

Cabinet – 12 December 2018

Young Persons Housing Services

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew – Regeneration
Councillor Wilson – Children’s and Health and Wellbeing

Related portfolios:

Service: Money Home Job (MHJ) / Children’s Services

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary

1.1 The Council want to provide Housing choice and opportunity for young people in Walsall. The number of young people aged 16-29 experiencing homelessness has increased and the complexities of the issues faced by young people have also changed. The Council want to provide a series of housing options which can be available to young people based on what their needs are and help them transition into independent living. A procurement exercise in partnership with MHJ and Children’s Services aims to provide a clear pathway for young people and appreciates the importance of being able to deliver flexible and tailored services for young people.

1.2 Approval is sought within this Cabinet report for the award of contracts for 2 Lots of Young Persons Housing services (Lot 1 and Lot 2):

- Lot 1 - A 15 unit supported lodgings scheme with a Night/Day stop service
- Lot 2 - Housing accommodation for up to 76 young people with medium to low level needs
- Lot 3 was part of the Procurement process for Supported accommodation for up to 21 young people with more high level complex needs and more specialised support. This Lot also builds in a support/community outreach support bank which is used to help transition young people into independent living. Officers are still in the process of evaluating Lot 3 and the outcome of which will be updated in a Supplementary Paper to be provided in due course.

The contracts are for the 2 year period from 1 January 2019 until 31 December 2020, with the option to extend by 2 additional periods of 12 months each at the sole discretion of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council. The contract will be awarded following the conclusion of an open procurement process.

1.3 The 3 Lots reflect Young Persons Housing Services which are being delivered as current contracts for the MHJ service, but will include additional placements and

services for Children's Services under a Council Right for Children Transformation initiative.

- 1.4 A public advertisement was placed on the Council's e-tendering portal 'Intend', on 17 October 2018 and closed on 16 November 2018. An Open Procedure Procurement Process was used to invite tenders for the provision of Young Persons Housing Services across 3 Lots.
- 1.4 This cabinet report should be read and considered in conjunction with the 'Award of new contract for provision of a Young Persons Housing Services' Private Session Agenda Cabinet Report.
- 1.5 This is a key decision because it exceeds the threshold for significant expenditure and affects more than 2 wards.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That following consideration of this cabinet report and the 'Award of new contracts for provision of Young Persons Housing Services' Private Session Agenda Cabinet Report, that Cabinet approves the award of the new contracts for
 - A 15 unit supported lodgings scheme with a Night/Day stop service to YMCA with an estimated value of £395,320 over the maximum 4 year term of the proposed contract
 - Housing accommodation for 76 young people with medium to low level needs to whg with an estimated value of £1,137,822 over the maximum 4 year term of the contract
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, to enter into a new contract/s to deliver the 'Young Persons Housing Services' by using the most appropriate procedures and to subsequently authorise the sealing or signing of any contract, deeds or other related documents for such services (including any necessary temporary extensions of the existing contracts).
- 2.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation to extend existing contracts as necessary to ensure continuity of services while any necessary staff transfer and contract implementation requirements are undertaken.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 The Council aims to provide young people in Walsall with access to a range of accommodation to meet their individual needs. The Council understand the importance of ensuring the right accommodation is available to young people at the right time to ensure they are able to transition to independent living and avoid disruption. MHJ currently has 3 contracts with different providers which help different young people depending on what their needs are to secure accommodation in the future. Children's Service currently uses a mixture of local providers and access accommodation for young people through the West

Midlands Framework agreement. The Council has responsibility to house children through the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, which impose duties on local authorities to support certain categories of looked-after children and care leavers. In providing accommodation for care leavers, local authorities should:

- avoid moving and disrupting young people who are settled
- assess young people's needs and prepare them for any move
- offer a choice of accommodation (where practicable)
- provide a support package to go with the accommodation
- have a contingency plan in case accommodation arrangements break down

The Housing Act 1996 sets out requirements on local authorities to assist people who are homeless. Part 7 requires that local authorities secure suitable accommodation for a person who meets all of the four statutory tests. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) came into force in April 2018, and puts an important focus on the prevention of homelessness. As part of the legislation, local authorities have more responsibility to support those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

