

Report to: **STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING BOARD**

Date: 28 October 2020

Executive Member: Councillor Allison Gwynne – Executive Member Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment

Clinical Lead: Asad Ali (Living Well)

Reporting Officer: Emma Varnam – Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods

Subject: **COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HOMELESSNESS CONTRACTS EXTENSION AND SERVICE MODIFICATION**

Report Summary: The report explains the proposal to enter into contracts with providers currently delivering the services for the continued delivery of a number of services across the Operations and Neighbourhoods portfolio. The contracts would continue to deliver commissioned homelessness services that support the needs of the homeless, those on the verge of homelessness and the vulnerable in the Borough. The contracts are as follows:

- Short Term Accommodation and Support
- Impact - Service for people with chronic exclusion
- Floating Support and Activities
- Accommodation Based Service - People with Alcohol & Substance Misuse Problems
- Personalisation Fund
- Supported Housing for Homeless Families
- Temporary Accommodation
- Short Term Accommodation and Support - Younger Clients

The report explains the changes to the delivery of these services in line with statutory requirements and restrictions in place due to COVID-19 and the reasons for awarding these contracts at this time, which includes maintenance of critical services and to ensure a full service review can be carried out to enable robust re-procurement of the service's requirements.

The report seeks authority to award contracts to the current service providers for these health and social care contracts for the period October 2020 to 30 September 2021 while service review and re-procurement takes place.

Recommendations: That approval is given to extend existing contracts with the current service providers for 12 months commencing 1 October 2020 to 30 Sept 2021.

Financial Implications: The report requests a 12 month extension to a number of homelessness contracts to 30 September 2021 as stated in section 2.2. The annual cost of this extension is £1.419 million.

(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer) Members are reminded that there was a service redesign carried out in 2019 of the Community Safety and Homelessness Service.

The affordability of this service redesign was predicated on savings being realised from the re-procurement of these contracts once they expired. Grant funding is in place to support the contract extension for the 6 month period in 2021/22 to ensure affordability. However there is a minimum saving requirement of £0.167 million on the total annual contract value following re-procurement to ensure a balanced budget is delivered in 2021/22 and beyond. This excludes any additional savings that the service and directorate will be expected to deliver as part of the 2021/22 Council budget process.

Legal Implications:

(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

The contracts referred to in the report have expired but required services are nevertheless continuing to be provided by the same providers. The services must as soon as possible be compliantly procured via competition to ensure the Council's requirements are effectively delivered and value for money obtained.

As re-procurement can take some time, to mitigate commercial risk in the mean-time, it is proposed that short term contracts, also covering any new and additional requirements, are now put in place until procurements are carried out.

This proposal is not without risk but this is balanced against the current need for services to continue and compliance with statutory obligations regarding homelessness whilst appropriate competitive procurements are carried out.

How do proposals align with Health & Wellbeing Strategy?

The proposal aligns with the Living Well and Ageing Well programmes.

How do proposals align with Locality Plan?

The service links into the Council's priorities:

- Help people to live independent lifestyles supported by responsible communities
- Improve Health and wellbeing of residents
- Protect the most vulnerable

How do proposals align with the Commissioning Strategy?

This supports the 'Care Together Commissioning for Reform Strategy 2016-2020' commissioning priorities for improving population health particularly: - Creating the right care model so that people with long term support needs have the opportunity to build independence skills and reduce dependency on the health and social care system

Recommendations / views of the Health and Care Advisory Group:

This report has not been presented to the HCAG

Public and Patient Implications:

Those accessing the service have been identified as having eligible needs under the Housing Act 2004 and Homelessness Act 2002.

Quality Implications:



The service will support quality outcomes for people to be able to live in their own home and prevent homelessness.

How do the proposals help to reduce health inequalities?

The service delivers whole life support to vulnerable adults including ensuring individuals have access to a healthy lifestyle and routine medical checks.

What are the Equality and

There are no negative equality and diversity implications

Diversity implications?	associated with this report, see the Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 1 .
What are the safeguarding implications?	There are no safeguarding implications associated with this report. Where safeguarding concerns arise as a result of the actions or inactions of the provider and their staff, or concerns are raised by staff members or other professionals or members of the public, the Safeguarding Policy will be followed.
What are the Information Governance implications? Has a privacy impact assessment been conducted?	Personal data relating to the occupants of the properties, as well as in relation to officers of the Council, will be held by the provider. The Council will potentially hold personal data relating to the employees or contractors of the provider. The provider and the Council must comply with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 in relation to their handling of this data and this will be further underpinned by relevant and appropriate provisions governing the handling of data in the contracts.
Risk Management:	As there are current major disruption to services due to COVID-19 and its impacts, recommissioning the service now would not be possible for potential providers. The COVID-19 crisis would have a severely damaging effect on both the market and the process, risking both a shortage of providers bidding for the contract, and a failure of the tender and TUPE processes to be fair, open and transparent. It is essential that, to ensure a strategic approach that enables close partnership working, the delivery of quality outcomes and efficient use of resources, a timely delay in the re-tender of service is considered to ensure the market can respond to the council needs in the future.
Access to Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting John Gregory, Head of Community Safety & Homelessness:
	 Telephone: 0161 342 3520
	 e-mail: john.gregory@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's Homelessness Service employs 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 services to fulfil the aims of the Council's Preventing Homelessness Strategy. 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.
- 1.2 The strategy is aligned with the Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network strategy that aims to end rough sleeping by 2020, and develop a 10-year plan to tackle the issues of wider homelessness. The strategy also links with other strategies and programmes that aim to address the wide range of factors that could contribute to homelessness in Tameside Borough.
- 1.3 The strategy contains eight strategic 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
- 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 The contract arrangements for the services referred to at 2.2 below ended on 31 March 2020 but are continuing in order to maintain critical service delivery and continuity to the borough's most vulnerable residents, as well as allowing the Council to meet its statutory obligations.

