
Part A - Report to CABINET

Out of Hours Emergency Homeless Support Service
Exemption from the Contract Procedure Rules and grant of a direct
award of a 6-Month Contract for the Out of Hours Emergency
Homelessness Support Service

Officer Contact:

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24th August 2026

Reason for Decision

Approval is sought for a 6-month extension of the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service at a cost of to ensure continuity of a critical statutory service from 1st of July 2026 to 31st of December 2026.

Executive Summary

The legal basis for this service sits within Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, which sets out the Council's duties to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. In particular, section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 requires a housing authority to secure that accommodation is available for an applicant if it has reason to believe that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need, pending further enquiries. The statutory threshold for this interim duty is deliberately low.

Although the legislation does not prescribe the exact operating model, the Council must have practical arrangements in place to discharge these duties outside normal office hours, including where a household presents as homeless in an emergency at night or over the weekend. The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, to which councils must have regard when exercising their homelessness functions, confirms these duties and the need for authorities to respond appropriately to homelessness presentations.

The extension is therefore necessary to ensure the Council can continue to comply with its statutory homelessness duties, avoid any gap in out-of-hours provision, and protect

vulnerable households who present in crisis outside standard working hours. Failure to maintain this service would create legal, safeguarding, operational and reputational risks for the Council.

Recommendations

- **Part A**
To approve an exemption under Rule 21 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules from the requirement to undertake a competitive procurement exercise under Rule 4, having regard to the nature and urgency of the service requirement.
- **Part B**
Subject to approval of Part A, to approve the direct award of a contract to Care Point Housing for delivery of the Out of Hours Emergency Housing Options Service for a period of 6 months, from the 1st of July 2026 to 31st of December 2026.

The proposed 6-month extension is necessary and proportionate to ensure there is no interruption to a critical statutory service, to mitigate legal and operational risk, and to maintain safe emergency pathways for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness outside normal working hours. The Council remains responsible for the discharge of its statutory duties, notwithstanding the external delivery model.

Emergency Out of Hours (Housing Options) Contract - Procurement

1 Background

1.1 The service is currently provided by Care Point Housing under a contract awarded on the 1st of July 2024 following a procurement exercise. The contract was awarded for one year with the option to extend for a further year, and that extension was exercised to 30th of June 2025. There is no further extension option within the existing contract.

1.2 The service operates by telephone outside normal office hours: Monday to Friday, 5:00pm to 9:00am, and 24 hours a day on Saturdays and Sundays. It provides an initial assessment of households presenting as homeless out of hours and, where required, arranges emergency accommodation pending a full homelessness assessment by the Housing Options Team on the next working day.

1.3 The service was procured externally following a 2024 Senior Leadership Team review, which found that the previous internal rota arrangement was no longer sustainable due to increasing workload and the impact on staff health and wellbeing. Alternative delivery models were considered, including the Emergency Duty Team and MioCare Out of Hours Service, but these options were not considered sustainable. As a result, a dedicated externally delivered out-of-hours homelessness service was put in place.

1.4 Following Following a full procurement exercise, a contract was awarded for the provision of the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service for an initial period of 12 months. The service provides 6,696 hours of support per annum. The original procurement exercise included an option to extend the contract for a further 12 months, and that extension has been utilised. Approval is sought for a 6-month extension of the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service.

1.5 A further 6-month direct award is required to maintain continuity of the service and to enable the Council to complete the necessary procurement activity for longer-term provision. A separate Cabinet report has been drafted and is currently in circulation seeking approval to commence a full tender exercise, with a view to awarding a 12-month contract for the delivery of the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service from 1st of January 2027 to 31st of December 2027.

