

Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 17 April 2024
Subject:	Review of Neighbourhood Housing Support Services- Complex Needs and Floating Support/Dispersed accommodation services	
Report of	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care	

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report requests the approval for the Community Commissioning division to commence in reviewing two lots of housing related support provision in Neighbourhood Housing Support services. These lots are:
- **Adullam Homes**- Bury Bridges- Complex Needs Accommodation
 - **Calico Enterprise**- Bury Gateway- Floating Support/Dispersed Accommodation
- 1.2 Housing related support services, which includes supported accommodation and floating support services are essential in breaking cycles of homelessness, by providing bespoke support packages to develop independent living skills and improving quality of life. This type of housing is essential to ensure people address their support needs to move forward in their lives.
- 1.3 Adullam Homes was commissioned on 1st October 2019 for 3 years (with the option to extend for 2 years), to deliver 30 units of communal accommodation facilities, available to those with higher levels of mental health needs and exhibiting chaotic / complex behaviours. Due to saving demands, the contract value was reduced from £410,216.59 to £338,343.48 per annum, generating a saving to the Council of £71,873.11 per annum, a total of £143,746.22 over a 2-year period.
- 1.4 Calico Enterprise was commissioned to deliver floating support/dispersed accommodation in 2019. The service included delivering 875 hours of support to households regardless of tenure and 30 units of accommodation for single homeless and childless couples. Due to savings demands reduce the contract value from £634,970.77 to £599,970.77 per annum- saving the Council £70,000 over a 2-year period.
- 1.5 Calico Enterprise contractual arrangements end on the 31st June 2024. Adullam arrangements end on the 31st September 2024.
- 1.6 The combined budget for both services is £938,314.25 pa.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 The recommendations are for Cabinet to:

- Extend contractual arrangements of Calico Enterprise from the 1st July 2024 to 31st September 2024 to align with the end of contractual arrangements of Adullam at a cost of £151,233
- Agree to reviewing of both services.
- Agree to the procurement of the services to a specification informed by the review.
- Note Cabinet will receive a further report setting out recommendations as to preferred bidders and costs.

3. Reasons for recommendation(s)

3.1 There has been a significant increase of single people that require tenancy related service and households that requires interventions to sustain their tenancies.

3.2 Rough sleeping has increased locally, due numerous factors which include:

- Increase in the number of people with complex needs (mental health, substance misuse and offending behaviours)
- Expensive housing market in the borough contributing to lack of access to the private rented sector and finite support of social housing.
- Regional and local challenges regarding providing accommodation to increased asylum and refugee presentations due to government policy and leave to remain cases.
- Cost of living has increased which has meant that more households are struggling to sustain their tenancies.

There needs to be a review to ensure that supported accommodation for single people and floating support for household reflects these challenges. Services must be fit for purpose, to prevent people from failing in their tenancies and provide housing solutions that develop independent living skills and improve quality of life in the community.

4 Alternative options considered and rejected

4.1 Procurement rules do not allow any further extensions to contractual arrangements. Therefore, it provides an opportunity to review the current services and housing and homelessness pressures in Bury.

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5 Background

- 5.1 The Community Commissioning division commissioned a range of Neighbourhood Support Housing services in 2018/19. Each service area was commissioned as separate lot 1 – 4. Lot 1 Complex Needs Service was awarded to Adullam Homes and Lot 2 floating support was awarded to Calico Enterprise.
- 5.2 Lot 3 domestic abuse service was commissioned with contract management transferred to another department in the authority. Lot 4 Young Peoples (16-25) end their contractual arrangements in April 2025, which is still managed by Community Commissioning.
- 5.3 The Council has a statutory duty to support people that are homeless in the Borough and the Council must have a robust Homelessness Strategy to clearly demonstrate how it will meet the required statutory duties and obligations for homelessness in the Borough.
- 5.4 The Council has core strategies that underpin the approach to preventing homelessness. In 2020 a new Housing Strategy was agreed which included a commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024. The Homelessness Strategy, approved in 2022 details the ethos of prevention, early intervention and the targeting of public service resources. The Bury Housing for Adults with Additional Needs Strategy outlines the need to increase the number of beds / units in Bury for people with Adult Social Care needs, which the complex needs service and floating support service also addresses.
- 5.5 **Evidence of housing need due to homelessness/risk of homelessness.**
- 5.6 Since April 2021, demand for statutory homeless services in Bury has increased by over 46% and this is expected to increase further because of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the current 'cost of living' crisis.
- 5.7 The number of recorded rough sleepers has been increasing year on year, from 20 in 2019/20 to 140 in 2022/23. However, these figures are for customers who have been provided non statutory emergency accommodation. It is becoming more challenging to accommodate and support this cohort due to the increasing complexities of their support needs and the limitations of the existing resources and accommodation available.
- 5.8 The Homelessness and Housing Options service is currently supporting and assisting 964 homeless cases and on average the Council receives around 250 homeless self-referrals/new cases per month (a 300% increase from before Covid-19) and over 60 "duty to refer" cases each month. The overall number of homeless presentations to the Council has been increasing significantly year on year, from 2,933 in 2018/19 to 4,044 in 2022/23.
- 5.9 Over the last 24 months demand for statutory services in Bury has increased by over 46% and is expected to increase further.

