

OFFICER DECISION FORM**DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:** Director of Regeneration and Place**KEY DECISION YES****DIRECTORATE: REGENERATION & PLACE****WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

SUBJECT: AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR HOMELESS 16 & 17 YEAR OLDS.

1.0 DECISION:

1.1 The Director of Regeneration & Place has decided to approve the award of a one (1) year contract, with two (2) twelve-month options to extend, in relation to the delivery of a Supported Housing Service for homeless 16 & 17 year olds commencing on the 11th July and running until the 10th July 2027 (if all extension options are taken) to Forum Housing Association within the approved budget and as the highest scoring tenderer in accordance with the Most Economically Advantageous Tender criteria.

2.0 REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 2.1** In respect of 16- & 17-year-old people who present as homeless, the Council is statutorily obligated to ensure that that any temporary accommodation provided for this cohort is suitable and appropriate to their needs and offers the availability of on-site support.
- 2.2** The current contract for the delivery of a Supported Housing Service for homeless 16- & 17-year-olds, provided by Forum Housing Association, is due to expire on the 10th July 2024.
- 2.3** A procurement exercise has been completed in accordance with Council Contract Procedure Rules. The tender was evaluated against a 25% contract price, 15% Social Value and 60% contract quality ratio.
- 2.4** The successful bidder met all the quality requirements within the allocated budget.

3.0 STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

3.1 It has been necessary to recommission this service to comply with Public Contract Regulations and Wirral Council Contract Procedure Rules. The supplier selection process has been conducted in accordance with The Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Wirral Council Contract Procedure Rules.

4.0 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

4.1 There were no interests declared.

Signed:

Officer: Marc Cole

Title: Interim Director of Regeneration & Place

Date: 9th July 2024

A list of background papers on this issue is held with:

Contact Officer: Sheila Jacobs

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REPORT TITLE:	AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR HOMELESS 16- & 17-YEAR OLDS.
REPORT OF:	SHEILA JACOBS, SUPPORTED HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SNR MGR

REPORT SUMMARY

Under Housing Law, the Council has a statutory duty to secure suitable accommodation for an individual presenting as homeless if there is reason to believe they are homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need. Those in priority need include young people aged 16-17.

For adults, the definition of 'suitable accommodation' may include emergency housing such as B&B accommodation, or temporary housing such as standard residential accommodation. However, for homeless 16- & 17-year-olds, statutory guidance states that B&B accommodation is never suitable for this cohort, and that it is not usually appropriate to place any 16- or 17-year-old in temporary accommodation that does not provide on-site support.

In March 2024, the Housing Department undertook a competitive procurement process for the delivery of a Supported Housing Service for homeless 16/17-year-olds. The contract term for this service will be for one (1) year from 11th July 2024 until 10th July 2025 with the option to extend the contract by a further two (2) years. The total identified global budget for the potential maximum 3 years of the contract will be £1,330,314.

This report is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Assistance Director of Housing Services is recommended to:

1. Endorse the competitive procurement process undertaken for the delivery of a Supported Housing Service for homeless 16- & 17-year-olds.
2. Approve the award of a contract for the delivery of this service to Forum Housing Association

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Supported housing assists people to develop the skills they need to live independently and forms a crucial pathway for people, preventing homelessness and promoting independence. This is central to the Council's Corporate vision for preventing vulnerable people becoming socially excluded and isolated. The provision of housing support services in supported housing works to reduce repeat homelessness and tenancy failure, generating financial savings in these areas.
- 1.2 As the local housing authority, the Council has a duty to assess and accommodate if there is reason to believe an individual is homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need. Those in priority need include young people aged 16-17, those leaving care and any young person with significant health issues that means they are vulnerable. Across all departments there is a wider corporate parenting responsibility owed to children under the age of 18.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to reducing homelessness for young people and care leavers in Wirral and this is outlined in the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The following options were considered:
- 2.2 Do nothing – The Council could elect not to commission a supported housing service for homeless 16- & 17-year-olds. This would, however, place the Council in breach of its statutory obligations under both Housing and Children's Acts. The option to do nothing was therefore considered and rejected.
- 2.3 Extend existing contract – The extension periods available within the existing contract has been exhausted and, as such, this was not a viable option.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2018, the (then) Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Education (DfE) released joint statutory guidance surrounding the prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation.
- 3.2 The statutory guidance states that any accommodation provided must be suitable for the young person's needs. It further states that B&B type accommodation is

considered unsuitable emergency accommodation for this group and, any temporary accommodation provided, must make available appropriate on-site support.

