenities.
- 3.13 In delivering intensive housing management support, providers are required to meet national housing criteria standards which ensures accommodation is fit for purpose.
- 3.14 In developing these services in the borough, the Council is reducing the potential for individuals accessing unplanned and ad hoc services for people with additional needs that are often far more expensive, and if supported generates value in terms of:
- Outcomes for people
 - Cost benefit (to the public purse)
 - Wider social and community benefit
- 3.15 By changing to an EHB model, it is also anticipated that the Authority will make significant savings in respect of the proposed changes to the service, which the service will be able to redirect towards supporting more complex & vulnerable individuals.
- 3.16 The current contracts are due to end on 30 September 2021 and the Commissioners are looking at a phased approach to the implementation of this model to ensure a smooth transition.
- 3.17 This approach will enable a move from a commissioned service to a model completely supported by enhanced housing benefit for the majority of the individuals supported by these four commissioned services. The finances previously demanded for this model will be repurposed in specialist accommodation services where there is currently a shortfall of beds.

Contract for Accommodation Based Service for People With Alcohol & Substance Misuse Problems/ Provision of a 5 Bed Complex Needs Service for Rough Sleepers/ Contract for Accommodation Based Service for Young People and Care Leavers

- 3.18 The accommodation based service for people with alcohol & substance misuse problems delivers outreach and specialist short term accommodation based support that meets the needs of people with alcohol problems who require housing related support within an accommodation based setting to achieve and maintain independent living and abstinence and prevent rough sleeping in the borough.
- 3.19 The provision of a 5 bed complex needs service for rough sleepers works alongside other providers within the Rough Sleepers Initiative. This specialist service overall delivers a place of safety, and housing related support, within an accommodation based setting for those who

are rough sleeping. The service supports individuals to address barriers to accessing and maintaining independent accommodation and to gain the skills and confidence to live independently in the community.

3.20 Those accessing these specialist services have a more complex range of needs than those individuals who are accessing those services described in 3.2 and therefore as part of the review and commissioning intentions, a different avenue is being considered in the development for this area.

3.21 The accommodation based service for young people and care leavers delivers outreach and specialist short term accommodation based support that meets the needs of young people and care leavers who require housing related support within an accommodation based setting to achieve and maintain independent living and prevent rough sleeping in the borough.

3.22 The details of the current contract are as follows:

Contract	Service Delivery	Provider	Contract Price
Accommodation Based Service - People with Alcohol & Substance Misuse Problems	15 units	Greystones	£118,340
Provision of a 5 Bed Complex Needs Service for Rough Sleepers	5 units	Anew	£100,000
Short-term Accommodation and Support - Younger Clients	15 units	Jigsaw (Threshold)	£117,780

3.23 The proposal is to develop a flexible purchasing system/dynamic purchasing system (FPS/DPS) that will support the commissioners to shape the market to meet local needs. Having a Purchasing System can help streamline procurement for both suppliers and commissioners; suppliers don't have to demonstrate suitability and capability every time they wish to compete for a public sector contract and the award of individual tenders can be quicker than under some other tender procedures, which would support the nature and sometimes emergency response required for these types of service.

3.24 Having an FPS/DPS in place will allow the Commissioners to continually respond to the ever-changing landscape of the homelessness agenda by having access to a framework of providers who are already approved in terms of their sustainability as an organisation and skills and ability to deliver services.

3.25 A move to an EHB (Enhanced Housing Benefit) model for individuals with less complex needs will enable the service to ensure the needs of the move complex services users who need specialist provision can be better met. This is a reflection of the changes in the face of homelessness provision in Tameside and GM since these outdated commissions were made and the addition of "A Bed Every Night" and the Rough Sleepers Initiative (ABEN / RSI).

Contract for the provision of a Tenancy Support and Compliance Service for Offenders subject to MAPPA and PPO/ Contract for the Provision of a Floating Support and Activities Service for People at Risk of Social Exclusion

3.26 The service Tenancy Support and Compliance Service for Offenders subject to MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements and PPO (Prolific and Priority Offender) provides an assertive tenancy support and compliance service for offenders subject to MAPPA and/or PPO arrangements. The service supports those individuals to access stable accommodation which in turn allows a platform for all agencies involved (Police, Probation, Sex Offender Management Unit) to monitor, support and work with individuals to prevent them from going

“underground” which is a known factor in significantly increasing risk behaviours both for the individual and for the community.

