

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

9TH JULY 2024

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING - COUNCILLOR ROSIE HERRING

Report Title **Broadmead Court: Commissioning of a Housing Support Provider**

Report Author **Precious Williamson – Commissioning Manager (Housing Strategy and Partnerships)**

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	12 th June 2024
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	12 th June 2024
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	12 th June 2024

List of Appendices

none

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to undertake a competitive procurement process, which will result in us entering into contract with a Support Provider to deliver a new Multiple Complex and High Needs Support Service for people with a history of rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping accommodated at Broadmead Court. This project supports the Council’s Single Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Pathway or in order to deliver against the commitments set out in the Council’s Corporate Plan, Housing Strategy 2022-2025 and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2027 on preventing homelessness and reducing rough sleeping.

- 1.2. The service will commence in late Summer/early Autumn 2025 funded by the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) and delivered through the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Homes England.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council has been awarded a grant of up to £3.2m from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Homes England for the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).
- 2.2 The successful bid is for a grant amounting up to £1,800,000 for capital costs to purchase, re-purpose and refurbish 18 units (20 bed-spaces) at Broadmead Court and revenue expenditure amounting to £1,471,453 to deliver a Multiple Complex and High Needs Support service. This funding is to deliver accommodation, with support, to address gaps in the homelessness pathway and specifically targeted at people who have been rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.
- 2.3 Through the SHAP revenue programme, West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) will commission a support provider, who will provide specialist support to homeless people with multiple complex and high needs who have been rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping to help increase their resilience and equip them with the necessary tools to enable them to move on to sustainable and independent living.
- 2.4 Currently, there are no dedicated specialist services or arrangements to support the targeted cohort. The Council commissioned research of the health and housing needs of rough sleepers, this research was carried out by PPL consultancy. This research identified that there is significant unmet need in the higher intensity support provision.
- 2.5 West Northants Council commissioned Midland Heart to provide housing-related and independent-living support to residents at Oasis House, Northampton. This provision consists of 58 units of accommodation, for verified rough sleepers and those verified as being at risk of rough sleeping. This service focusses on a range of low to medium needs, with a small number of residents with high needs. However the service is not commissioned to deliver a service, to support a high level of residents with high complex needs.
- 2.6 Existing outreach service arrangements focus on the delivery of low to medium housing related needs and sits with the Housing Outreach team. Housing-related support services are not general health, mental health, social care or statutory personal care services, but rather current services aim to support more independent living arrangements.
- 2.7 As part of the commissioning process, engagement will take place in June, July and August 2024 with both internal and external stakeholders and service users to inform the service specification and requirements of the new service and ensure a delivery of a model that meets the current and future needs of client group.
- 2.8 Following review of the current provision and WNC's strategic priorities, it is recommended a block contract is awarded to the preferred supplier for a period of 3 years, with possible 1 year extension, subject to the success and performance of the service and availability of funds.

- 2.9 Through a robust procurement process, the successful provider will be awarded the contract having been assessed against a range of quality criteria, minimising risk to the Council.
- 2.10 Although a Support Provider will be commissioned to deliver high intensive housing support for people with multiple support needs, the day-to-day housing management of Broadmead Court will be delivered through Northamptonshire Partnership Homes.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- a) Approves procurement of a Support Provider to deliver a service that provides people with a history of rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping who have multiple complex and high support needs at Broadmead Court for a period of 3 years.
 - b) Authorises the Director of Housing and Communities to commence the tender process with the new contract being put in place by Autumn 2025.
 - c) Delegate to the Director of Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing to undertake the necessary due diligence to finalise the terms and condition and award a contract for a period of 3 years to the preferred supplier with possible 1 year extension, subject to the success and performance of the service and availability of funds.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The proposed service aligns to the key themes and priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan, Housing Strategy 2022-2025 and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2027 on preventing homelessness and reducing rough sleeping.
- 4.2 Allows WNC to address the gaps in single rough sleeping and homelessness pathway provision and help those with longest histories of rough sleeping or the most complex and high needs to recover from rough sleeping and its associated traumas.
- 4.3 Enables WNC to achieve better outcomes for people living at Broadmead Court and empowers them to move on to sustainable and independent living. Additionally, the service will form an essential part of a wider strategic response to homelessness and rough sleeping and will complement internal and external services.
- 4.4 Timely conclusion of the procurement via delegated authority to award contract.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) funding was announced during Summer 2023, providing over £200M nationally to deliver targeted support to people with the longest history of rough sleeping and the most complex needs, and to support vulnerable young

people at risk of rough sleeping and homelessness. The prospectus included revenue funding towards support costs, and capital funding for property.