- 3.3 The Council's Housing Options Service operates a joint working protocol with the Children's & Young Person's Department for the assessment of homeless 16- and 17-year-olds. The principal aim of the protocol is to ensure that our most vulnerable young people in the borough are supported. This varies from young people who may be at risk and /or leaving care and /or at risk of re-offending with a range of complex support needs. It also includes young people who may be homeless or excluded from the family or parental home where mediation has failed or require a supported environment as a step towards independent living. The protocol also ensures that our 16- & 17-year-old young people who are at risk of homelessness are assessed, housed and offered intense support to meet their needs and mediated back to their families if suitable.
- 3.4 In this regard, availability of an appropriate supported housing service is critical in ensuring the accommodation and support needs of homeless 16- and 17-year-olds can be responded to and addressed; and to meet the Council's statutory obligations.
- 3.5 The key objective of such services are to enable young people to develop the independent living skills required to move on to longer term stable housing, explore life choice options, and become independent.
- 3.6 These Services also aim to achieve the following desired outcomes for young people:
- Enabling young people to continue to work towards independence and achieve better life outcomes.
 - Maximising and improving opportunities for accessing education, training and employment,
 - Improving access to health services and ensuring young people are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles.
 - Decreasing criminal activity and anti-social behaviour by supporting young people to address offending and re-offending behaviour.
 - Supporting young people to understand and access sources of assistance in the community that will be able to continue to assist them in the future.
 - Improving and encouraging the development of skills and confidence to negotiate safe healthy relationships and support young people to tackle issues affecting their physical, mental and sexual health and wellbeing.
 - Promoting responsible parenting, enabling young people to make informed decisions as to parenthood and where required access appropriate accommodation.

- 3.7 In March 2024, an open tender process was carried out in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Standing Orders.
- 3.8 The Invitation to Tender (ITT) and supporting documents were published via the North-West's Local Authority Procurement Portal 'The Chest', to enable potential tenderers to access the tender and submit documents electronically.
- 3.9 All tenders were checked for compliance with minimum requirements including mandatory and discretionary exclusion criteria before quality and price evaluations.
- 3.10 Tenders were evaluated using the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) with a split of 60% quality, 25% price and 15% Social Value. The tender evaluation criteria and weighting were set out in the tender documents and clarified during the tendering process. Quality, Price and Social Value scores were added together to determine the Most Economically Advantageous Tender.
- 3.11 Following evaluation, the Most Economically Advantageous Tender was determined to have been submitted by Forum Housing Association.
- 3.12 Forum Housing Association have provided accommodation and support to the most vulnerable members of our society in Wirral, for over 50 years. In addition to delivering services in Wirral, the organisation also provides similar services to homeless people in Warrington and Cheshire. At the time of undertaking the procurement activity, Forum Housing Association were the incumbent suppliers of Supported Housing for homeless 16- & 17-year-olds.
- 3.13 The Scheme proposed by Forum Housing Association, offers 24-hour on-site staff support across a range of sites in the borough for up to 24 homeless young people, at any time. In addition to this, the Service will operate five 'Assessment Beds' for any young person that presents as homeless in an emergency.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost of this procurement exercise will be £1,330,314 if all extension options are taken. This will be met through the Supported Housing Programme Budget. No other costs are envisaged.
- 4.2 Delivery of this contract will realise savings for other budget streams both internally and externally to the Council, linked to the prevention of homelessness i.e. Children's Social Care, Police, NHS etc.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Department for Education (2018) Joint statutory guidance *'Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation'* states that any temporary accommodation provided for this cohort must be suitable and appropriate to their needs and offer the availability of on-site support.
- 5.2 This contract is a "public services contract" for the purposes of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as it is above the relevant threshold of £189,330. The Council has complied with these rules by undertaking a competitive procurement under the competitive procedure. This is a high value contract under the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSO). The requirements of the CSO have been complied with by carrying out a two-stage tender process involving the shortlisting of suppliers following receipt of selection questionnaires and a competitive tendering process.
- 5.3 The tenders have been assessed on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) scoring. The meaning of MEAT is currently governed by the Public Contract Regulations 2015. As criteria for the assessment of tenders on the basis of the best price-quality ratio, MEAT will always predominantly contain a cost or quality element, but the MEAT criteria may also include assessment on the basis of various other criteria linked to the subject-matter of the contract in question, including lifecycle costing and environmental or social aspects.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no additional resource implications associated with the awarding of this contract.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to ensure the availability of suitable accommodation with on-site support for homeless 16- & 17-year-olds, will place the Council in breach of its statutory obligations.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Ongoing consultation with Childrens and Young Persons Department has taken place regarding the requirement for Supported Housing for Homeless 16- & 17-year-olds.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact

Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 During the procurement process, bids were evaluated on any social value added to the service which includes potential impact of the contract on Wirral's climate and environment. Social value will be monitored as part of routine contract and performance management arrangements.

10.2 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no significant impact on emissions of greenhouse gases.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 A component of the competitive procurement exercise is that bidders are required to identify the potential social value that can be achieved through the delivery of the contract, through a series of indicators.

11.2 Forum Housing Association have identified that over £500,000 of Social Value to the Wirral could be achieved through the delivery of this Supported Housing service.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Department for Education (2018) Joint statutory guidance 'Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation.'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation>

'Wirral Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025'

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50065564/Enc.%201%20for%20Homelessnes%20and%20Rough%20Sleeping%20Strategy%202020-2025.pdf>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
N/A	