2 Current Position

2.1 The current contract for the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service ended on the 30th of June 2026, with no further extension option available. Care Point Housing has continued to honour the original contract and provide the service, ensuring continuity of provision to date. Approval is therefore sought for a 6-month direct award from the 1st of July 2026 to 31 December 2026, to maintain this critical statutory service while the Council completes a full procurement process for longer-term provision from on the 1st of January 2027.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1 –

Part A: approve an exemption in respect of rule 4 of the Contract Procurement Rules by utilising rule 21 of the CPRs, and

Part B: Subject to approval of the recommendation under Part A of Option 1, that the Delegated Officer for Part B approves:

- (a) the direct award of and enter into a new contract with Care Point Housing award a contract for the Out of Hours Emergency Housing Options Service for a period of 6 months, from the 1st of July 2026 to 31st of December 2026.
- (b) The extension provides continuity of a critical frontline service for a defined interim period.
- (c) The Contract award reflects the need to maintain out-of-hours staffing and emergency response capacity.
- (d) Continuing the current arrangement for a short period avoids service disruption while future delivery arrangements are determined

3.2 Option 2 – Do not approve the proposed exemption under rule 21 of the CPRs, end the external delivery of the Out of Hours Service and deliver the service in-house (Not Recommended): This would cause instability for the residents, and the Council also does not have the staffing capacity to deliver in-house and would have to rely on agency staff at additional cost. There would be a significant gap in service whilst the council re-procured the services.

3.3 Option 3: Do Nothing (Not Recommended): Ceasing to deliver Out of Hours Service, the Council would have no dedicated out-of-hours homelessness response from 1 July 2026.

This would create a significant risk of failure to respond appropriately to households presenting as homeless in an emergency outside office hours.
It would expose the Council to legal, safeguarding, reputational and operational risks

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 –

Part A: approve an exemption in respect of rule 4 of the Contract Procurement Rules by utilising rule 21 of the CPRs, and

Part B: Subject to approval of the recommendation under Part A of Option 1, that the Delegated Officer for Part B approves:

- A. the direct award of and enter into a new contract with Care Point Housing award a contract for the Out of Hours Emergency Housing Options Service for a period of 6 months, from the 1st of July 2026 to 31st of December 2026.
- B. The extension provides continuity of a critical frontline service for a defined interim period.

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- C. The cost (*this information is contained in Part B of the report*) reflects the need to maintain out-of-hours staffing and emergency response capacity.
 - D. Continuing the current arrangement for a short period avoids service disruption while future delivery arrangements are determined

5 Consultation

5.1 The provision of an Out of Hours service is a legal requirement. Consultation is not required

6 Financial Implications

6.1 Funding for the Out of Hours service is held within the Professional Fees budget, and the forecast spend for 2026-27

(This information is contained in Part B of the report)

The proposed extension will not result in any additional cost pressures. *Mike Roberts (Housing Finance Manager)*

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The contract was originally awarded following a compliant procurement exercise in July 2024. The proposed 6-month extension is intended solely to ensure continuity of a critical statutory homelessness service pending completion of a competitive procurement exercise for longer-term provision. Having regard to its limited duration and scope, and as the modification does not alter the overall nature of the contract, the proposed arrangement is considered capable of being justified under Regulation 72(1)(e) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as a non-substantial modification of the original contract. *Pamela Nsofor (solicitor)*

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 An Open ITT would be a compliant route to market; there would be no implications. The 6-month extension to the current contract would enable a compliant competitive tender to take place.

Angela Porter – (Senior Category Manager)

RISK: Non-compliance as there is no room to extend the current contract.

Angela Porter – Senior Category Manager

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 Yes- Equality Impact Assessment Completed

10 Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 Key Decision Reference

11.1 HNS-08-26

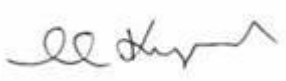
12 Background Papers

12.1 N/A

13 Appendices

13.1 Equality Impact Assessment

13.2 **Part B- Report to CABINET Out of Hours Emergency Homeless Support Service Exemption from the Contract Procedure Rules and grant of a direct award of a 6-Month Contract for the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service.** Is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because the report contains information relating to the financial and/or business affairs of [the Council / a third party / a provider / a contractor], and publication could prejudice commercial negotiations, reveal commercially sensitive information, or adversely affect the Council's ability to secure best value.

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders. Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.	
Signed:  Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive	Dated: 25 August 2026
Date of Group Leaders meeting	24 August 2025