- 5.2 SHAP is targeted to address the support needs of the most entrenched rough sleepers and those with the most complex needs, who have experienced multiple periods of homelessness and unsuccessful interventions by existing provision. To achieve the objectives of SHAP, local systems will need to come together in collaboration – commissioners and service providers; Integrated Care Partnerships; public health, third sector, and business sectors – from housing and homelessness, health, substance misuse, criminal justice, skills and employment, domestic abuse systems, to co-design the best local solutions to entrenched rough sleeping.
- 5.3 The Council successfully bid for £3.2m grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP). The bid for this funding comprised:
- a comprehensive Strategic Gap Analysis of the most entrenched and vulnerable rough sleepers – the Target Priority Group (TPG - i.e. People who have been seen sleeping rough in two or more years out of the last three and in two or more months out of the last 12). In 2022 there were 91 people in the TPG and by 2023 this had increased to 99 people.
 - an application for £1,800,000 capital grant funding towards the purchase and refurbishment Broadmead Court, providing 18 units.
 - an application for revenue funding of £1,471,453 to deliver support to adults who have been verified sleeping rough and have multiple and high support needs.
- 5.4 The capital grant allocation will be utilised to create accommodation provision for the target priority group at Broadmead Court which is due for completion in late Summer/early Autumn 2025 and the revenue funding allows the council to commission a support provider to deliver 24/7 specialist support to people living there.
- 5.5 The Assets and Environment Team are overseeing the acquisition of Broadmead Court and the Major Projects and Regeneration are leading the re-purposing and refurbishment of the property, supported by colleagues in Finance, Assets, Housing, Legal services and Communications.
- 5.6 The Commissioning Lead and Officers within Housing Strategy and Partnerships Team will work alongside the Regeneration Team supported by colleagues in Adults Social Care, Legal Services, Procurement and wider partners to commission a support provider at Broadmead Court.
- 5.7 This report is in relation to the Revenue project.
- 5.8 The provision is for individuals who have multiple complex/high needs and have a dual diagnosis which may include mental health needs and substance misuse as well as a history of rough sleeping and are:

- assessed as requiring extensive support through supported accommodation with high-level on-site support
- assessed as being in either priority need or non-priority
- single and childless couples
- over 18 years of age at the start of tenancy
- individuals who have a local connection to West Northamptonshire

5.9 WNC has expressed a commitment within its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2027¹ to ensure the provision of support to homeless people with multiple needs who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping people is tailored to the needs of individual to secure better outcomes, improve health and wellbeing and support recovery and avoid repeated homelessness.

5.10 The proposed commissioned service will focus on preventing and reducing homelessness by delivering support which is person centred, trauma informed and seeks to break the cycle of homelessness, leading eventually to independent living and stable accommodation. This helps contribute to the council's commitments, supporting delivery against the following objectives:

- to achieve better outcomes and enable them to move on to sustainable long-term accommodation and independent living.
- to prevent homelessness and repeat homelessness.
- to prevent people from offending and re-offending.
- to de-escalate crisis points in service user's lives and prevent escalation into crisis.
- to prevent or delay the need for people to access Adult Social Care services or Primary Health - Care services and to prevent or delay entry into institutional care or clinical services.
- to prevent or limit social exclusion and isolation.
- to promote the financial management skills needed for tenancy sustainment.

