

# Decision Pathway – Report



**PURPOSE:** Key decision

**MEETING:** Cabinet

**DATE:** 04 April 2023

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Supported Parents Homeless Prevention Service &amp; Floating Support Service</b>		
<b>Ward(s)</b>	Citywide		
<b>Author:</b> Carmel Brogan	<b>Job title:</b> Contracts and Commissioning Manager (Homelessness)		
<b>Cabinet lead:</b> Cllr Tom Renhard; Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery & Homes	<b>Executive Director lead:</b> John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration		
<b>Proposal origin:</b> BCC Staff			
<b>Decision maker:</b> Cabinet Member <b>Decision forum:</b> Cabinet			
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To seek approval for the recommissioning of the Supported Parents and Young Children Accommodation Service and the floating support for Supported Parents and Wider Homeless Families Prevention Floating Support Service			
<b>Evidence Base:</b>			
<b><u>1. Background</u></b>			
<p>Bristol City Council has recently conducted a consultation on budget savings proposals to enable the Council to close the budget gap over the medium-term financial plan (MTFP). There is a £5m pressure on homelessness Temporary Accommodation (TA).</p> <p>All potential contract extensions and re-commissioning of services are being reviewed in order to ensure that they align with the Council's efforts to reduce the use and cost of TA.</p>			
<b><u>1.1 Current service</u></b>			
<p>This integrated service has been in place since 2013 when the client group were dominantly young parents. Then in June 2018, Children Services started providing resources to support the families. Currently 88% of the client group are aged 19 years and above and 70% of the children are age 3 years and above. The service was last reviewed in July 2021 which resulted in temporary service remodelling to accept parents with children aged up to 5 years in some schemes. We have 100% nomination rights to these accommodation units.</p> <p>The service is being delivered by Elim Housing Association and Places for People working in partnership. Elim is the main contractor and Places for People is the sub-contractor. The service is currently an integrated service (floating support &amp; 36 units of accommodation-based with support) for parents with children under the age of 2 years. Places for People delivers the floating support element, a prevention service to support those parents threatened with homelessness to help them sustain their current accommodation. Elim and Places for People jointly deliver the 36 units of accommodation-based support for those parents who have become homeless by providing accommodation and support to help them become independent and eventually move on into permanent accommodation.</p>			
<p>The supported accommodation comprises of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 high support scheme in the south of the city with 10 self-contained flats and 5 shared units;</li> <li>• 1 medium support scheme in the north of the city with 11 self-contained flats;</li> </ul>			

- 1 low support scheme in the east of the city with 2 self-contained flats and 8 shared units.

The shared units can accommodate a parent and child under 3 years and the self-contained flats in the medium and low support scheme can accommodate a parent and 2 children under the age of 3 or 2 adults and 1 child over 3 years. The provision of this supported accommodation is a cost-effective way for the council to provide for homeless families in comparison with emergency TA provision. BCC commissions the support and the RP provides the management and maintenance, which is paid for through rent and service charges by Housing Benefit. The annual average support costs per unit per year for the service is £6431.67. This compares very favourably to the average cost for equivalent sized unsupported TA of £12.8k to £20.8k. The incentive for this recommissioning is the fact that there has been no uplift to the contract value for both the accommodation and floating support element and it therefore represents better value for money. Also, the new floating support service will cover the wider families in our Temporary Accommodation.

The current floating support is a city-wide floating support service for parents with young children at risk of homeless. The service provides support to prevent homelessness, help vulnerable families settle into accommodation and link into support networks in their local community.

The newly commissioned floating support service will include support for homeless families in our temporary accommodation, to support those families who are able to return to their family homes where it is safe and sustainable. It will also support other families who cannot return to their family homes in order to ensure the sustainment of their current temporary accommodation and with a range of move-on options including private renting.

There is good contract management in place for this service for example bi-monthly meeting with providers, constant communication in resolving issues or challenges as they arise, quarterly performance reporting and annual review meeting. The performance report for the service is attached as an appendix.