2. SERVICE STRATEGY

- 2.1 This report seeks permission to award contracts to providers. These awards fall outside of the application of the PCR's (Public Contract Regulations 2015) as they each fall below the relevant OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) threshold for these services which fall under the light touch regime as health and social care contracts. The award will be for a specified period of time 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021.
- 2.2 The contracts for consideration are imperative to the continued delivery of homelessness services across the Borough and are as follows:

Name of Service	Name of Provider	Direct Award Cost 1 Oct 2020 to 30 Sept 2020
Short Term Accommodation and Support	Foundation	£133,887.00
Impact - Service for people with chronic exclusion	Greystones	£75,000.00
Floating Support and Activities	Adullum Homes	£253,000.00
Accommodation Based Service - People with Alcohol & Substance Misuse Problems	Greystones	£118,340.00

Name of Service	Name of Provider	Direct Award Cost 1 Oct 2020 to 30 Sept 2020
Personalisation Fund	Adullum Homes	£32,000.00
Short Term Accommodation and Support	Foundation	£58,576.00
Supported Housing for Homeless Families	Jigsaw Support (Housing Group)	£430,295.00
Temporary Accommodation	Jigsaw Support (Housing Group)	£200,000.00
Short Term Accommodation and Support - Younger Clients	Jigsaw Support (Housing Group) formerly Threshold	£117,780.00

3. SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 Tameside Council submitted a bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in 2018 for additional resources to provide new services to prevent and relieve rough sleeping. This bid was successful and has supported the Council to develop and review delivery in order to meet the continued demands on services.
- 3.2 In order for the Operations and Neighbourhoods directorate to quickly respond to the MHCLG funding and implement additional services, it has been necessary to continue with contracts with current providers to maintain existing services. The impact of the funding and the development of an additional service for a multi-agency assertive outreach service, a Rough Sleepers Coordinator Post and more accommodation options for those at risk of rough sleeping, would not have been known in a timely manner to support a procurement exercise for contract commencement of 1 April 2020.
- 3.3 In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on both commissioners and providers alike who have been directed to prioritise other work related to Covid-19. Capacity at services and for providers will continue to be affected as services recover and adjustments are made to comply with current national guidance and advice relating to Covid-19 to prevent further spread of infection. 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 services as lockdown restrictions are lifted and peoples' accommodation situations may change, particularly where temporary stays with friends/families have been supported in the main throws of Covid-19.
- 3.4 The additional services implemented following the MHCLG funding and the Covid-19 situation have both been factors in the consideration of continuing contracts with the current providers from 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021. In addition, it will allow a comprehensive review to explore the learning and best practice that both these scenarios have presented, as well as more generally a full review of service requirements, to ensure a robust and competitive procurement exercise can be implemented going forward.
- 3.5 The continued delivery of services has enabled the Council to support the change in landscape and demand for the homelessness contracted services. The ability to adapt and respond flexibly in the current climate has been paramount to ensuring the Council maintains the levels of service performance that has only been possible with the support of the contracted providers.
- 3.6 There is value for money for the Council and other partner agencies in ensuring services continue for the most vulnerable and avoid the need for more costly placements. The value for money obtained in continuing these contracts include:

- a) There are huge cost savings in delivering these services to a wide variety of support services.
- b) There could be additional costs incurred by the Council if a procurement exercise did not identify and secure the right services to meet suitable housing and support needs because the re-tender was premature without a full assessment of Service Requirements.