- 5.10 The complexity and number of asylum seekers, new arrivals and refugees continue to increase within the Borough as the Government introduce and implement new and changed approaches to managing migration.
- 5.11 Due to the implementation of the Afghan Bridging hotel scheme it is estimated that that 82 singles and 23 families will initially be referred to the Homelessness and Housing Options Service. There is evidence that rough sleeper numbers are also increasing due to migration.
- 5.12 Circa 440 asylum seekers are accommodated in Serco / Home office accommodation within the Borough using circa 150 Private Rented Sector properties. This is projected to increase by 100% to 970. It is expected that a high percentage will access homelessness services following Home office asylum decision – either negative or positive decisions.
- 5.13 Home office fast track system to determine immigration status – projected 70 new cases within Bury over the next 3+ months in addition to existing numbers.
- 5.14 The reason for this increase in the incidence and presentation of homelessness cases includes:
- Complex and chaotic lifestyles can result in an inability to sustain tenancies and result in evictions. Most homeless people have experienced some combination of financial, emotional, health or substance abuse.
 - Mortgage repossessions is increasing due to the cost-of-living crisis. The full impact of the crisis is yet to become evident, however the expectation over the next 12 months projects numbers increasing, particularly amongst working families/individuals due to their reducing ability to pay their mortgages and rent along with the associated other housing and general costs.
 - Increased Private Rented Sector (PRS) evictions and Section 21 notices. This is mainly due to affordability issues but also landlords looking at other options due to recent Government policies/intervention that now make it more difficult for landlords in the PRS to operate and it is now less financially attractive to rent properties.
 - The asylum seekers and refugee crisis that has had an impact on both statutory and non-statutory services and will likely continue, in the future in terms of increasing number of people presenting as homeless and many with complex support needs.
 - The lack of available and affordable 'move-on' properties because of the limited housing supply in Bury, means people are staying longer in emergency/temporary accommodation, which limits its availability for other people. The average length of stay in emergency/temporary accommodation is currently 169 days with some families in temporary accommodation for over 12 months.

- 5.15 The Council, despite its extensive range of homelessness prevention activities and effective homelessness strategy, has recently in 2023 had to start using 'bed and breakfast' accommodation due to the increase in homelessness cases and the limited capacity of existing accommodation resources. This is expensive but also not good practice for our customers.
- 5.16 Over the last 1-2 years statutory accommodation has been operating at full capacity. The numbers of individuals/households using temporary accommodation has been increasing year on year.
- 5.17 There were 50 households in temporary accommodation in November 2019; by November 2022 this had increased to 108 households. The lack of affordable and suitable accommodation means that average stay in this temporary accommodation was 169 days in 2021/22 up from 85 days in 2020/21, i.e. an increase of over 100% over that period.
- 5.18 There is currently no slack capacity and, despite the Council's policy of not using 'bed and breakfast' accommodation, over the last few months it has had no alternatives other than to use bed and breakfast accommodation on a short-term basis, which is also expensive to provide.

6 Highlights from previous extension reviews of Neighbourhood Housing Support Services

- 6.1 Feedback from previous reviews during the length of the service has identified the following key issues and headlines in relation to the current range of commissioned provision.
- There is significant demand for all the commissioned supported housing services, i.e. current supply is at full capacity in relation to need.
 - The floating support and dispersed supported housing services were reviewed by the Council in spring 2023. This identified that:
 - The number of people on the waiting list for dispersed accommodation indicates that demand is exceeding supply.
 - The outcomes achieved are clearly improving people's lives by preventing homelessness, building resilience, maximising income and improving health and wellbeing in local communities.
 - The Complex Needs service reviews identified that the shared housing model should be reconsidered. The nature of complex needs means that sharing with others may trigger and intensify challenging behaviours particularly where support levels available would not be as high.
 - The referral and access arrangements should be remodelled, in relation to the current Central Access Point arrangements.
 - Feedback from residents, providers and stakeholders indicates that the main barrier to moving on from supported housing services to independent living is a lack of available move on properties in the social housing sector, and a lack of access to private rented sector housing due to affordability barriers.
 - The current dispersed model of providing statutory temporary accommodation for single people in Bury is not sustainable.