- 3.27 The floating support and activities service for people at risk of social exclusion delivers support to enable people to maintain independent living and remain in their existing home. This is provided through the delivery of individual, person centred support plans that address a range of issues such as budget management, tenancy management, accessing other support services, coaching/mentoring etc. The activities element of the service relates to the provision of a programme of purposeful activities and learning opportunities for people receiving housing related support services to reduce the risk of homelessness.

Contract	Service Delivery	Provider	Contract Price
ROOTS		Jigsaw (THA)	£71,284
Floating Support- CONTRACT		Adullam	£253,000

- 3.28 There is a need to extend two of the commissioned services for a further 12 months period from September 21.

- Roots – this is a highly specialist and high risk service dealing with top level offenders, over recent months there has been a significant increase in risk levels and numbers of service offenders to the service. Roots has the specialism and experience in place to manage the needs of this cohort.
- Adullam floating support – there is a need to extend the work of Adullam for a further 12 months whilst we make the transition of models and whilst there are further restructuring plans within the in-house service. During the 12 month extension we will align the services of floating support with those of the RSI team to ensure best possible support for the service users.

- 3.29 The Commissioners have been working with STAR procurement throughout this period, who have advised that under Public Contract Regulations 2015 there is provision for extending or modifying a contract during its term where there are urgent requirements due to unforeseen circumstances. They are confident that this situation meets these definitions. We are continuing to work closely with STAR to ensure that the procurement process is fair, transparent and lawful.

- 3.30 In seeking to move towards the proposals outlined above, the commissioners will be seeking to carry out a consultation exercise with the findings and recommendations included in service delivery specifications going forward.

- 3.31 Permission is also being sought to carry out a period of public consultation in respect of these changes, to ensure, specifically, that the views of service users are taken into account. The proposed public consultation questions are attached at **Appendix 1**.

4 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 There is no realistic option of discontinuing the provision of any of the above support mechanisms:

- The Council has statutory obligations, particularly under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Impact on other partners
- Reputational damage to the council
- Increased homelessness
- Increased rough sleeping
- Impact on a vulnerable service user group
- Increased costs due to unplanned commissions

- 4.2 Discontinuation of these services would have a catastrophic impact on the Council's budgets and temporary accommodation use is already at record levels with significant use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Jigsaw Support and Greystones are the main providers of temporary accommodation, and without these services the Council would be forced to resort almost wholly on the use of bed and breakfast facilities.
- 4.3 The Council has a statutory obligation to comply with legislation to provide temporary accommodation for families. The legislation states that people who have children cannot be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation except in an emergency and then only for 6 weeks. Without the current contracts in place, there is a risk that the Council would not be legally compliant.
- 4.4 Residents in supported housing are the most vulnerable in our borough and often at crucial stages in their recovery and the impact of closing these services would be detrimental. Closing these services would mean that these individuals would lose a secure and safe home.
- 4.5 At the moment, demand for homelessness services are extremely high and this is predicted to increase further following the lifting of the bar on evictions on 24 September 2020. Additionally, a significant rise in unemployment is predicted due to Covid-19, which brings a further risk of a rise in homelessness. The link between unemployment and homelessness is well evidenced and closure of these services at this particular point would be catastrophic in terms of costs to the Council, reputational damage and impact on individuals and partner agencies.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As set out at the front of the report.

APPENDIX 1

Homelessness Service Contract Consultation

Introduction

The Council's Homelessness Service employs a range of services to fulfil the aims of the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Borough.

These priorities are also aligned with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Homelessness Strategy which is currently under development. The overall aim to address the wide range of factors that could contribute to homelessness in Tameside borough are considered through the following priorities:

- (a) A holistic and integrated response to preventing homelessness
- (b) Proactive information management and provision of advice
- (c) Raised awareness of the causes of homelessness and services and a shared understanding that preventing homelessness is everyone's business
- (d) Early intervention before a crisis
- (e) Increased resilience and targeted support
- (f) Preventing rough sleeping
- (g) Access to a wide range of affordable, permanent accommodation options
- (h) Identifying, cultivating and empowering untapped resources in the community

In order to meet these priorities, the Council has in place a number of contracts that deliver accommodation based services and support. These contracts are due to expire and the Council is planning to recommission services that will continue to offer a range of accommodation and support services that will also ensure service users are given every opportunity to build life skills to move on to managing their own tenancy, have increased independence and regain a positive place in the community. Overall the Council want to make sure that we focus on the right things in Tameside.