5.11 The service will effectively provide a wraparound service- not just looking to address homelessness prevention, but also aiming to improve individuals wider personal circumstances and quality of life-ranging from physical health, mental health, employment, education, training, better sense of community, tenant satisfaction of wellbeing and access to support services. To achieve this the accommodation and service provision will establish a psychologically and trauma informed environment to ensure the service is delivered in line with Housing First England principles.

5.12 The philosophy of Housing First is to provide a stable, independent home and intensive personalised support and case management to homeless people with multiple and complex needs with no conditions around 'readiness' before providing someone with a home. A secure home is seen as a stable platform from which other issues can be addressed, rather than as a reward for engagement and compliance.

¹ <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/housing-advice-and-support/homelessness/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-strategy>

- 5.13 The support service will be operational beginning of late Summer/early Autumn or as soon as possible after that date and the completion of the refurbishment of Broadmead Court.
- 5.14 It is expected that the support provider who will be involved in the delivery of support to SHAP accommodation will have Registered Provider status, which substantially reduces the subsidy model financial pressures connected to supported accommodation.
- 5.15 A range of internal stakeholders have already and will continue to contribute to and/or be engaged as part of the commissioning process. Stakeholders engaged to date include:
- Housing Solutions Service
 - Rough Sleeping Service
 - Adult Social Care
 - Corporate Services (Finance, Legal, Procurement)
- 5.16 An outcome-focused specification will ensure provision of trauma informed and specialist support that meets the aims and objectives of the service and the people accommodated in Broadmead Court. These outcomes will include:
- Improved physical health
 - Improved mental health
 - Substance misuse stabilisation
 - Increase access to education, employment or training
 - Tenant satisfaction of wellbeing
 - Enabling and supporting independence and move on to long-term accommodation
 - Improved confidence and quality of life and pursue aspirations and areas of interest
 - To support people who have slept rough to ensure they do not return to the street
 - Reduction of self-harm self-neglect tenant safety
 - Improved access to services such as GP
 - Better sense of community participation
- 5.17 There will be robust market engagement process to test the market's appetite for the proposed procurement and identify any required changes to the service model. Benchmarking against other Local Authorities has been completed to review service models and funding arrangements. The outcome of this has informed the proposed approach.
- 5.18 Due to its strategic relevance and WNC's commitment to developing a vibrant market of supported accommodation services that meets the needs of its population, the Commissioning Lead will work with the Service Manager Strategic Commissioning (Adult Social Care), Housing Strategy and Partnership Team, Housing Solutions Service and Adult Social Care colleagues to commission and oversee the mobilisation of the service. To deliver this, a project group has been established.
- 5.19 Purchasing of effective, sustainable, and affordable provision will enable WNC to fulfil its duties regarding rough sleeping and homelessness and its strategic key themes within the WNC

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2027 and Housing Strategy 2022-2025 and shape the supported accommodation local market.

- 5.20 This proposed approach will ensure compliance with the Public Contract Regulations (2015).
- 5.21 Milestones, outcomes, quality, performance requirements and key result areas will be defined in the specification. Council officers will have regular and/or quarterly contract review meetings with the support provider to measure on-going success, monitor the service approach, client outcomes and progress in case management meetings, progress reports and case studies.
- 5.22 Quarterly performance reports to the council will assist us to effectively measure performance against targets, allowing us to take action to improve the performance in contract delivery if required.

6 Issues and Choices

6.1 Procurement Routes and Market

- 6.1.1 Procurement routes have been reviewed with the Procurement team and the proposed route is to undertake a single provider to deliver all the requirements of the service specification. This will ensure best value is achieved, with local services delivered by a provider with the appropriate governance arrangements in place to ensure the high quality and safe delivery of the service.
- 6.1.2 The recommendation to procure via the open market will maximise competition and ensure the contract delivers best value for all stakeholders.

6.2 Options Appraisal

- 6.2.1 Options considered as part of the appraisal exercise are as follows:

Option 1- not recommended

Do nothing.

We have entered into a grant funding agreement with Homes England to deliver the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme, and as such, this is not a recommended option.

Option 2- not recommended

To deliver the support service in-house.

