
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
Cabinet

3rd July 2025
8th July 2025

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities – Councillor N Akhtar

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Care, Health and Housing

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title: The Re-commissioning of Housing Related Support Services

Is this a key decision?

Yes - the re-commissioning of the housing related support services for the city has the potential to affect all wards, and the total expenditure over the 6 years (2+2+2) is £14,814,000.

Executive summary:

This report follows extensive engagement with key stakeholders in Coventry and makes recommendations as to the requirements for the commissioned housing related support services, effective from 1st April 2026.

The existing housing related support contracts went live on 1st April 2020, at that point the country had been in a national lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic for approximately 1 week. Contract mobilisation at a time of national crisis was challenging however the providers mobilised and started delivering support and services to those in need of housing related support. The existing contracts are due to expire on 31st March 2026.

The housing related support services support the statutory homelessness service in a number of ways. Without the hostel type accommodation that is commissioned, a significant percentage of the occupants would need to be provided with Temporary Accommodation (TA) by the Council. This would result in additional financial pressure on the service. In addition to this a percentage of the floating support provision supports people in hostel type accommodation e.g. Frank Walsh House, The Foyer etc. Any reduction in support to this provision could result in these services being unviable and therefore placing another pressure on the Council's TA numbers and provision.

Since the contracts were previously awarded in 2020 there has been an increase of 95% in the number of households and individuals approaching the Council in housing need. This is particularly the case for families and for individuals who require support for multiple complex needs. This has placed substantial pressure on the housing and homelessness service and its budget over the last few years.

The new provision will support the delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2025- 2029). The key aim is to ensure that the newly commissioned services are not only focussed on the delivery of services to households who are in a crisis, but that prevention work is fundamental in the delivery of these services.

We are proposing that there will be 5 commissioned Lots instead of the current 4 to deliver housing related support services and specialist accommodation and that, within these, there are specific Lots that address and support the aspirations within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and for specific groups at risk of homelessness. The Lots that we are seeking to commission through this exercise are Adults with Complex Needs, Older Single People (25yrs +), Young People (18-24), Families, and Women with Complex Needs

In terms of how the new Lots will compare with previous Lots there will be some difference, which includes a slight reduction in the number of commissioned bed spaces, and a reconfiguration of the floating support provision. This is because although costs have increased, the budget has remained static so need to ensure that the services are targeted where they will have the greatest impact and supports how we meet our statutory obligations to the residents of Coventry.

Recommendations:

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to consider the content of the report and identify any further recommendations or comments for Cabinet

Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Consider any recommendations or comments from Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
- 2) Approve the re-commissioning of Housing Related Support Services.
- 3) Approve the proposed contract structure for the Housing Related Support Services.
- 4) Delegate authority to the Director of Care, Health and Housing to commence the Housing Related Support Services tender process with the new contracts being put in place by April 1st, 2026
- 5) Following the completion of the procurement process, delegate authority to the Director of Care, Health and Housing and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to undertake the necessary due diligence, finalise the terms and conditions and award a contract for a period of up to 6 years to the preferred suppliers.

- 6) Delegate authority to the Director of Care, Health and Housing, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to make variations to the terms of the contracts over the life of the contract term.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy (2025-2029) [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2029 – Coventry City Council](#)

Homelessness review (2024). [Coventry Homelessness Review 2024 – Coventry City Council](#)

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes – Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 3rd July 2025

Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: The Re-commissioning of Housing Related Support Services