We want to hear your views on the Accommodation Based Homelessness Services in Tameside.

1. Please tick the box that best describes your interest in this issue? (Please tick one box only)

- A person who is accessing an accommodation based homelessness service (Go to Q2)
- A former resident of an accommodation based homelessness service (Go to Q2)
- A friend or relative of an accommodation based homelessness service (Go to Q5)
- A member of the public (Go to Q5)
- A Tameside Council employee (Go to Q5)
- An employee of an accommodation based homelessness service (Go to Q4)
- A community or voluntary group (Go to Q5)
- A partner organisation (Go to Q5)
- A business /private organisation (Go to Q5)
- Other (please specify below) (Go to Q5)

2. Which supported housing services are you using/have you used in Tameside?

- Rough Sleepers Initiative / A Bed Every Night (includes town house and dispersed units)
- Short term supported accommodation (Foundation, Threshold, Greystones)
- Floating support (Adullum)
- ROOTS Service
- Temporary accommodation via Tameside Housing Advice (including Gibson Terrace, Lyme View, Mossley, B&B, The Quays)
- Other (please specify below)

3. When did you last use the homelessness service? Please tick one box only.

- I currently use one of the homelessness services listed in Q2.
- I used this service within the last 1-2 months
- I used this service within the last 3-6 months
- I used this service within the last 7-12 months
- I used this service within the last 13-18 months
- I used this service more than 18 months ago

4. From the list below, please indicate the ways in which the service has helped you?

(Please tick all that apply) It helped me to.....

- Find somewhere to live
- Sort out my benefits
- Manage my money
- Get into college
- Find opportunities to volunteer
- Use local services, for example, libraries, sports centre
- Get a job
- Improve my health by registering with a GP
- Find a dentist
- Make contact with my family
- Get help for my drug use
- Get help with my alcohol use
- Work better with other services I am involved with, for example, Social Services Lifeline, Probation etc.
- It helped me in other ways (please specify below)

5. What, if anything do you feel is missing from the current homelessness service? Please write comments in the box below.

6. What do you feel would be important for the Council to consider when developing future strategies for homelessness and rough sleeping services?

7. Are there any other comments or thoughts you wish to make regarding the homelessness service? Please write in the box below.

ABOUT YOU

We would like to ask some questions about you. This information will help the Council to improve its services. The information you provide will be kept entirely confidential, will be used for statistical and research purposes only and will be stored securely. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, please move on to the next question.

8. Are you: (Please tick one box only)

- Female
- Male
- Other (Please state below)

Prefer not to say

9. Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

10. What is your age? (Please state)

11. What is your postcode? (Please state)

12. What is your ethnic group? (Please tick one box only)

White

English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background (please specify)

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background (please specify)

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

African

Caribbean

Any other Black / African / Caribbean background (please specify)

Any other Black / African / Caribbean background (please specify)

Asian / Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background (please specify)

Other ethnic group

Arab

Any other ethnic group (please specify)

13. What is your religion or belief? (Please tick one box only)

- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Jewish
- Sikh
- Hindu
- Muslim
- No religion
- Any other religion (please specify)

14. What is your sexual orientation? (Please tick one box only)

- Heterosexual / straight
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe
- Other sexual orientation (Please state below)

15. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? Include problems related to old age. (Please tick one box only)

- Yes, limited a lot
- Yes, limited a little
- No

16. Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either, long-term physical or mental ill-health / disability or problems due to old age? (Please tick one box only)

- No
- Yes, 1-19 hours a week
- Yes, 20-49 hours a week
- Yes, 50 or more a week

17. Are you a member or ex-member of the armed forces? (Please tick one box only)

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

18. What is your marital status? (Please tick one box only)

- Single
- Married
- Civil Partnership
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Prefer not to say

19. Are you pregnant, on maternity leave or returning from maternity leave?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

20. If yes, are you:

- Pregnant
- On maternity leave
- Returning from maternity leave