



Cabinet

Thursday, 16 May 2024 at 4.00 p.m.

Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel

Supplementary Agenda 3 – Contracts Forward Plan and Improving the Homelessness Service

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6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.5	Contracts Forward Plan 2023/24 - Quarter 4	3 - 36
<p>Report Summary: This report presents the contracts being procured during quarter four. The report also sets out the Contracts Forward Plan at appendix 3 to this report.</p> <p>The report asks for confirmation that all contracts can proceed to contract award after tender.</p> <p>Wards: All Wards Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Corporate Priority: All Priorities</p>		

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

7.2	Improving the Homelessness Service	37 - 62
<p>Report Summary: This report sets out a recommendation to immediately invest in additional resources for frontline services to: Develop capacity on the frontline to provide an empathetic and dignified response to every service user seeking support. Address the pressures within the service caused by increasing demands including high caseloads and backlogs. Alleviate pressures on the workforce and build capacity for staff to access additional support and development. Implement expanded face to face service hours to provide those in need with wider access to the service including later opening hours on weekdays and on a Saturday morning and Secure improvements to the council’s telephony services providing benefits to the wider organisations.</p> <p>Wards: All</p>		



Lead Member:

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for
Regeneration, Inclusive Development &
Housebuilding

Corporate Priority:

Providing Homes for the Future
Tackling the cost-of-living crisis
Investing in public services



The best of London in one borough

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E14 2BG

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Agenda Item 6.5

Cabinet 16 May 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources	Classification: Unrestricted
Contracts Forward Plan – Quarter Four (FY2023-2024)	

Lead Member	Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Originating Officer(s)	Andy Grant – Interim Programme Director – Procurement
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Forward Plan Notice Published	24-04-2024
Reason for Key Decision	Significant Financial Expenditure and Significant Impact on two or more wards
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	A fair and prosperous community

Reasons for urgency

The report missed the statutory deadline because there were adjustments and changes to the pack of appendices following the MAB meeting on the 8th of May 2024 which required further clarification with various parts of the business.

The report cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting of the Committee because of the impending deadlines on the intended procurements contained in the report. A delay would risk the need to request extensions to existing contracts to cover any shortfall in provision.

Executive Summary

The Council's Procurement Procedures require a quarterly report to be submitted to Cabinet, setting out a forward plan of supply and service contracts over £1m in value, or capital works contracts over £5m. This provides Cabinet with the visibility of all high value contracting activity, and the opportunity to request further information regarding any of the contracts identified. This report provides information relating to quarter four of the 2023-2024 financial year. Only contracts which have not previously been reported are included in this report.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Consider the contract summary at Appendix 1 and identify those contracts about which specific reports – relating to contract award – should be brought before Cabinet prior to contract award by the appropriate Corporate Director for the service area.
2. Authorise the appropriate Corporate Director in consultation with the Mayor to award those contracts set out in Appendix 1 and not identified in accordance with recommendation 1, following an appropriate procurement exercise.
3. Authorise the Director Legal Services (Monitoring Officer), to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contract referred to at recommendation 2, subject to an appropriate award decision being achieved in accordance with recommendations 1 and 2 above.
4. Review the procurement forward plan 2023-2028 schedule detailed in Appendix 2 and identify any contracts about which further detail is required in advance of the quarterly forward plan reporting cycle.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council's Procurement Procedures require submission of a quarterly forward plan of contracts for Cabinet consideration, and it is a requirement of the Constitution that "The contracting strategy and/or award of any contract for goods or services with an estimated value exceeding £1m, and any contract for capital works with an estimated value exceeding £5m shall be approved by the Cabinet in accordance with the Procurement Procedures as amended by the General Purposes Committee held on 05 October 2021. This report fulfils these requirements for contracts to be let during and after quarter one of the current financial Year.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Bringing a consolidated report on contracting activity is considered the most efficient way of meeting the requirement in the Constitution, whilst providing full visibility of contracting activity; therefore no alternative proposals are being made.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Council's procurement procedures and processes have undergone major improvements to ensure they are clear, concise and transparent. Our systems, documentations and guidance to suppliers have been transformed to ensure they reflect best practice in Public Sector procurement. Our efforts in maintaining effective dialogue with our bidders during the procurement process has helped to minimise procurement challenges.