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of people, their families, and their communities. Decent housing provides a stable base on which people can build their lives and build successful communities. Poor or unsuitable housing or homelessness, however, can have negative impacts on many other areas of personal and community life as well as physical and mental health and wellbeing. If people are experiencing homelessness or do not have decent housing, everything else becomes much more difficult. Supporting people who are facing homelessness and improving housing options, conditions, and neighbourhoods within the city is essential for economic growth, improving outcomes for residents and children including their educational attainment, health and wellbeing, and community cohesion. The commissioned housing related support services aim to support people in housing need and those who are experiencing homelessness. The provision of support for those in housing crisis supports the Council's statutory duty in terms of families and single people who are homeless and provides specialist accommodation options for specific groups facing homelessness.
- 1.2 To identify the specific Lots for the re-commissioning a number of issues were considered and discussed with partners, both regarding the current provision and what could/should be re-commissioned for future years. It was agreed that the priorities would be;
- 1.2.1 To provide support to households who are identified as requiring support and are placed into specific accommodation schemes either managed by or contracted to the Council
 - 1.2.2 To provide specialist support to complex women as this is a clear gap in the current provision. It is included as a separate lot as in 2019 no specific provision for this group was put forward as part of the complex needs lot.
 - 1.2.3 The focus on complex needs is due to this group being the most difficult to accommodate and closest to ending up sleeping rough in the city. Additionally, there are a range of non-commissioned providers who provide accommodation for people with low-medium support needs operating in the city
 - 1.2.4 The provision of accommodation and support for young people in the city is also a priority. Friends and family no longer willing to accommodate people is the biggest reason for homelessness and often impacts on young people without children.
 - 1.2.5 The Complex Needs provision includes a number of different services including some specific beds for rough sleepers, a Hub to provide information and advice to people who are non-priority homeless as well as the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP= additional support during periods of extreme weather.)

1.3 The proposals contained within this report support the delivery of the City Councils Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2025 - 2029) which focuses on three main themes:

- Early intervention and prevention
- Targeted and crisis support
- Move on and tenancy sustainment

1.4 The proposals contained within this report for a key part of the delivery of this Strategy. In addition, the Council has statutory duties specifically under part 7 of the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), which includes specific duties to secure accommodation for applicants who are homeless, eligible for assistance, have priority need and are not intentionally homeless (the main housing duty).

1.5 As a service we are experiencing a sharp increase in people approaching the statutory homeless service (a 36% increase in approaches from 22/23 to 23/24). This increase has resulted in a significant increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation. The local authority has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for those in housing need who are deemed eligible. The current temporary accommodation provision is split between outsourced providers as well as Council owned and managed services.

1.6 In order to attract the enhanced housing benefit rates for the Council owned temporary accommodation, the provision of care, support and supervision must be in place – this provision is currently delivered via the housing related support contract. Our Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) provision is provided by the Council for single people and in order to receive enhanced housing benefit rates, housing related support must be provided. As part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, we have expanded the STA portfolio over the last 12 months to cater for the demand and deliver savings, this relies on commissioned support being delivered into the provision.

1.7 The Housing and Homelessness service are also expanding their TA provision for families through purchasing properties as well as creating a new scheme with Green Square Accord. To attract enhanced housing benefit for these schemes and therefore ensure their overhead costs are met, a support service needs to be provided alongside enhanced housing management costs that are met through Housing Benefit. We need to clearly articulate to the Housing Benefit Service how the support element is funded as this cost cannot be met through housing benefit. This will need to be commissioned support.

1.8 Coventry's latest Homelessness Review (2024) identified a number of key challenges and factors that impact homelessness in the city. Those relevant to this report are:

- **Affordability:** The cost of housing, whether through buying or renting, is rising faster than household incomes, creating a disparity and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have struggled to keep pace with the rising rents.

- **Health and homelessness:** it is well evidenced that people who are homeless experience worse health outcomes than the rest of the population, this includes both physical health as well as mental health and medical interventions and support for the use of substances.
- **Domestic abuse:** Domestic abuse is a key factor in terms of homelessness within Coventry.
- **Increased demand:** There has been a year-on-year increase in demand for support in regard to homelessness in Coventry particularly from young people, single adults, and single parents with dependent children.
- **Temporary accommodation:** The increased demand for temporary accommodation and length of stay, against the availability of permanent accommodation suggests that the number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation will continue to rise if the supply of affordable housing does not increase.
- **Supply:** The housing needs in terms of the number of households on the housing list in Coventry outpaces the availability of social rented housing, highlighting the gap in supply and demand.
- **Support needs:** The primary support need for those approaching the homelessness service is in relation to Mental Health closely followed by physical health, substance misuse, and domestic abuse.
- **Rough sleeping:** The number of individuals found rough sleeping is on an upward trend, with a notable increase in non-nationals being found.