### **1.2 Additional services for homeless families**

We currently have two separate homeless family service contracts commissioned through a framework agreement. These framework contracts provide 92 units of accommodation for homeless families. Two of these family schemes are located in the south of the city and one service has dispersed units around the city. The call-off contracts are due to end in March 2026. The service provision will be evaluated at part of a wider review of children and family service provision. Our overall future commissioning intention is to align the Supported Parents & Young Children Service, the Family Floating Support Service and the Family Accommodation Support Service into one framework as different lots in order to simplify and make the commissioning more cost effective.

## **2. Needs analysis and proposed changes to the service**

The needs analysis has indicated that the current floating support element is underutilised, but has also identified a significant gap in floating support provision (detailed below) which needs to be met. This is to provide floating support to homeless families in our temporary emergency accommodation, so it is proposed that the floating support element be recommissioned separately to cater for the wider needs.

However, the demand for the accommodation-based service continues to increase as currently there are about 353 families in our more expensive emergency accommodation (TA), whereas there were 169 families on the waiting list when the service was last commissioned in 2018.

The revised specification for the accommodation-based service will be for homeless parents with children aged up to 5 years old and vulnerable parents and children referred by Children Services, who would otherwise have been placed in expensive foster care provision. The new service will continue to provide support at the 36 units of accommodation, which will include a requirement for higher level of support at 15 accommodation units with access to 24 hour support. We continue to build on the relationship between Children Services and the providers to make the most effective use of this provision and to meet the needs of both directorates. We have a joint working protocol

agreed between the provider and Children Services in place. There is also agreement for Children Services resources to be targeted at families/children at risk placed within this service.

We held a consultation event in October 2022, to which we invited various Register Providers, but had no interest registered beyond the current providers. We have issued a PIN through ProContract which is currently live.

We are proposing to direct award the accommodation-based contract to the current provider on the basis that there is no alternative provider in the market with accommodation and the specialist knowledge of this cohort. The annual costs of the accommodation contract will be £243,750. The total cost for the life of the proposed contract period of 2 years and 6 months will be (£243,750 \* 2 ½ years) =£609,375.

The annual costs of the floating support contract will be £124,250. The total cost for the life of the proposed contract period of 2 years and 6 months will be (124,250 \* 2 ½ years) = £310,625. It is proposed that this service will be recommissioned via open tender.

The budget ceiling for both the accommodation-based element and the floating support element is being held at the same level as the current contract. This effectively involves a significant reduction due to the impact of inflationary factors over the last five years. Any further reduction in budget would mean the loss of accommodation units and associated rise in use of more expensive TA as the council has a statutory duty to provide accommodation for most of these homeless families.

#### **Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:**

That Cabinet:

1. Authorises the Executive Director - Growth & Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery & Homes to procure and award the contract necessary for the implementation of Supported Parents & Young Children Accommodation Service at a cost of up to £609,375 for 2 years and 6 months, in-line with the procurement routes and maximum budget envelopes outlined in this report.
2. Authorises the Executive Director - Growth & Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery & Homes to procure and award the contract necessary for the implementation of a Supported Parents & Wider Homeless Families Prevention Floating Support Service at a cost of up to £310,625 for 2 years and 6 months, in-line with the procurement routes and maximum budget envelopes outlined in this report.
3. Note the consultation report at appendix B.

#### **Corporate Strategy alignment:**

1. Links to Empowering and Caring Theme - Work with partners to empower communities and individuals, increase independence and support those who need it. Give children the best possible start in life.
2. To reduce costs to the council by reducing the number of temporary emergency accommodation units used and thereby to achieve value for money.
3. The key commitment to reduce the overall level of homelessness and rough sleeping, with no-one needing to spend a 'second night out'.

#### **City Benefits:**

This proposal when approved, will benefit the city as it will continue to accommodate homeless parents and their children, help reduce the numbers of parents in our expensive emergency accommodation and help reduce the budget pressure on Housing Options. Families will be placed in a better regulated accommodation where support will be provided to help address their support needs for example, training and employment, mental health support which will reduce hospital admissions, children can have a stable home.