- 3.2 To ensure the Council continues to be recognised for its sound procurement practices and effective engagement with the supply community, it is imperative that delays in contract award are minimised and adherence to the timetable outlined within our Invitation to Tender documentations.
- 3.3 The importance of procurement as an essential tool to deliver Councils wider social, economic and environmental aims has resulted in the need to ensure effective elected Member engagement in the pre-procurement and decision-making process as identified in the recent Best Value audit.
- 3.4 This report provides the forward plan for quarter four of the current financial year at Appendix 1 and gives Cabinet Members the opportunity to select contracts about which they would wish to receive further information, through subsequent reports.
- 3.5 The report also includes a Procurement Forward Plan 2023-2028 to provide the Mayor and Cabinet members with high level visibility of planned procurement activity and the opportunity to be informed in advance of the procurement cycle.
- 3.6 Appendix 1 details new contracts that are planned during quarter four of this financial year. This plan summarises new contracts that have been registered with the Procurement Service, and are scheduled for procurement during the reporting period.
- 3.7 Contracts which have previously been reported are not included in this report. Whilst every effort has been made to include all contracts which are likely to arise, it is possible that other, urgent requirements may emerge. Such cases will need to be reported separately to Cabinet as individual contract reports.
- 3.8 Cabinet is asked to review the Contracts Forward Plan (CFP), confirm its agreement to the proposed programme and identify any individual contracts about which further information – relating either to contracting strategy or to contract award – will be required before proceeding.

Consultation

- 3.9 The table below outlines contracts identified in Appendix 1 and the relevant service area/directorates. Officers from the relative service areas were advised to consult with Lead Members on the proposal of each of the contracts:

Directorate	Number of Contracts	Project title / description
Children	1	1. CYP Befriending Short Breaks recommission
Communities	2	1. Specialised Vehicle Maintenance Contract 2. Purchase of URS vehicles for Waste services
Health, Adult & Social Care	8	1. Mental Health Supported Living Services: Huddleston Close 2. Mental Health Supported Living Services (ILCS) 3. Mental Health Supported Living Services: Teresa House & Hamlets Way 4. Mental Health Supported Living Services: Cannon Street Road 5. Mental Health Recovery: Lot 4 Employment Hub

		6. Mental Health Recovery Lot 1 Connecting Communities Lot 2 One to One Community Support" 7. Culturally Sensitive Substance Misuse Service 8. Extra Care Supported Housing
Housing & Regeneration	1	1. SHAP Housing First

3.9.1 The Council also ensures further governance through its tollgate process, which is a procurement project assurance methodology, designed to assist in achieving successful outcomes from the Council's high value contracting activities (over £1m, for revenue contracts, and £5m, for capital works contracts which have not gone through the Asset Management Board approval system).

4. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Equality and diversity implications and are addressed through the tollgate process, and all contracting proposals are required to demonstrate that both financial and social considerations are adequately and proportionately addressed.

5. **OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications.
- Consultations.
- Environmental (including air quality).
- Risk Management.
- Crime Reduction.
- Safeguarding.

Best Value Implications

5.2 The Council is required to consider the value for money implications of its decisions and to secure best value in the provision of all its services. The Council procures circa £350m of supplies and services annually with a current supplier base of approximately 3,500 suppliers. The governance arrangements undertaking such buying decisions are set out in the Council's Procurement Procedures, which form part of the Financial Regulations.

5.3 The contracts listed in Appendix 1 are all subject to the Council's tollgate process which involves a detailed assessment by the Procurement Review Panel of the procurement strategy to ensure compliance with existing policies, procedures and best value duties prior to publication of the contract notice.

Sustainable Action for Greener Environment

- 5.4 Contracts are required to address sustainability issues in their planning, letting and management. This is assured through the tollgate process.

Risk Management

- 5.5 Risk management is addressed in each individual contracting project and also assessed through the tollgate process.

Efficiency Statement

- 5.6 Contract owners are required to demonstrate how they will achieve cashable savings and other efficiencies through individual contracting proposals. Proposed efficiencies are subsequently monitored throughout implementation.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report details the contract forward plan for quarter four of 2023-24 in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures. All contract spend should be carried out within approved resources and, where possible, savings identified to improve value for money and contribute to MTFS savings.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has adopted financial procedures for the proper administration of its financial affairs pursuant to section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. These generally require Cabinet approval for expenditure over £1m for revenue contracts and £5m for capital works contracts as Key Decisions.
- 7.2 Cabinet has approved procurement procedures, which are designed to help the Council discharge its duty as a best value authority under the Local Government Act 1999 and comply with the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The procurement procedures contain the arrangements specified in the report under which Cabinet is presented with forward plan of proposed contracts that exceed specified thresholds. The arrangements are consistent with the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 7.3 Pursuant to the Council's duty under the Public Services (Social Values) Act 2012, as part of the tender process and where appropriate, bidders will be evaluated on the community benefits they offer to enhance the economic social or environmental well-being of the Borough. The exact nature of those benefits will vary with each contract and will be reported at the contract award stage. All contracts delivered in London and which use staff who are ordinarily resident in London will require contractors to pay those staff the London Living Wage. Where workers are based outside London an assessment will be carried out to determine if the same requirement is appropriate.
- 7.4 When considering its approach to contracting, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good

relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty). Officers are expected to continuously consider, at every stage, the way in which procurements conducted and contracts awarded satisfy the requirements of the public sector equality duty. This includes, where appropriate, completing an equality impact assessment as part of the procurement strategy, which is then considered as part of the tollgate process.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – new contracts planned: Q3 of the Financial Year and beyond.
- Appendix 2 - Procurement Forward Plan 2023 -2028

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

Andy Grant (Interim Programme Director – Procurement)

Andy.Grant@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Cabinet Contracts Forward Plan – Appendix 1

Contract Ref & Title	CS5978 CYP Befriending Short Breaks recommission		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	*New Procurement Details 3+1 = 4 Years
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	84705		
Value Total:	£980,809 (Over the entire maximum contract period)	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£245,206.25 per annum	Budget	£245,206.25 per annum
Current annual value	£245,206.25 per annum	Revised Annual Contract	£245,206.25 per annum
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable – see below		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

Reduction to the budget would put the quality and delivery of service provision at risk.

The service is already highly oversubscribed and has been operating with additional funds sourced from other areas to meet demand. We therefore do not foresee any savings.

The local authority has a legal duty to provide this service to vulnerable children and young people in the borough.

Background

The Befriending Short Breaks contract is a mandated/ statutory service and is delivered to some of the most vulnerable, high-risk children in Tower Hamlets. The commissioning of this service enables the Council to meet its statutory duty under the Children & Families Care Act 2014.

The current contract is delivered through a framework agreement consisting of four service providers and will expire on 31st March 2025. The request to Cabinet is to approve the commencement of a procurement exercise to replace the existing framework agreement that is due to expire, to ensure service continuity.

The new framework agreement will be for a period of 4 years (initial term 3 years, plus1) and will be awarded to multiple suitably qualified providers. Forecasts indicate that total expenditure in this area over the four-year period will be approximately under £1m, although this could increase based on demand as we are seeing a significant rise in the number of children identified as having Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) in the Borough, as well as an increase in children accessing two or more short breaks due to expanding needs.

The service is a vital support for children with disabilities and their families and is part of a range of short breaks offered by Tower Hamlets Council for children and families that fulfil the eligibility criteria.

Scope of Contract

The contract is for the provision of a high-quality Befriending Short Breaks service eligible to children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs or disability. It contains essential services that enable and support children and young people with a disability to live ordinary family lives, to have fun, try new activities, gain independence, and make friends. The service also provides parents and carers with a much-needed respite from their caring responsibilities and can reduce the risk of family breakdown.

The service is eligible to children and young people (CYP) aged 5 to 18 who live in Tower Hamlets with either Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and severe learning difficulties and/or have complex health needs (including those with physical and/or learning disabilities).

Providers are expected to deliver services through a range of innovative and targeted interventions aimed at building resilience and reducing inequalities as well as demonstrating the following:

- Sound understanding of the needs of children and young people with ASC and complex health needs.
- Develop innovative and/or tried and tested approaches to supporting the delivery of improved outcomes.
- Deliver person-centred services in collaboration with children, young people and/or their families.
- Support increase partnership working between primary and secondary schools.
- Meet the individual needs of children and young people.

The current service is however significantly oversubscribed, and year-on-year more families are requesting daytime short breaks such as the Befriending Service which is putting considerable pressure on the current budget. The service has been operating with a waiting list and in year 23/24 additional budget was sourced to support growth, as well as to accommodate the children on the waiting list. Going forward an expansion to the budget will need to be considered, as the current budget is not able to sustain demand and could potentially lead to longer waiting periods for services.

Contracting Approach

The contracting approach will be finalised after completing the pre-sourcing activities which may include the analysis of the business need, market analysis / market engagement and development of the sourcing strategy. The procurement will be compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process with the requirements being developed and defined during the preparation of the Tender Pack. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract.