1.9 The new provision will support us to address some of the key challenges that have been identified and support the delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

1.10 The key aim is to ensure that the newly commissioned services are not only focussed on the delivery of services to households who are in crisis, but that prevention work is fundamental in the delivery of these services.

1.11 The Council are funding the support provision for each of the contracts with rental payments being met through Housing benefit claims made for the residents.

1.12 The recommended option proposes that there will be five separate Lots commissioned to deliver housing related support and accommodation to target cohorts of service users, including:

- Adults with Complex Needs,
- Older Single People (25yrs +),
- Young People (18-24),
- Families, and
- Women with Complex Needs

1.13 Contract Description:

It is proposed that the contract for Housing Related Support is commissioned in four separate 'Lots' covering each of the five cohorts listed in para 2.9 above.

1.14 Lot 1: Temporary Accommodation Support

This Lot will provide support services for families and single people with the ability for support capacity to be used flexibly within the overall capacity available of 750 hours per week supporting an indicative 150 single people and 100 families.

1.15 Lot 2: Complex Needs Provision (Over 25's)

This Lot will provide support services for individuals aged over 25 with complex needs, including ex-offenders. The support provided includes prevention and crisis support. The service will provide a minimum of 100 units of accommodation along with outreach services for newly settled individuals. The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), and emergency off the street accommodation for rough sleepers are included here.

1.16 Lot 3: Under 25s Provision

This Lot will provide support services and accommodation for individuals aged under 25. Support includes prevention, crisis, and tenancy sustainment support. An under 25s Hub will also be commissioned to support on homelessness and tenancy sustainment. A minimum of 50 units of accommodation will be required (funded via housing benefit) with outreach support being part of the prevention offer.

1.17 Lot 4: Families Provision

This Lot will provide support services to Families related to prevention and tenancy sustainment. Outreach support will also be provided as part of a prevention offer.

1.18 Lot 5: Women with Complex Needs Provision

This Lot will provide support services and accommodation for women. This includes prevention, crisis support and sustainment support. 20-25 units of accommodation (funded via Housing Benefit) as well as outreach support from part of the contract Lot.

1.19 The proposed contracts are for the initial term of 2 years from 2026 to 2028 and potentially extended for two periods of 2 years each to 2032. The contracts aim to provide comprehensive support across various cohorts, addressing the needs of families, single persons, individuals with complex needs, under 25s, and women. The flexible support structure and targeted interventions are designed to reflect fluctuating demands and ensure effective service delivery.

1.20 We will welcome consortium bids, as well as bids where one contractor is the lead provider of the contract, with sub-contractor arrangements in place to deliver the different elements. Regardless of contracting arrangements, it will be a requirement for all parties/organisations who are part of the contract delivery to regularly meet with and

report to the commissioning team as part of quality assurance processes for the suite of contracts.

1.21 The Commissioning & Partnership Lead within the Housing & Homelessness Service will be responsible for the monitoring of the contract. This will include the providers having to,

- Provide weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual performance data in an agreed format utilised across the different providers.
- Monthly monitoring meetings and quarterly review meetings.
- A minimum of quarterly meetings with residents to secure feedback regarding the provision of the support service they are receiving
- Observation of support delivered
- Support plan, risk assessment and exit interview quality checks on a quarterly basis
- The requirement to produce an annual report
- A clear process for escalation/dispute resolution

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Option 1 - (recommended option) – Externally commission the required support.

This option is to externally commission through a tender process the housing and homelessness provision described in section 2.9 – 2.15 above, ensuring best use of the budget envelope with a focus not only on crisis support but also on prevention and tenancy sustainment.

The decision to pursue this option reflects the complex and specialist nature of providing good quality floating and accommodation-based support services and the availability of a range of direct access and supported accommodation which already operates across the city by partner organisations.

Option 2 – not recommended - Do not continue to provide housing related support services beyond the end of the current contract

This option is not recommended as the Council has statutory responsibilities to support households who are at risk of becoming or already are homeless.