In addition, we will ensure that the providers continue to maintain the social values, environmental awareness, sustainability that they brought to the contract. We have effective contract management processes set up within the team with regular reporting on equalities data of service users and staff. This allows us to challenge refusals and

evictions that relate to a protected characteristic, e.g. gender or disability, (such as learning difficulty or mental health).

Ultimately, if the approach outlined in this report is not approved the current Supported Parents & Young Children Accommodation Service Providers will at the end of their contract revert to emergency provision which will cost the Council more money than we are currently paying. Furthermore, homeless families in the emergency accommodation will continue to live in the accommodation with no support.

**Consultation Details:**

We have conducted a consultation event with both internal and external stakeholder, current service providers and both current and ex-service users from October to December. The consultation event took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> October with internal and external stakeholders including current service providers. We have run an online survey monkey for service users from October to November. We have also involved Independent Futures, a separate organisation who interviewed both current and ex-service users during November. The consultation document is available as an appendix to the report.

**Background Documents:**

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy [Housing Strategy and supporting strategies \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/housing-strategy)

<b>Revenue Cost</b>	£920,000	<b>Source of Revenue Funding</b>	GF - Housing Options Commissioning (11012)
<b>Capital Cost</b>	£0	<b>Source of Capital Funding</b>	N/A
<b>One off cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ongoing cost</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Saving Proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Income generation proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

**Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:**

**1. Finance Advice:**

This report seeks approval to recommission the Supported Parents and Young Children Accommodation Service and award a contract for 2 years and 6 months from October 2023. The contract value is in line with the current annual spend and approved budget of £243,750 and will cost £609,375 over the life of the contract.

In addition, the report seeks approval to commission a floating support service for families with support needs at risk of homelessness and award a contract for 2 years and 6 months at an annual cost of £124,250 and £310,635 over the life of the contract.

The estimated value of the services (accommodation & floating support) to be provided under the contracts over the contract term of 2 years & 6 months is £920,010.

The service continues to provide value for money in terms of costs and quality, and though this contract does not deliver any cashable savings, this service is one of the Council's preventative measures to reduce homelessness in the City. The average support costs per unit annually for the service is £6.4k, compared to the average cost for equivalent sized unsupported Temporary Accommodation (TA) of £12.8k to £20.8k, therefore the council can assume average cost avoidance of circa £6.4k per unit with this contract in place.

There will be no inflationary uplifts over the length of the contract period, and no additional funding is required, as the costs of the contracts will be contained within the existing Housing Options General Fund budgets, mitigating any additional financial risk to the Council.

**Finance Manager:** Archa Campbell, Housing Finance Manager – 15 March 2023

**2. Legal Advice:** The accommodation-based support is excluded from the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 by virtue of Regulation 10(1)(a), due to relating to an interest in land. The council's procurement rules also do not apply on the same basis.

The floating support is a Schedule 3 service and is below the threshold at which a PCR compliant procurement process is required. An open tender process, as being proposed, will be in accordance with the council's procurement

rules.		
<b>Legal Team Leader:</b> Husinara Jones, Team Manager Commercial and Governance: Governance Lead, 13 March 2023		
<b>3. Implications on IT:</b> I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.		
<b>IT Team Leader:</b> Alex Simpson, Solution Architect Practitioner 13 March 2023		
<b>4. HR Advice:</b> There are no HR implications evident.		
<b>HR Partner:</b> Celia Williams, HR Business Partner 13 March 2023		
<b>EDM Sign-off</b>	Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	1 February 2023
<b>Cabinet Member sign-off</b>	Cllr Tom Renhard; Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery & Homes	8 February 2023
<b>For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off</b>	Mayor's Office	6 March 2023

<b>Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix D – Risk assessment</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix G – Financial Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix H – Legal Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix I – Exempt Information</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix J – HR advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix K – ICT</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix L – Procurement</b>	<b>NO</b>