

11 June 2018

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RE-COMMISSIONING THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SUPPORT SERVICE FOR SINGLE HOMELESS ADULTS IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval to re-commission the Support Service for Single Homeless People in Temporary Accommodation and, subject to a compliant procurement process, to award a contract for this service.

Information

Background

2. Since 2014 the Council has used part of the public health ring-fenced grant to support services contributing to public health outcomes which, until that point, had been previously funded through other Council budgets. This includes funding of the contract for the Support Service for Single Homeless People in Temporary Accommodation (the Service). This service and the steps required to secure its future provision are the subject of this report.
3. The Service currently provides Nottinghamshire-wide support for single adult homeless individuals accessing short term hostel accommodation (18 weeks support) or move-on accommodation (12 months support). This focusses on supporting service users to achieve and sustain independent tenancy, thereby reducing repeat homelessness. The contract value for this service is £922,000 per annum.
4. The current Service in Nottinghamshire was tendered in 2016 and a two year framework agreement was set up. A call-off for the service was awarded to Framework Housing Association initially for one year and extended for the second year. This 2-year contract will come to an end on 22nd September 2018. Nottinghamshire County Council's Financial Regulations and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 require the Council to re-tender the Service.

Need for Homelessness Support in Nottinghamshire

5. Being homeless has significant negative impacts on both physical and mental health. The average age of death for those who are rough sleeping or resident in homeless accommodation is 47 for men and 43 for women.

6. The level of need for support to single homeless individuals is difficult to accurately assess. Homelessness in the UK is increasing and projections indicate that it set to continue to rise over the coming years.
7. Housing authorities (lower tier and unitary local authorities) have a statutory duty to provide accommodation to those who fall within certain categories of 'priority need' and who are not deemed intentionally homeless. The criteria which determine whether someone has 'priority need' for accommodation are set out in national guidance.¹ Single homeless people and couples without children often do not qualify for housing, as they do not meet 'priority need' criteria. In 2016/17 there were 70 households² in Nottinghamshire who were eligible homeless but not in priority need (a rate of 0.2 per 1,000 households). This is lower than the England average (0.8 per 1,000 households).
8. For households which are assessed as eligible homeless and in priority need, housing authorities must secure suitable temporary accommodation until a settled home becomes available. In 2016/17 there were 100 households in temporary accommodation (a rate of 0.3 per 1,000 households). This is lower than the England average (3.3 per 1,000 households). A proportion of these will be single homeless individuals. In England in 2017, an estimated 19% of those in temporary accommodation were single persons.
9. In addition, single homeless populations will include those deemed 'intentionally' homeless, and those not known to services (for example, they have not engaged with local housing services). In 2016/17, there were 75 households in Nottinghamshire identified as eligible but intentionally homeless.
10. The annual rough sleeping count in autumn 2017 estimated 47 individuals were rough sleeping in Nottinghamshire.
11. Not all of these people will present or be referred to the Service, but taken together these figures provide an indication of the level of need in Nottinghamshire.
12. In 2017/18, the Service supported 212 service users in temporary accommodation and 275 service users in 'move-on' accommodation.

The current service provision

13. The Service is currently provided by Framework Housing Association (the Provider) and has 5 key delivery aims:
 - Prevent homelessness and repeated homelessness
 - Support people back to independence
 - Reduce the adverse effects of homelessness on individuals
 - Improve the health and wellbeing of homeless service users
 - Promote social inclusion.