- Feedback from the homeless team indicates that the current A Bed Every Night (ABEN) service model is not effective in addressing the complex support needs of many rough sleepers and other single homeless people.
- Feedback from the homeless team and providers indicates that the routes into different types of accommodation for single homeless people with complex support needs should be redesigned so that there is a more effective 'pathway' from referral through a range of housing options.
- There is a need for additional self-contained supported housing, as well as shared supported housing provision.
- The support available in some of the supported housing services includes a 'floating' nighttime staff member. Whilst this will be sustainable for many clients, some homeless people with complex support need are likely to require 24/7 support.
- There is an ongoing need for access to floating support to assist people to maintain a tenancy once they move into general needs housing.

7 Aligning Lot 1 and 2 contractual arrangements

- 7.1 The services of both lots do not align to each other regarding contract end (Calico- 31st June 2024 and Adullam- 31st September 2024). This is problematic as both services are closely linked in their role and function i.e. to prevent homelessness and develop independent living skills.
- 7.2 Registered Housing Providers deliver housing to both services on lease arrangements, with a combined housing portfolio of circa 62 units of accommodation. Until there is a clear understanding of what needs to be commissioned, there is a risk that housing models available do not reflect the demand regarding needs of residents.
- 7.3 There is a potential to bring both services together into more effective commissioning that provide a one service approach to housing related to support for people and household that are homeless or at risk of losing their tenancies.
- 7.4 Clearly, evidence suggest that the number of people that have complex needs has significantly increased over the last 3 years. This has meant that both services have had to accommodate people with complex needs to ensure that people are accommodated and supported i.e. demand has dictated services need to provide a similar accommodation/support service.
- 7.5 Both services have a wider range of shared accommodation, which needs to be reviewed, as the demand of people that require self-contained accommodation has increased due to risk associated with sharing communal facilities with others.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

- 8 The Housing for Adults with Additional Needs Strategy aligns to the Bury Let's Do It Strategy which provides the vision to enable people of all ages to live

well within their neighbourhoods, supported by the integration of public services with our neighbourhood hubs.

Local

- Local housing options for local people
- Developing and regenerating the unique townships where people live
- Prevent the need for Bury residents to have to move out of the borough to have their needs met.
- Bring Bury residents back in borough if its right for them.
- Work with local developer's and providers who know the local area.

Enterprise

- Encouraging enterprise to drive inclusive economic growth through our business community.
- Enterprising innovation and creative solutions to current housing issues.
- Be bold in our housing solutions and future developments in Bury.

Together

- Working together to design quality, fit for purpose homes for people with additional needs in Bury.
- Working together with service users, their cares and families to shape accommodation options and design.
- Working together to ensure inclusivity throughout the housing agenda.

Strengths

- Taking a strength- based approach to recognise the assets and strengths of communities.
- Recognising the strengths of individuals enabling their independence, choice, and control for housing.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

No EIA required at this stage due to extension of current contract arrangements. EIA will be required on the outcome of the proposed review.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

An environmental impact assessment has not been undertaken for the review, as there are no implications or carbon impact of this decision.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Increase of demand of people who having housing/homelessness problems	The review will consider the pathways which are required to ensure early

accessing the service and have complex needs (mental health, offending histories, and substance misuse problems).	identification of people/households that require housing related support. This will include different ways of working to develop support packages which are not only tenancy related but provide interventions for other aspects of people lives to develop independence and resilience.
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Legal Implications:

A short-term extension of this kind to align one contract with another contract’s termination date is permissible without a formal exemption. That is provided it is for the specific purpose of enabling an overall review of the provision followed by a procurement. In legal terms this is a holding over arrangement, but it can only be utilised in extremely limited circumstances such as this case.

Financial Implications:

The costs for letting this contract were provided for in the Medium Term Financial Plan agreed by Council in February 2024.

As part of the monthly budget monitoring cycle, Finance and Budget holders will track the expenditure linked to contract/s costs ensuring that all expenditure aligns to the funding provided. Any financial risks/pressures identified will be highlighted to the Director of Adult Social Services as part of the monthly budget monitoring cycle whereby an action plan will be deployed to mitigate any financial risks/ pressures.

Appendices:

None.

Background papers:

None.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
ABEN	A Bed Every Night
PRS	Private Rented Sector