Contract Ref & Title	AHS5036: Mental Health Supported Living Services: Huddleston Close		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	New Procurement Details 3 + 2 = 5 Years Contract Extension Details 6 months (01/07/2024 – 31/12/2024)
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	33201-R5600-A2559		
Value Total:	£186,994 for the 6-month extension period and £2,120,428 over the total contract period	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Non Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£393,195 per Year with inflationary uplifts-built in.	Budget	£393,195 per Year
Current annual value	£370,939 per Year	Revised Annual Contract	£393,195 per Year
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

No direct savings are achieved from this contract however, this contract supports the MTFs Mental Health Accommodation Pathway savings of £571,28 delivered in 2021/22 through repatriation of out of Borough placements. A further savings target of £174k has been identified for 2022/23. These placements will be supported under this contract.

Background

This Appendix 1 was originally presented and approved at Cabinet on 25/01/2023 whereby authority to undertake a competitive procurement exercise was granted. [Appendix. 1 for Contracts Forward Plan 202223 - Quarter 3.pdf \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)

This exercise has since commenced and is in the advanced stages of completion. A contract extension is being sought due to the volume of concurrent procurements requiring competitive public tenders during this period, to facilitate the conclusion of the procurement exercise.

A 6-month contract extension is requested (01/07/24-31/12/24) at a cost of £186,994 based on 2023/2024 contract values to enable this procurement process to take place allowing for a minimum necessary transition and mobilisation period. Whilst a 3- month extension period is being sought, **the contract award will take place as soon as is possible and only the required extension period will be utilised for the minimum period necessary.**

Scope of Contract

This service has been tendered alongside two other supported living services, intended for service users with mental ill-health who may have had a significant admission to institutional care. The services will have a strong focus on supporting service users with their journey towards recovery and independence, providing support that is tailored and flexible and delivered in accordance with individual's needs. Services will be provided as part of the Authorities duties under the Care Act.

This procurement will bring together 3 contracts across three mental health supported living services. This grouping reflects the ambition to provide a more joined up accommodation pathway that is able to reduce out of area placements and improve system resilience.

- Service one comprises 39 units of supported accommodation, 20 high support and 19 step down.
- Service two comprises 19 units of supported accommodation, 11 high support and 8 step down.

- Service three comprises 32 units of high support accommodation.

The emphasis of these services is on preparing individuals to move on to independence. The support service is provided 24 hours a day 365 days per year with tailored flexible support delivered in accordance with needs of users. The future contract service will help achieve the Tower Hamlets Health and Well-being Board's vision for improving outcomes for people with mental health problems in the borough. Additional outcomes for this service include: -

- Enhancing the strengths and resilience of service users through therapeutic risk-taking to promote personal recovery
- Maintaining individuals' growth and recovery
- Treating disability with respect, promoting social inclusion, and reducing stigma
- Improving users' holistic quality of life
- Enhancing life-skills and supported users into long term independence.

Spend

The calculated total contract value over the life of the new contract period, will be the maximum amount that may be considered following a decision to procure. The figures provided represent the maximum final value in 2024-25.

Any decision to uplift the contracts will be determined through a process of negotiation and in full understanding of evidence-based cost pressures prior to any agreement, and confirmation of annual increases to LLW and inflationary pressures.

Contracting Approach

The contracts have been tendered through a Single Stage Open Procedure and issued via London Tender Portal, compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020). The procurement timeframe is as follows.

Tender phase	Expected completion
Design and preparation	November 2023
Contract award	July 2024
New contract start	December 2024

The final contract value will be based on submission (within budget) from the winning bidder and will be determined through a weighted score as part of the procurement process.

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract. An indication of the benefits that may be requested within the procurement process are listed below:

- Ensuring accessibility for all eligible service users with due respect to their culture and religion
- Ensuring acceptance by local community leaders and that they are fully informed about our services and supportive of them,
- employing people with mental health problems in their service,
- employing Tower Hamlets residents in their service.

Contract Ref & Title	AHS5037 Mental Health Supported Living Services: Independent Living and Community Support (ILCS)		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	New Procurement Details 3 + 2 = 5 Years Contract Extension Details 3 months, (1/07/2024 – 30/09/2024)
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital
Cost Code	R5600-33201-A2559		<input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Value Total:	£162,510 for the 3-month extension period and £3,795,722 over the total contract period (maximum)	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Non Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£703,849 per Year.	Budget	£703,849 per Year
Current annual value	£651,825 per Year	Revised Annual Contract	£703,849 per Year
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

No direct savings are achieved from this contract as this is a statutory adult social care service where we have committed to meet the LLW commitments. However, this contract supports the MTFS Mental Health Accommodation Pathway savings target of £571,286

Background

This Appendix 1 was originally presented and approved at Cabinet on 25/01/2023 whereby authority to undertake a competitive procurement exercise was granted. [Appendix. 1 for Contracts Forward Plan 202223 - Quarter 3.pdf \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#).