¹ Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (February 2018) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>

² Household is defined as:

•one person living alone, or

•a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping – that is, sharing a living room or sitting room or at least 1 meal a day

14. The Service contributes to the following Public Health Outcomes:
 - 1.13 Re-offending levels – percentage of offenders who re-offend
 - 1.15 Statutory Homelessness – eligible homeless people not in priority need
 - 2.10 Self harm – emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm
 - 2.23 Self-reported well-being – people with a low satisfaction, low worthwhile and happiness scores and people with a high anxiety
 - 4.10 Suicide rate.
15. The Provider works with the service user to strengthen a range of skills, including self-care, living skills, managing money, motivation and taking responsibility, social networks and relationships, managing tenancy and accommodation, reducing offending and meaningful use of time. Goals for each service user will vary, based on individual needs.
16. Intensive support is provided to service users with a range of complex needs who are accessing short term hostel accommodation, for up to 18 weeks. When service users no longer need this level of support, the service works with them to support their move to longer-term supported accommodation (known as 'move-on' accommodation), which can be seen as a stepping-stone between hostels and independent living. Less intensive support is available to service users in move-on accommodation for up to 12 months.
17. Within the Service contract, the Provider supplies the accommodation units where the homelessness support is offered. There are 63 short term (18 weeks support) and 175 move-on (12 months support) accommodation units across Nottinghamshire. The provision of these accommodation units is not funded via the contract for the Service.

The current service performance

18. The intended outcome of the Service is that service users are supported to successfully achieve and sustain independent tenancy. This is monitored through the proportion of service users who are able, with the support of the service, to develop and follow through on a plan, resulting in a move to longer term accommodation (either to supported accommodation or to an independent tenancy).
19. In 2017/18 110 individuals (72.6% of all service users, against a target of 79%) in short term hostel accommodation and 138 individuals (87.9% of all service users, against a target of 79%) were supported to move on to longer-term accommodation.
20. To assess the effectiveness of the current service model, Public Health undertook a Utilisation Review in August 2017. This found that the Service is being provided appropriately to the targeted population, with access to the service meeting the eligibility criteria of the contract. Support workers are completing Individual Support Plans and reviews with service users, and are identifying and supporting physical, mental, substance misuse and social need.
21. However, there are a number of ways in which the Service could improve in terms of providing information, signposting and pathways to access wider health, wellbeing and social care services. These include for example smoking cessation advice, social prescribing programmes, Nottinghamshire Enablement Service, Inspire Library Service health and wellbeing programmes and Community Voluntary Sector programmes. This additional support will be addressed in a revised service specification.

Policy Context

Homelessness Reduction Act

22. The **Homelessness Reduction Act** ('the Act')³ came into force in April 2018. The Act is expected to widen access to assistance from local housing authorities to all households at risk of homelessness, regardless of priority need, intentionality and local connection. This will result in single homeless people being entitled to more tailored support from district housing officers. The implications of the Act for Nottinghamshire County Council are still being explored. There is an expectation of higher demands on front line housing needs teams and on accommodation, including temporary accommodation. Housing Authorities within Nottinghamshire have identified an ongoing need for support services in temporary accommodation.

Consultation on Funding Supported Housing

23. The HM Government Consultation on **Funding Supported Housing** (2017)⁴ outlines the National Statement of Expectation to commission services that meet local needs for supported housing. The consultation proposes that short-term supported housing be funded and commissioned by upper tier local authorities through a ring-fenced grant from central government. It is likely that the current level of provision of supported housing may be used as a benchmark of need in determining future funding settlements.
24. However, the implications of Funding Supported Housing for Nottinghamshire County Council are not yet fully understood. The consultation ended in December 2017 and details of specific changes are still to be published.

Funding for public health from April 2020

25. The ring fence on the Public Health Grant to local authorities has been extended to 31st March 2020. Allocations for 2018/19 and indicative allocations for 2019/20 have been published.
26. The grant allocated to Nottinghamshire County Council has seen year on year reductions. The arrangements for public health funding beyond 2020 remain uncertain.

Proposal to re-commission the Service

27. The existing two year contract will come to an end on 22nd September 2018, and cannot be extended. In order to comply with Nottinghamshire County Council's Financial Regulations and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 the Service needs to be retendered.
28. The maximum contract value for the Service is £922,000 per annum. The proposal is to tender for a maximum 4 year Framework Agreement structured as a 2 year fixed term and extension options of 2 by 12 month periods.

