

Subject:	Re- Procurement of Floating Support Service		
Date of Meeting:	13th November 2019		
Report of:	Executive Director for Health & Adult Social Care		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Jenny Knight	Tel: 01273 293081
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Ward(s) affected:	(All Wards);		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

1.1 This report is being presented to request authority to tender a support service for homeless people transitioning into independent accommodation from supported accommodation and for people who require support to maintain an independent tenancy.

1.2 The council currently contracts with Southdown for the provision of the following services

- Southdown Generic Floating Support Service
- Southdown Floating Support Service for those with Mental Health Needs
- Young Peoples' Floating Support for those in Independent Accommodation

The contract for these services expires on 30 September 2020.

1.3 The primary aims of the current service are to;

- Provide a floating support service to support individuals, aged 16 years old and above, living in independent accommodation to sustain their home, to transition between accommodation and to manage their health and wellbeing.
- Support individuals to build links in their local communities thereby developing the resilience to continue living independently.

1.4 In 2018-19 the service worked with people to address the following areas of support

- To access and secure accommodation
- To sustain accommodation and prevent eviction
- To manage a new tenancy
- To reduce debt and to maximise income
- To access support services including health, mental health and substance misuse

- To secure employment, volunteering and education opportunities
- To participate in the local community and develop sustainable support networks to allow them to live independently

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Committee grants delegated authority to the Executive Director of Health & Adult Social Care (HASC) to take all necessary steps to:

(i) procure and award a contract for Five (5) years for the provision of a floating support service to the maximum value of £390,000.00 per annum,

(ii) to approve an extension to the contract referred to in 2.1(i) for a period or periods of up to two years in total if it is deemed appropriate and subject to available budget.

(iii) to report back to Housing Committee the progress and outcomes of this service.

2.2 The Committee is requested to note that this report was considered by the Procurement Advisory Board on 14th October 2019. The Board recommended that some additional information be included in the paper, this has been done and the paper is taken to Housing Committee for a decision.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The Southdown Floating support service is open to occupiers of independent accommodation including those in social housing and emergency placement accommodation.

3.2 The service originally started out as three separate commissions, the first service commissioned to support those in independent accommodation with mental health needs commenced in February 2014 and was developed as part of the H&ASC and CCG jointly commissioned mental health supported accommodation pathway.

3.3 The generic floating support service was commissioned in 2015 to provide support for former homeless people and rough sleepers and to prevent homelessness for those in independent accommodation.

3.4 These two services were merged in 2017 following discussions with the provider to streamline referrals and create additional units of support.

3.5 The third element of the service is young people's floating support. The original holder of this contract pulled out in 2019 and their contract was split between two providers with Southdown incorporating the support for young people in independent accommodation into their service.

- 3.6 The focus of the current service is divided into four areas;
- Transition and resettlement – to support those exiting supported accommodation into independent accommodation
 - Crisis response – to support those at imminent risk of tenancy loss due to a housing or mental health crisis to maintain their tenancy or access new accommodation
 - Standard Support – approximately six (6) months of support to help an individual manage their independent tenancy, build links in the local community and manage their health and wellbeing
 - Complex Case Support – longer term support to manage an independent tenancy for those with more complex support needs

Demand:

- 3.7 The service is in high demand and running at full capacity whilst maintaining a short waiting list. The contract currently offers 200 units of support at an average of 2.9 hours support per week per service user. In 2018/19 the service worked with a total 556 individuals.
- 3.8 Referrals are open to all agencies and self-referrals are accepted. In 2018/19
- Referrals came from 65 individual teams and organisations
 - 26% of accepted referrals were self-referrals
 - 20% of accepted referrals came from mental health specialist services or mental health charities
 - 13% of accepted referrals came from BHCC Housing Options
- 3.9 Of those supported;
- 30% were in private rented sector accommodation
 - 20% were in properties owned by a Registered Social Landlord
 - 14% were in BHCC tenancies
 - 13% were living with family and friends
 - 11% were in local authority emergency or temporary accommodation
- 3.10 There is a demand for transitional support for those exiting supported accommodation with 80 individuals making planned moves into their own tenancies from supported accommodation in 2018/19. This aspect of the service is currently under-utilised and this will be addressed within the new tender.
- 3.11 There is additional unmet demand for those waiting for supported accommodation. In August 2019, 39 individuals were awaiting low support accommodation, many of these could be diverted directly into independent accommodation with floating support, if accommodation was available to them. The same is true of low support tenants many of whom could manage independent accommodation with floating support if accommodation was available.

Performance:

3.12 The current service performs well, as an example the following outcomes were achieved between July and December 2018:

- 94% of those with an identified need sustained or obtained accommodation
- 86% of those who identified work and learning as a goal achieved access to work, learning or volunteering
- 95% of those with an identified need reduced debt or maximised their income
- 88% of service users reported that their needs had been resolved at the end of their support.