4. CURRENT PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 Tameside's Homelessness Service has seen substantial changes in the last eighteen months. During 2019 Tameside was the top performing Council in England for the reduction of Rough Sleeping with 43 rough sleepers reduced to 6, and then zero in July 2020. Although this success is significant, the people who were previously sleeping rough are now in service with the Rough Sleeping team and require considerable ongoing support.
- 4.2 Additionally many of these former rough sleepers have now found emergency accommodation with the service. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic almost 90 service users were accommodated, reducing to around 60 individuals currently (over 50% of whom have identified move on accommodation)
- 4.3 During the Covid-19 pandemic the Government has removed the ability for landlords to commence eviction proceedings with their tenants. This prohibition was lifted on 24 September 2020, which may result in a further influx of service users to the service.
- 4.4 The service has used the Covid-19 period to improve preventative pathways including insurances, improved access and relationships with the Private Rented Sector and the opportunity to secure new and focussed inward investment in the form of grant funding to support the development of move on accommodation in the borough to further relieve demand.
- 4.5 The service has been extremely responsive and flexible during the Covid-19 pandemic and has adapted to continue to provide homelessness support as well as supporting Covid-19 response services in other organisations.
- 4.6 The ability to be able to adapt, not only to the Covid-19 pandemic but also to the changing national and local drivers has only been possible due the continuation of services with current providers. These providers have continued to deliver services post 1 April 2020 and have worked to positively with us to drive the need for change and we will continue to do so if further contracts are put in place for the period 1 October 2020 to 30 Sept 2021 while the re-procurement strategy is carried out.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL/ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The termination of the services while the re-procurement strategy is carried out is not a recommended option for a number of reasons:
 - 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

- 5.2 Closure 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.
- 5.3 The Council has an 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.

6. EQUALITIES

- 6.1 It is not anticipated that there are any negative equality and diversity issues with this proposal, see EIA available at **Appendix A** to the report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 As set out on the front of the report.

APPENDIX A

Subject / Title		Community Safety and Homelessness Contracts Extension and Service Modification.	
Team		Department	Directorate
Community Safety and Homelessness		Community Safety and Homelessness	Operations and Neighbourhoods
Start Date		Completion Date	
22 July 2020		22 July 2020	
Project Lead Officer		Vanessa Rothwell/ Denise Buckley	
Contract / Commissioning Manager		John Gregory	
Assistant Director/ Director		Ian Saxon	
EIA Group (lead contact first)	Job title	Service	
Vanessa Rothwell	Partnerships Manager	Operations and Neighbourhoods	
John Gregory	Head of Community Safety	Operations and Neighbourhoods	
Denise Buckley	Acting Team Manager	JC&PMT - Adults	

PART 1 – INITIAL SCREENING

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for all formal decisions that involve changes to service delivery and/or provision. Note: all other changes – whether a formal decision or not – require consideration for an EIA.

The Initial screening is a quick and easy process which aims to identify:

- *those projects, proposals and service or contract changes which require a full EIA by looking at the potential impact on, or relevance to, any of the equality groups*
- *prioritise if and when a full EIA should be completed*
- *explain and record the reasons why it is deemed a full EIA is not required*

A full EIA should always be undertaken if the project, proposal and service / contract change is likely to have an impact upon, or relevance to, people with a protected characteristic. This should be undertaken irrespective of whether the impact or relevancy is major or minor, or on a large or small group of people. If the initial screening concludes a full EIA is not required, please fully explain the reasons for this at 1e and ensure this form is signed off by the relevant Contract / Commissioning Manager and the Assistant Director / Director.

1a.	What is the project, proposal or service / contract change?	The proposal is for a direct contract award to Community Safety and Homelessness Contracts
1b.	What are the main aims of the project, proposal or service / contract change?	To offer support based on the principles of prevention and rehabilitation
1c. Will the project, proposal or service / contract change have either a direct or indirect impact on, or relevance to, any groups of people with protected equality characteristics? Where there is a direct or indirect impact on, or relevance to, a group of people with protected equality characteristics as a result of the project, proposal or service / contract change please explain why and how that group of people will be affected.		

Protected Characteristic	Direct Impact/Relevance	Indirect Impact/Relevance	Little / No Impact/Relevance	Explanation
Age	✓			The service is for individuals aged 18+. Those individuals under the age of 18 will have access to support via Children's Services.
Disability			✓	
Ethnicity			✓	
Sex			✓	
Religion or Belief			✓	
Sexual Orientation			✓	
Gender Reassignment			✓	
Pregnancy & Maternity			✓	
Marriage & Civil Partnership			✓	
Other protected groups determined locally by Tameside and Glossop Strategic Commission?				
Group (please state)	Direct Impact/Relevance	Indirect Impact/Relevance	Little / No Impact/Relevance	Explanation
Mental Health			✓	
Carers			✓	
Military Veterans			✓	
Breast Feeding			✓	
Are there any other groups who you feel may be impacted by the project, proposal or service/contract change or which it may have relevance to? (e.g. vulnerable residents, isolated residents, those who are homeless)				
Group (please state)	Direct Impact/Relevance	Indirect Impact/Relevance	Little / No Impact/Relevance	Explanation
N/A				

Wherever a direct or indirect impact or relevance has been identified you should consider undertaking a full EIA or be able to adequately explain your reasoning for not doing so. Where little / no impact or relevance is anticipated, this can be explored in more detail when undertaking a full EIA.

1d.	Does the project, proposal or service / contract change require a full EIA?	Yes	No
			✓
1e.	What are your reasons for the decision made at 1d?	The proposed direct award to the contracts will not require any change to service delivery and therefore will not impose an impact on any of the protected characteristics.	
Signature of Contract / Commissioning Manager			Date
Signature of Assistant Director / Director			Date