This will require significant investment to set up and deliver an in-house specialist support e.g. financial implications as setting up service is likely to cost more than a commissioned service. The complex nature of the client group requires expertise which is not available to the council. Additionally, a review of the provision of services in neighbouring authorities, was unable to identify any local authority delivering these types of services on an in-sourced basis so no benchmark is available from other local authorities. As such, this is not a viable option.

Option 3- recommended

Undertake a competitive procurement exercise and to enter into contract with an external support provider to deliver the service.

6.3 Proposal

It is proposed that Cabinet approves option 3 and tender for a support provider to become operational late Summer/early Autumn 2025.

- 6.3.1 The support service is specialist for a fixed period of time – 3 years; (with possible 1 year extension, subject to the success and performance of the service and availability of funds) and the expertise and resource to deliver this type of specialist service is not available in-house. The preferred option is to commission this new service from an external provider. People sleeping rough evidence profound health inequalities, and complex vulnerabilities, and require specialist support intervention to reduce negative impact across a range of housing, health, social and wellbeing outcomes. Not commissioning this support provision would result in a significantly adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of people sleeping rough in West Northamptonshire with a potential worsening of health inequalities, including increasing mortality rates, and increasing complexity of needs presenting to statutory council services.

6.4 Equality & Anti-Poverty Analysis

- 6.4.1 An Equalities Screening Assessment completed in June 2024 acknowledged that the proposed service has a positive impact on the target priority group.
- 6.4.2 The full Equalities Screening Assessment is available on request.
- 6.4.3 The target priority group for these services tends to experience multiple exclusions and have multiple and complex needs and the aim of the proposed service is to provide specialist support and ensure they provide better outcomes for this population. The service will form an essential part of a wider strategic response to this group and will complement internal and external services in West Northamptonshire.
- 6.4.4 The procurement process documents will include questions that ensure interested providers address all equalities considerations, both organisationally and through evaluation of how they will engage with service users to ensure they give consideration to the diversity and specific equality related needs of the client group.
- 6.4.5 The contract will ensure that provider complies with the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty and therefore will not unlawfully discriminate against employees or target priority group with particular protected characteristics.
- 6.4.6 The provider will be required to provide demographic data, including relevant protected characteristics to assess and monitor the values and practices of providers in relation to equal opportunities.

6.4.7 The provider will be required to ensure that its workforce receives appropriate training in order to understand their roles and responsibilities in implementing Equal Opportunity requirements, and to promote equality and prevent discrimination.

6.5 Anticipated Timetable for Implementation this decision

The expected timescale for delivering the procurement and tendering of the new service is shown in the table below:

Description	Indicative dates
Seek approval from Cabinet to procure the new service	9 th July 2024
PGG (permission to procure) submission	12 th July 2024
Market Engagement	August/September 2024
Invitation to tender goes live	15 th November 2024
Tender closes	19 th December 2024 at 12 noon
Evaluation Period	7 th January -18 th February 2025
Award recommendation and sign off	19 th February- 20 th February 2025
Final award notification to providers	21 st February 2025
Commence mobilisation and implementation	4 th March- 31 st May 2025
New Service contract start date	1 st June 2025 (anticipated)

7 Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The total value of the service is £1,471,453 over three years and the yearly value is shown in the table below:

DLUHC Revenue award (RDEL) Forecast (£) per Contractual Year		
Year 1 (2025/26)	Year 2 (2026/27)	Year 3 (2027/28)
£463,985	£491,921	£515,547

