

Delegated Decision Report

Decision below £250k

NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council.

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| Subject: | Emergency Out of Hours (Housing Options) Contract Award |
| Decision maker: Senior Officer | Neil Consterdine – Director of Communities |
| Decision maker: Cabinet Member | Cllr Elaine Taylor – Decent Homes |
| Decision date: | 11.09.2024 |
| Report author: | Victoria Wood – Head of Housing Needs |
| Ward (s): | N/A |
| Reason(s) for exemption from publication: | 3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council. |

Reason for decision

The Out of Hours emergency housing options telephone service is currently being provided externally by Care Point Housing following an emergency intervention invoked by Senior Leadership January 2024.

As part of the local housing recovery plan, Cabinet gave approval to undertake a full tender exercise for this service with a funding envelope of £130,000 per annum (Appendix 1 – A Local Response to the National Housing Crisis).

Following a robust and transparent procurement and evaluation process approval is now sought to award the contact to the highest scoring bidder from 1 July 2024. This will enable the Local Authority to continue to fulfil its statutory responsibilities and provide emergency out of hours housing advice and support.

Recommendation(s)

1. **Option 1 – award the contract** the contract to the preferred provider – Care Point Housing.

Background

The Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service is a telephone-based service that residents can contact outside of usual office hours: Monday - Friday 5pm-9am overnight support, and Saturday – Sunday 24hours support.

The officer who answers the telephone will undertake light touch assessment to ascertain if the resident and their household is without accommodation that night. If the resident has accommodation, they will be re-directed to the Housing Options Service who will provide help, advice and support the next working day. If the resident and their household does not have accommodation available to them that evening the officer will make arrangements to secure emergency accommodation for them (usually hotel / B&B accommodation). The resident will then be contacted the next working day by a member of the Housing Options Team to undertake a homelessness assessment in the usual way.

Given the significant increases to staff workloads, hours of working and to protect the health and wellbeing of employees; alternative arrangements have been explored to support the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Service (given this was previously additional duties for the Housing service on top of their daytime duties, and regularly required staff to work 24/7 on a rota).

The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure there is 24/7 homelessness support for residents and therefore alternative options have been explored including: the Emergency Duty Team (Adults / Childrens Out of Hours service); or utilising the MioCare Out of Hours service; however neither option was sustainable. Therefore provision of dedicated out of hours emergency homelessness support duties was commissioned on a temporary basis while a full options appraisal was undertaken.

A full procurement exercise has now been completed and this report seeks approval to appointment an external provider (Care Point Housing) to cover out of hours emergency homelessness support for a period of 12months. The Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service provides 6,696 hours of support per annum. The successful bidder has advised the cost for them to run this service is **£94,440** per annum. This procurement allows for the contract be extended for a further 12 months if needed. The total value of this contract for 1+1 years is **£188,880**. and it is estimated that the tender for this service will cost approximately **£130k** per annum.

All procurement activity has been overseen by the Procurement Team.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s))*

Option 1 – award the contract

Award the contract to the preferred provider (Care Point Housing) within the specified funding envelope.

Option 2 – do not award the contract

This is not viable as this would lead to a gap in services and a failure of the council to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. This would be reputationally damaging and impact on some of our most vulnerable and at risk families.

Consultation *(include any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted)*


N/A

Risks

If the contract is not awarded Oldham Council fails to deliver its statutory responsibilities resulting in reputational risk to the Council.

Implications

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| Financial | <p>If approved, the cost of running the Out of Hours Service will be £0.094m per annum. The contract will be agreed on a 1+1 basis.</p> <p>As part of the Cabinet report dated 18th March 2024 and titled “A Local Response to the National Housing Crisis”, financial resource of £0.130m was allocated for funding an Out of Hours Service within Housing.</p> <p>Therefore, sufficient resource already exists within the 24/25 Housing budget. All remaining financial resource will be realigned to help offset the current budget pressures experienced through the rising demand for Temporary Accommodation.</p> <p>John Hoskins (Finance Manager)</p> |
| Legal | <p>It is not suitable for the same staff within the team to have to work in the day and pick up further work in the evening and be at risk of working 24 hours. Without any viable alternative option the recommended option will make sure that the Council’s statutory obligations to provide the required service are complied with.</p> <p>The service should seek to monitor the delivery of the out of hours advice by the external provider. It would be prudent to routinely spot check advice provided to individuals and to receive monthly numbers of calls received, to make sure that advice is of a good standard and best value for the Council is achieved.</p> <p>The service should be mindful of the TUPE considerations in the future. Under the legislation service provision changes can give rise to a situation where TUPE applies. For example where a contract ends and the Council in the future looks to insource the delivery back into the Council in two years time. It could give rise to a TUPE occurrence, depending on the stance of the employer.</p> <p>(Alex Bougatef-Interim Assistant Director Legal Services)</p> |

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| Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People |  IAReport_OOH_Contract.pdf |
| Other | N/A |

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| Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? | Yes |
| Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? | Yes |
| Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? | No |


Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

N/A

Appendix

1. [A+Local+Response+to+the+National+Housing+Crisis+A.pdf \(oldham.gov.uk\)](#)

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| Report author sign-off | Victoria Wood |
| Role | Head of Housing Needs |
| Date of sign-off | 27.06.24 |

| Approval | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Officer approval sign-off | Neil Consterdine  |
| Role | Director of Communities |
| Date of sign-off | 11.09.24 |

| Approval | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Member(s) approval sign-off | Cllr Elaine Taylor  |
| Role | Cabinet member for Decent Homes |
| Date of sign-off | 16.09.24 |