Overlap with existing services:

3.13 Since the current service was commissioned, there have been some changes which affect the future service model. The current service overlaps with a number of services also provided in-house by housing teams. New legislation, the introduction of a new team in emergency placement accommodation and a planned expansion of the remit of tenancy support in Housing Management will mean an adjustment to the scope of the proposed contract to avoid duplication in the future.

The areas of overlap are as follows;

3.14 Crisis Response for those at imminent risk of eviction:

The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018 and brought in new duties and responsibilities on local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness. This included; an extension of the period 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days, a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need and a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need.

3.15 Support to those in Emergency & Temporary Accommodation:

The re-introduction of the support service in emergency accommodation has provided increased capacity in Housing to provide this support however we propose to continue to offer some support to those entering this accommodation at high risk of rough sleeping with complex support needs. This additional resource through the Welfare Officers team is in place until the end of March 2020. Future funding is subject to agreement at - budget council.

3.16 Support to those in council tenancies:

BHCC Housing Management offers tenancy sustainment support to its tenants. Housing Management intend to expand their remit in recognition of the number of people in council tenancies who have support needs.

3.17 In total, crisis intervention, support in emergency accommodation and support in council tenancies make up around 38% of the services caseload.

Service Model:

3.18 Following feedback from service users and stakeholders, and analysis of the current demand for the service the following is proposed:

The tender of a floating support service offering:

- support to those exiting supported accommodation, those in independent accommodation and those being referred to supported accommodation who could manage independent accommodation with support.
- support for those at high risk of rough sleeping placed in emergency accommodation (currently a MCHLG funded post).

This will encompass the following elements;

(a) Transitional support:

- Feedback has identified that support should commence once an individual is ready for independent accommodation ensuing a relationship can be built and pre-tenancy support can be provided. Currently a referral is made once a property has been offered which is too late.
- Support to those settling in council accommodation via H&ASC's allocation to council tenancies via the council interest queue scheme.
- To offer longer term more intensive support to clients with higher support needs who are able to settle in independent accommodation.

(b) Support in Independent Accommodation:

- a specialist mental health support offer within the wider service to help those with mental health needs access support and maintain their independent accommodation.
- a specialist young person's element within the wider service to meet the differing needs of those aged 16-25.
- a service to help divert those from the supported accommodation waiting list who could manage in independent accommodation with floating support.

(c) Support in Emergency Accommodation for those at high risk of rough sleeping:

- The successful pilot of the MHCLG funded post within Southdown has identified a need for a floating support worker who is able to work more intensely with those referred into emergency accommodation with complex support needs who

are at high risk of rough sleeping. An extract of client feedback is included as Appendix 1.

- 3.19 The service will act to prevent more costly interventions from statutory services including evictions, mental health crisis and referrals into supported accommodation.

Timeline for procurement:

- 3.20 If approved by Housing Committee the tender of the service would commence in January 2020 with service award in April 2020 and service commencement on the 1st October 2020.

Budget:

- 3.20 The budget for 2019/20 for floating support is £558,111.00, this comprises the following elements.

Element of the Service	Annual Budget 2019/2020
Generic Floating Support	£300,000.00
Floating Support for those with Mental Health Needs	£200,111.00
Young Peoples Floating Support	£58,000.00
Total Annual Floating Support Budget	£558,111.00

- 3.21 The proposed budget for re-tender is £390,000.00 this is a reduction of 30%. However, £125,000.00 has been reallocated into the tender for rough sleeper outreach services and £43,111.00 has been allocated as a saving.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Consideration has been given to providing the service in house. TUPE data has been received from the service which shows that the service currently employs 22 full time equivalent staff.

- 4.2 The following information has been provided by finance based on the TUPE information however it is a high level estimate and would need more detailed investigation for this option to be considered. This cannot be undertaken without understanding the full terms and conditions offered by the provider.

- 4.3 Cost of offering the service in house

Staffing	£799,295.00
Running Costs	£8,180.00
Support Service Costs	£113,047.00
Total Cost	£920,522.00 per annum

- 4.4 This cost would be an annual cost. There is a small, one off IT and equipment cost of £3000 but the other costs are ongoing.

The costs of the in-house service are above those proposed for external tender due to the following key factors:

- The council pension employer contribution is significantly higher than the average external organisation. The council contribution is 17.3% compared to an average of 7% for the current external provider.
 - The council support service costs are higher than an external organisation at 14% where an external organisation would be less than 10%.
 - There is no current management structure in place for these services so the cost of bringing this service in house includes an element of additional senior management resource.
- 4.5 This option has been discounted due to the increased cost of running the service in-house.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Interviews were held with 10 service users who were in low support accommodation and ready to move on and 9 who had recently moved on from supported accommodation into independent accommodation. They were asked a range of questions about the support they needed with this transition, the support they received and what support they felt they needed to maintain their new tenancy.
- 5.2 The overall feedback was that transitioning between supported accommodation into independent accommodation was challenging and that support was needed in a range of areas including; practical help with bills, benefits, moving, furnishing properties. Others identified support with medication, physical adaptations, mental health and linking with support networks / ensuring continuity of support services.
- 5.3 Online surveys were issued to stakeholders and all referring organisations. The response was limited and therefore the survey was undertaken twice and the deadline extended. In total 17 responses were received. Meetings were also held with individual services and with major stakeholders such as Housing. The following summarises the feedback and comments made regarding the proposed service needs;
- Person centred support which could adapt to the needs of the individual, being assertive for those who may struggle to engage.
 - Wide ranging support from transition and practical elements of moving and settling to support to prevent isolation, attend appointments, build links, grow in independence in a guided and supported way.