7.1.2 The contract is grant funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) and managed by Homes England.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Care Act 2014 places duties on local authorities to provide advice and assistance to prevent homelessness, regardless of priority need, at an earlier stage which this proposed service helps the Council to discharge. In addition, the Council also has power under Section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything which individuals generally may do provided it is not prohibited by legislation and subject to the public law principles (the 'general power of competence'). Further, the Council also has the power pursuant to section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions. The Council may exercise its general power of competence for its own purpose or for the benefit of others. In this case the Council is functioning within its powers for the benefit of those in its area.
- 7.2.2 The Council shall have and will continue to have due regard to the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act'), in exercising its duties and ensure it is compliant on the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- 7.2.3 The procurement of a Support Provider must be compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) and in accordance with the Light Touch Regime as set out in Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended). Given the upcoming changes in the procurement regulations, officers must ensure that they continue to obtain legal advice in order to ensure that the Council remains compliant under the new legislation. The Council should also ensure that the procurement is in line with its obligation to obtain best value.
- 7.2.4 The procurement and contractual provisions for the implementation of the recommended option will be undertaken with the advice and support provided by the Council's Legal and Procurement services.
- 7.2.5 As the Council has entered into a grant agreement with Homes England, it will ensure that the compliance of the terms and conditions of the grant (including obligations on the Council to review and monitor) are mirrored in the contractual document arrangements between the Council and the Support Provider.
- 7.2.6 Engagement from the Council's Legal team will ensure a full and appropriate contract is prepared to meet the requirement and given the value of the contract, it shall be sealed by legal services.

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 Not agreeing to utilise this funding stream in the manner it was awarded for may result in the funding being returned to DLUHC and reputational damage to the Council.
- 7.3.2 If the recommended approach is not approved the Council will not have appropriate arrangements in place to purchase the service to support this client group.
- 7.3.3. Not commissioning this support provision would result in a significantly adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of people sleeping rough in West Northamptonshire with a potential

worsening of health inequalities, including increasing mortality rates, and increasing complexity of needs presenting to statutory council services.

7.3.4 Providers may choose not to apply, or their application may be unsuccessful. However, ongoing engagement with the market will continue to try and mitigate this risk.

7.3.5 There is a risk to the timely conclusion of the procurement and start of the services if delegated authority is not authorised, to enable further decisions and/or actions to be progressed.

7.3.6 Further risks identified during the procurement process will be detailed and mitigations identified as part of the project management process.

7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 Engagement with current and potential providers will be undertaken to gain an understanding of any gaps in provision or development requirements.

7.4.2 The service specification will be co-designed those with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping population and builds on our Council's ongoing commitment to improve co-production into services in West Northamptonshire.

7.4.3 Officers within the Housing Strategy and Partnerships service will continue to facilitate on-going engagement as part of the commissioning cycle. The service specification will be informed by targeted engagement with service users, outreach team and other relevant stakeholders and groups. Feedback from these engagement activities will be incorporated into the specification. Engagement will include:

- Meetings and discussions with potential service providers to understand both benefits and issues in commissioning service provisions.
- Provider conversations which include Registered Providers and Prospective Providers.
- Current and former service users with lived experience – drawing on feedback through service providers and WNC Outreach team.
- Maximisation of cross directorate expertise within the Council to ensure it is fully reflective and complementary to a range of existing corporate strategies and procurement exercises.

7.4.4 Feedback from these activities will be incorporated into the specification.

7.4.5 Internal stakeholders including Housing Options, Housing Strategy and Partnership, Adult Social Care, Finance, and Procurement have all been engaged in the commissioning process to ensure a sustainable model is developed.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 The procurement process and/or any part of the requirement may be selected for consideration by Scrutiny.

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 The specification will set an expectation for provider(s) to commit to WNC's priority within the corporate plan to be "Clean and Green".

7.6.2 WNC will work continuously with the provider(s) to ensure the services maximise the use of technology and equipment to minimise the impact on the environment.

7.7 Community and Poverty Impact

7.7.1 Homelessness and preventing Homelessness is one of the Councils priorities and provision like this is vital to deal with some of our most vulnerable residents and addressing the health inequalities they face. This provision will ensure that we have the right expertise to overcome some of the common health and social challenges faced and help aid people to return to independence and settled housing

7.7.2 WNC will also work with the provider(s) to maximise local employment and providers will support people living in Broadmead Court to have continuing access to community resources.

7.7.3 While there is a longer-term intent for the Council to be able to do more in house to support complex people facing homelessness, at this stage the service is not in a position to do so due to the number of changes and new systems and initiatives underway. This will be revisited at the end of the contract period.

8 Background Papers

8.1 None