3.2 Currently the MHJ service operates 3 contracts as detailed in table 1 below.

Table 1: Current Young Persons Housing Services contract

MHJ contract	Current provider	Start Date	Total spend (£)	Current contract end date (including extensions)
Supported lodgings for young people and Night Stop/ Day Stop variation	YMCA	January 2016	£286,073	03/01/2019
Temporary accommodation for young people	whg	March 2015	£250,560	25/12/2018
Specialist accommodation and Support for young people	St Basil	June 2016	£243,039	31/12/2018

3.3 Children's services current provision includes the use of the Council's Rivers House temporary accommodation. It also includes use of the West Midlands Regional contract, which is jointly commissioned by 13 local authorities with access to 82 providers across the region. There is also the use of St Basils which is commissioned by MHJ with a bolt on contract for Children's Services which provide individual units of accommodation accessible to care leavers aged 16/17 years. The new contracts will enable Children's services to bring children placed on the West Midlands Framework back into Walsall and also provide an additional pathway for young people to be housed in Walsall.

3.4 Our Walsall Right for Children vision is setting out our commitment to ensure that the right young people are in the right place with the right support for as long as it needed. The Council want to ensure that our most vulnerable young people

(including young people leaving care) who need supported accommodation can continue to live in Walsall with quality support available. This will enable them to acquire the skills to live independently, and make a successful transition to independent living.

- 3.5 The intention is to provide a range of Supported Housing accommodation and support in Walsall for Young People who are aged 16-25 years and assessed as vulnerable by the Children in Need Service and for who the Local Authority Children's Services has a Statutory duty. This includes Children Looked After aged 16-17 years and Care Leavers aged 18-25 years. These services will also accommodate and support those homeless young people aged 16-29 years. Children's services and the MHJ Team are working together through a Transformation initiative and has carried out a procurement exercise to contract for services jointly across 3 Lots.
- Lot 1 – This will provide Supported Lodging units in a host family setting and a Night Stop and a Day Stop service. The Night and Day Stop service provides a temporary place for the young person before they are either accommodated elsewhere or move to the supported lodging units. The supported lodgings units, Night and Day stop placements are with host families who have been trained by the provider to help the young person achieve crucial outcomes like going into employment, education or training. This service will give young people an opportunity to live in a safe, stable, caring and homely environment where they are safeguarded and their physical, mental and emotional welfare is promoted.
 - Lot 2- The primary purpose of the range of provision will be to prepare young people for independent living by building up their skills and resilience in areas such as payment of bills, education and employment or training. The provider will make available a total of up to 76 properties (up to 60 for MHJ and up to 16 for Children's Services) with intensive housing management which will be available for young people. The young people will also need some floating support to help succeed in their tenancy. Once the young person has the skills and capabilities to sustain their own tenancy, the provider will convert the tenancy to a standard tenancy. This means the young person does not have to move around or have any further disruption. The young person will be encouraged to take part and integrate into their local community and link into key services.
 - Lot 3 – this lot is targeted at young people with more complex needs who need greater support. The provider will offer up to 21 units of accommodation for young people with high or complex needs with 24/7 onsite support. These 21 units will be split as up to 11 for Children's Services and up to 10 for MHJ. In addition to their 10 accommodated units MHJ will also have floating support for up to an additional 5 young people with complex needs to help them achieve skills needed to successfully sustain independent accommodation. Lot 3 also includes a bank of 9000 hours of support for Children's Services which will be used to provide additional bespoke support for young people housed across lot 2 and 3.

3.6 Young People's Pathway

The Council will be working with the successful providers to ensure clear referral pathways and communication protocols are in place to ensure young people are placed appropriately and issues are resolved proactively reducing placement breakdowns. In addition our commissioned providers will be required to provide a good service with a Restorative Practice/relationship based approach and within a Psychologically Informed Environment enabling young people to better understand the relationship between their emotions and behaviours in a nurturing rather than a transactional setting.