This exercise has since commenced and is in the advanced stages of completion. A contract extension is being sought due to the volume of concurrent procurements requiring competitive public tenders during this period, to facilitate the conclusion of the procurement exercise.

A 3-month contract extension is requested (01/07/24-30/09/24) at a cost of £162,510 based on 2023/2024 contract values to enable this procurement process to take place allowing for a minimum necessary transition and mobilisation period. Whilst a 3-month extension period is being sought, **the contract award will take place as soon as is possible and only the required extension period will be utilised for the minimum period necessary for completion of mobilisation.**

Scope of Contract

The service offers support for service users with mental health needs (for whom the authority has a statutory duty) to support them to remain in independent living settings and prevent hospitalisation through the delivery of person-centred support. This contract offers transitional and tenancy sustainment support to those exiting mental health supported living services.

The service assists people to develop or maintain their independence within their own homes, thus preventing the otherwise unnecessary use of more institutional forms of care and hospital admission; by providing recovery orientated support to individuals, for whom the authority has a statutory duty under the Care Act. Service users may have a forensic history, including those on section 41 of Mental Health Act, MAPPA clients and those with serious mental illness or dual diagnosis- substance misuse and mental health needs. The service further supports individuals to move on to more independent forms of housing and sustain independent living through delivery of transitional move-on support.

The service focuses on engaging with and assisting service users to make good use of the community mental health services available to them whilst developing the knowledge, life skills and ability to manage and sustain a tenancy successfully.

These objectives are achieved by;

- Providing a recovery focused service that supports service users to stay well, safe are fulfilled.
- Delivery of crisis support to individuals who require short term support to deal with a crisis. The level of support depends on individual need and will range from one hour a week, with no upper limit.
- Providing creative options for supporting service users to maintain healthy lifestyles, and eat nutritiously, access education, employment and training (EET), structured support to prepare for independent living and support with legal matters.
- Support those existing supported living to move on to general needs housing through structured support with nomination and bidding, followed by 6 months transitional support.
- Offering opportunities for service users to meet together, developing options for peer support and appropriate facilitated support groups.

This contract helps achieve the Tower Hamlets Health and Well-being Board's vision for improving outcomes for people with mental health problems in the borough. Outcomes for these services will demonstrate the 6 shared objectives of the strategy which are:-

- More people will have good mental health
- More people with mental health problems will recover
- More people with mental health problem will have good physical health
- More people will have a positive experience of care and support
- Fewer people will suffer avoidable harm
- Fewer people will experience stigma and discrimination.

Spend

The calculated total contract value over the life of the new contract period, will be the maximum amount that may be considered following a decision to procure. The figures provided represent the maximum final value in 2024-25.

Any decision to uplift the contracts will be determined through a process of negotiation and in full understanding of evidence-based cost pressures prior to any agreement, and confirmation of annual increases to LLW and inflationary pressures.

Contracting Approach

The contracts have been tendered through a Single Stage Open Procedure and issued via London Tender Portal, compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

The procurement timeframe is as follows.

Tender phase	Expected completion
Design and preparation	November 2023
Contract award	March 2024
New contract start	September 2024

The final contract value will be based on submission within the budget from the winning bidder and will be determined through a weighted score as part of the procurement process.

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process with the requirements being developed and defined during the preparation of the Tender Pack. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract. An indication of the benefits that may be asked within the procurement are listed below.

- Funding, contribution and attendance at a minimum of 2 local job fair per annum.
- Commitment to local apprenticeships, trainees, volunteers and graduates that will be employed annually throughout the lifetime of the contract. This should include opportunities for career progression for 2 local people employed within the contract.
- Percentage of agency staff that will be recruited via local recruitment agencies in Tower Hamlets
- Percentage of vacancies within the service that will be recruited from the local community.
- Number of support programme placements organisation will be able to provide to assist people with Learning Disabilities; Physical Disabilities or Mental Health problems get into paid employment.
- Details of any programmes, placements or opportunities organisation will be able to offer to Assist unemployed people back into work.