- Emergency accommodation and the lack of support for ex-rough sleepers was highlighted and all those asked thought this was a necessary part of the service.
- The majority of those asked felt that there were gaps in the provision of floating support in the city, comments focused on; working with people prior to an offer of independent accommodation; more person centred, waiting times / referral process too long.
- Transition to independence support was identified as a key priority and it was clear that this support should start earlier than it currently does. Most respondents felt it should start before leaving supported accommodation.
- All respondents agreed that there should be a mental health element to the service, with the service preventing isolation and having a creative approach to those who do not engage.
- The majority of respondents felt that there should be a specific element in the service for young people. One suggestion was a flexible housing first type model. The ability to re-engage in crisis and the need for an understanding for the needs of YP and YP specific services.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 In conclusion the procurement of a floating support service for people transitioning into or living in independent accommodation is vital to ensuring that people are able to sustain their accommodation and live successfully in the community.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The floating support contract is within the Health & Adult Social Care – Housing Related Support budget. These services have an overall budget of £5.8m for 2019/20. Any funding for 2020/21 is subject to agreement at budget council.
- 7.2 The proposed funding for this contract going forward represents a saving from efficiencies outlined in paragraph 3.14 to 3.17. Detailed financial modelling would need to be carried out to ascertain the financial impact from providing this contract in-house.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sophie Warburton Date: 25/11/19

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 7.3.1 The Council's Constitution at Part 4 Scheme of Delegation to Committees and Sub-Committees sets out the terms of reference of each Committee. Housing Committee has overall responsibility for the Council's housing functions including homelessness .

7.3.2 The services required fall within Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR) and are therefore subject to the “light touch regime”. This means that there is flexibility as to the design of the procurement process providing safeguards around equal treatment and transparency are observed and the process is advertised in accordance with PCR and as required by reference to the relevant financial threshold. The threshold for the publication of light touch regime opportunities is currently £615,278.00.

7.3.3 The council’s Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) also apply.

7.3.4 It will be necessary on receipt of Tupe information to consider the extent to which the Tupe obligations apply in respect of the service to be provided by the successful bidder and to the extent that services previously delivered by an external provider are being provided in-house.

Lawyer Consulted: Judith Fisher

Date: 22.10.19

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 A budget EIA has been completed on the impact on proposed budget reductions in H&ASC which includes the reduction identified to floating support.
- 7.5 Due to the duplication in the service detailed in the report, we anticipate that there would not be an adverse impact on service users from the reduction funding and that these individuals would continue to receive support.
- 7.6 There will be an impact on staffing within the service. There is a significant reduction in funding which will likely result in some staff redundancies. Parts of the service offered by the current provider duplicates services which are being provided in house by the housing department (see above duplication). This may result in a TUPE transfer from the current provider to the housing team.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 Sustainability will be taken into account as part of the tender process including the use of public transport for visits.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.8 The service offers support to those who have mental and physical health needs. The service will link people into support services which address health and wellbeing issues and ensure that people are supported to enable them to manage independence accommodation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1

Case Study - Maintaining mental health and recovery from substance misuse

Assessment:

Client A referred due to threat of homelessness. Client A has anxiety, depression, autism, dyspraxia, alcohol abuse and in an abusive relationship. They struggled with budgeting, increasing debts and lacked motivation and self-care. There were no services involved.

Support:

- Supported with accommodation options and secured her first tenancy
- She disclosed that she hears voices - which she thought were normal
- Supported to register and attend GP appointments and referred into mental health services
- Helped to apply for PIP, have rent paid directly from Universal Credit, set up payment plans

Outcomes:

- Now securely housed in PRS tenancy
- Understands her tenancy rights & responsibilities
- Understands where to go for help and advice
- Linked in mental health and alcohol services
- Communicating well with support agencies
- Wants to move to a bigger property so has opened a savings account
- Engaging with support from RISE

Client feedback regarding the support in emergency accommodation worker funded by MCHLG.

I didn't want the support at first, I didn't want her to come here. I'd had counselling in the past and though want a load of nosiness. So when Karen came to my door, I thought Oh no! The first couple of times I didn't want her nosing into my stuff.....

It so hard to do things on your own. I just didn't care. I didn't know if I would wake up at all. Now I have a purpose, it's nice to have someone to talk to, who knew the answers. She went through everything with me, helped me with the paperwork, I could bounce ideas off her. I am certainly grateful. I can't praise her enough, she's a real rock, absolutely brilliant, I can't fault her.

I'm quite sure I would be dead if it wasn't for the support.
It's been sound with Karen and I'm very happy.