4. Council Corporate Plan priorities

The Young Persons Housing Services will contribute to the Council's priorities as follows:

- 4.1 Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses – homelessness and lack of access to settled and supported housing remains a key barrier to accessing employment, and so the proposed Service can help increase employment prospects and ensure care leavers are economically active citizens of their community.
- 4.2 People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities – preventing homelessness and advice and support in maintaining a tenancy can promote independence and can improve mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- 4.3 Internal focus, all council services are efficient and effective – transformational approach to joint commissioning between MHJ and Children's Services.
- 4.4 Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well – preventing homelessness and providing appropriate support for young people is essential to keep them safe happy and healthy. The right children being accommodated in Walsall, for the right length of time for as long as it needed so they can make a successful transition to independent living
- 4.5 Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion – ensuring that young people have the right housing to meet their needs, and that they are able to remain in these homes, sustain tenancies and be part of their community.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 Risk to continuity of service - as there may be a gap between the end of the existing contract and commencement of the new contract, there may be a need to offer a small extension of the current contracts to ensure continuity of service.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The total value of the Young Persons Housing Services contracts for Lots 1 and Lot 2 will be approximately £1.5 M over 4 years.
- 6.2 Such expenditure will be funded through MHJ and Children's Services. For Children's services the costs will be funded through current Looked After Children placement budget.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The Council has responsibility to house Children through the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, which impose duties on local authorities to support certain categories of looked-after children and care leavers. The Housing Act 1996 sets out requirements on local authorities to assist people who are homeless. Part 7 requires that local authorities secure suitable accommodation for a person who meets all of the four statutory tests. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 local authorities have more responsibility to support those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homelessness.
- 7.2 Legal Services have worked with the relevant Council Officers to ensure compliance with the applicable requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and to prepare an appropriate written contract. This will then be executed by the successful tenderers and the Council in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules.

8. Procurement Implications/Social Value

8.1. Advertisement and Tenders Received

A public advertisement was placed on the Council's e-tendering portal 'Intend', on 17 October 2018. An Open Procedure Procurement Process was used to invite tenders for the provision of Young Persons Housing Services across 3 Lots. The closing date for this procurement was 16 November 2018.

8.2. Evaluation

Evaluation by officers from MHJ and Children's Services was completed on 20 November 2018. Part of the Lots were also evaluated by a panel of service users on 19 November 2018 who had used some of the young persons services and some were also care leavers. A further evaluation is due for 5 December 2018 to discuss Lot 3 and will be detailed in the Supplementary Paper.

8.3 Social Value

A social value question (scored at 5%) was placed within the Invitation to Tender for Providers to explore how they would provide social value within these contracts. Both successful bidders were able to demonstrate a contribution to Economic Improvements; Environmental and Social contributions.

9. Property implications

There are no property implications for the Council

10. Health and wellbeing implications

The requirements in the Specification/s are in full accordance with the Marmot objectives. The prevention of homelessness and support to young people helps to ensure that young people have the best environment to maximise their potential. The security of a roof over their head helps provides young people with the best environment to study and / or access employment. Preventing and relieving homelessness contributes to the likelihood of a healthier environment for households to live in.

11. Staffing implications

There are currently 8 members of staff in the MHJ Young Persons Team who will continue to provide low level support to those young people placed by MHJ whose accommodation and support arrangements will be the subject of these contracts. This resource is not included in the tendered service and is not dependent on the outcome of the tender.

12. Reducing inequalities

12.1 The implications for reducing inequalities have been taken into account and an Equality Impact Assessment (**Appendix A**) has been completed.

12.2 Walsall's Homelessness Review found that youth homelessness has risen by 47% over the 5 year period of the review. The Young Persons Housing Services are expected to have positive equal opportunities implications, in that it seeks to ensure that homelessness is prevented wherever possible for young people and a clear pathway is available for them.

13. Consultation

Consultation has taken place in line with the Council's statutory duty to consult and has included the following:

- Data analysis of current service users
- Focus groups with key front line staff
- MHJ has as part of on-going quarterly monitoring spoken to young people about their experiences of the services.
- As part of the Transformation initiative officers also sought the input of service users as part of the procurement process which included being part of the scoring panel.

Background papers

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