Failure to continue to provide support, either commissioned or on house would present a budgetary impact on the Council as support is required for households living in temporary accommodation. Additionally, a number of individuals currently living in commissioned supported accommodation would require alternative accommodation that would in many instances be in temporary accommodation provided by the Council.

Option 3 – not recommended -Deliver the services through the establishment of a City Council team employed to deliver the support.

This would mean the Council needs to directly provide many services which are currently delivered by commissioned service providers. This option would see the Council delivering all services including support.

This option is not recommended because the complex and specialist nature of providing good quality floating and accommodation-based support services especially for rough sleepers and ex-offenders is expertise not currently in-house and the availability of a range of direct access and supported accommodation requires expertise that partner organisations are better placed to provide. Additionally, the Council would need to source accommodation units of sufficient volume for three of the service Lots (Lots 2, 3 and 5).

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 The initial overarching principles of each contract specification have been informed by targeted engagement with service users, existing service providers and other relevant stakeholders and groups. Such engagement has included:

- Meetings and discussions with existing service providers to understand both benefits and issues with the existing service provisions.
- Registered Providers.
- The Coventry Homelessness Forum
- Internal partners - Cross directorate expertise within the Council to ensure it is fully reflective and complementary to a range of existing corporate strategies and procurement exercises. Prime examples include the commissioned Drug and Alcohol Support Services and related Strategy and Domestic Abuse commissioned services.
- Existing service users – drawing on feedback through existing service providers and forums

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

Should recommendations be improved, a tender exercise is anticipated to commence in August 2025 with contract mobilisation over October 2025 – April 2026 and with contract commencement April 2026.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial Implications

The budget allocated for the recommissioning of the contract is an annual £2.469 million, and this will be met from the overall core budget allocation for Housing & Homelessness Service. Sufficient flexibility will be built into the contract structure and procurement process to deal with fluctuations and changes in levels of need over the contract term.

5.2. Legal Implications

The Council will conduct the procurement using the most appropriate procedure under the Procurement Act 2023 and/or other applicable procurement legislation for the purposes of procuring the services described in this report. Tender documents will

need to be published in accordance with the Council's Rules for Contract and via the Find-a-Tender Service (Central Digital Platform).

As described in the main body of this report, the Tender has been divided into a number of individual Lots. Tenderers will be invited to bid for one, some or all Lots. The highest scoring tenderer for the most advantageous tender option for the respective Lot will be recommended for award of that contract.

Contracts of the value set out in this report are regarded as key decisions under the Council's Constitution and as such require a decision needs to be taken by the Council's Cabinet. Additionally, as the value of the new contracts are expected to be over the UK public procurement thresholds, the Contract must be advertised via the Find-a-Tender in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and/or other applicable procurement legislation.

Whilst there will be no Council staff affected by the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) as amended, there will be TUPE implications for staff employed by the current providers. The Council should be made aware of any TUPE implications which will become clearer through the tender process.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

The commissioning of the housing related support services will ensure:

- Accommodation and support services directly support the One Coventry Plan and many of the wider outcomes of the Council's partners including those related to community safety, health and wellbeing and social inclusion.
- The services will contribute towards the One Coventry Plan priorities of improving outcomes and tackling inequalities for people who are experiencing homelessness.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

The main risk is that we fail to meet the required timescales thus resulting in failure to award the new contracts in time for 1st April 2026 start date.

To mitigate the risk, a detailed project plan has been developed which will be monitored by the Head of Housing. A 4-month mobilisation period is also realistic for the services required.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The Housing and Homelessness Commissioning and Partnerships Lead will be required to manage the re-commissioning and procurement process and the mobilisation and subsequent delivery of the contracts once awarded. Sufficient resources are currently in place to do this effectively.

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

Owing to the nature of the services provided, service users from certain demographic groups are more likely to come into contact with the services. The 2024 Homelessness Review provides full details in terms of demand from certain demographics groups.

A full EIA is being completed, and we believe there will be no new or disproportional impact on any group or people with protected characteristics compared with the previous impact.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

None

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

Providing good quality housing and homelessness services enables effective partnership working

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