³ Homelessness Reduction Act (April 2018) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/167/made>

⁴ HM Government (2017) Funding Supported Housing Consultation
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655990/Funding_supported_housing_-_policy_statement_and_consultation.pdf

29. There is uncertainty around the future of the financing of public health beyond March 2020, as well as uncertainty about the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Funding Supported Housing consultation on the future need for the Service. A Framework Agreement will allow the Council to establish a contract for at least 18 months of service provision with successful provider(s), and up to a maximum of four years, should further funding be agreed from April 2020.
30. The proposed budget commitment would be for an 18 month period from 23rd September 2018 to 31st March 2020, requiring a total budget of £ 1,383,000. This budget would be provided through the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant.
31. The provider will be required to fund the provision of the accommodation units. Any provider wishing to tender for the Service would need to demonstrate they have suitable separately funded hostel and move-on accommodation, or have the agreement of an accommodation provider to deliver the Service within their supported accommodation premises.
32. On the advice of Procurement, the most appropriate procurement process would be through an open tender.
33. The plan is to commence the procurement process on the 13th of June 2018 with the intention to commence the Framework Agreement on the 22nd of September 2018.

Other Options Considered

34. Adult Social Care undertook a review of homelessness prevention services with the districts and NHS partners in 2015. This concluded that there was no suitable alternative to the Council's commissioned temporary accommodation support service for people who become homeless but who do not meet the criteria for priority re-housing under the district councils' statutory responsibilities. Therefore de-commissioning the Service would result in lack of support to improve outcomes for this vulnerable population at a time of rising need.
35. The Council Procurement Services have advised that in order to comply with Nottinghamshire County Councils Financial Regulations and the Public Contract Regulations 2015, there is no option to extend the existing service contract.

Reasons for Recommendations

36. The Service supports the needs of a vulnerable service user group who have limited alternative sources of support. The Service is the only provision of its type commissioned for the whole county, to provide support for the single homeless population.
37. The prevention of homelessness avoids the need for more costly support within social care, the NHS and Police and Emergency Services. Therefore loss of the service would incur additional costs in other parts of Nottinghamshire County Council.
38. The Government has consulted on proposals to transfer supported housing responsibilities and funding to upper tier local authorities. Therefore maintaining the current level of

investment in the Service in Nottinghamshire demonstrates the level of supported housing need, as a benchmark for future funding settlements.

39. Whilst the Homelessness Reduction Act and future expectations around Funding Supported Housing are likely to have significant implications for both statutory responsibilities and the level of homelessness need, the practical impact of these legislative and policy changes will only become clear in the course of the coming year.
40. In the interim, a support service continues to be required to meet the needs of this population.
41. In order to continue to provide such a service, the Council needs to go out to tender to ensure compliance with Nottinghamshire County Councils Financial Regulations and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Statutory and Policy Implications

This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

42. A significant proportion of people at risk of homelessness are ex-offenders and the provision of temporary accommodation reduces the likelihood of re-offending.

Financial Implications

43. This service will continue to enable the Council to avoid costs elsewhere in terms of assessment, commissioned services (including Preventative Mental Health Services) and direct payments.

The proposed budget commitment would be for an 18 month period from 23rd September 2018 to 31st March 2020, requiring a total budget of £ 1,383,000. This budget would be provided through the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant.

Implications for Service Users

44. Re-commissioning the Service allows the Council to ensure it achieves the best value for service users, through competitive tender process. A revised service specification will allow the Council to pursue improved outcomes for service users. Availability of the service, and accessibility across Nottinghamshire should be either similar to or improvement on the current provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to give approval to:

- 1) Tender for a 4 year Framework Agreement with a 18 month Call-Off Contract , for Support Service for Single Homeless People in Temporary Accommodation in Nottinghamshire
- 2) Give delegated authority to the Director of Public Health (or their authorised deputy) in consultation with the Chair of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee to award to the successful bidder(s) once the tender is concluded.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 23.05.2018)

45. Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (DG 24.05.2018)

46. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 43 of this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 'None' or start list here

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- 'All' or start list here