Contract Ref & Title	AHS5252 : Mental Health Supported Living Services: Teresa House and Hamlets Way		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	New Procurement Details 3 + 2 = 5 Years Contract Extension Details months (1/07/2024 – 31/12/2024)
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	33201-R5600-A2559		
Value Total:	£330,867 for the 6-month extension period and £3,751,888 over the total contract period	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Non Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£695,721 per Year with inflationary uplifts-built in.	Budget	£695,721 per Year
Current annual value	£656,340 per Year	Revised Annual Contract	£695,721 per Year
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

No direct savings are achieved from this contract however, this contract supports the MTFs Mental Health Accommodation Pathway savings of £571,28 delivered in 2021/22 through repatriation of out of Borough placements. A further savings target of £174k has been identified for 2022/23. These placements will be supported under this contract.

Background

This Appendix 1 was originally presented and approved at Cabinet on 25/01/2023 whereby authority to undertake a competitive procurement exercise was granted. [Appendix. 1 for Contracts Forward Plan 202223 - Quarter 3.pdf \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)

This exercise has since commenced and is in the advanced stages of completion. A contract extension is being sought due to the volume of concurrent procurements requiring competitive public tenders during this period, to facilitate the conclusion of the procurement exercise.

A 6-month contract extension is requested (1/07/24-31/12/24) at a cost of £330,867.29 based on 2023/2024 contract values to enable this procurement process to take place allowing for a minimum necessary transition and mobilisation period. Whilst a 6-month extension period is being sought, the contract award will take place as soon as is possible and only the required extension period will be utilised for the minimum period necessary.

Scope of Contract

The new contract is intended for service users with mental ill-health who may have had a significant admission to institutional care. The services will have a strong focus on supporting service users with their journey towards recovery and independence, providing support that is tailored and flexible and delivered in accordance with individual's needs. Services will be provided as part of the Authorities duties under the Care Act.

This procurement will bring together 3 contracts across three mental health supported living services. This grouping reflects the ambition to provide a more joined up accommodation pathway that is able to reduce out of area placements and improve system resilience.

- Service one comprises 39 units of supported accommodation, 20 high support and 19 step down.

- Service two comprises 19 units of supported accommodation, 11 high support and 8 step down.
- Service three comprises 32 units of high support accommodation.

The emphasis of these services is on preparing individuals to move on to independence. The support service is provided 24 hours a day 365 days per year with tailored flexible support delivered in accordance with needs of users. The future contract service will help achieve the Tower Hamlets Health and Well-being Board's vision for improving outcomes for people with mental health problems in the borough. Additional outcomes for this service include: -

- Enhancing the strengths and resilience of service users through therapeutic risk-taking to promote personal recovery
- Maintaining individuals' growth and recovery
- Treating disability with respect, promoting social inclusion, and reducing stigma
- Improving users' holistic quality of life
- Enhancing life-skills and supported users into long term independence.

Spend

The calculated total contract value over the life of the new contract period, will be the maximum amount that may be considered following a decision to procure. The figures provided represent the maximum final value in 2024-25.

Any decision to uplift the contracts will be determined through a process of negotiation and in full understanding of evidence-based cost pressures prior to any agreement, and confirmation of annual increases to LLW and inflationary pressures.

Contracting Approach

The contracts have been tendered through a Single Stage Open Procedure and issued via London Tender Portal, compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

The procurement timeframe is as follows.

Tender phase	Expected completion
Design and preparation	November 2023
Contract award	July 2024
New contract starts	December 2024

The final contract value will be based on submission within the budget from the winning bidder and will be determined through a weighted score as part of the procurement process.

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract. An indication of the benefits that may be requested within the procurement process are listed below:

- Ensuring accessibility for all eligible service users with due respect to their culture and religion
- Ensuring acceptance by local community leaders and that they are fully informed about our services and supportive of them,
- employing people with mental health problems in their service,
- employing Tower Hamlets residents in their service.

Contract Ref & Title	AHS5040(B): Mental Health Supported Living Services: Cannon Street Road		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	New Procurement Details 3 + 2 = 5 Years Contract Extension Details 6 months (1/07/2024 – 31/12/2024)
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	33201-R5600-A2559		
Value Total:	£239,351 for the 6-month extension period and £2,314,133.6 over the total contract period	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Non Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£423,288 per Year with inflationary uplifts-built in.	Budget	£423,288 per Year
Current annual value	£474,800 per Year	Revised Annual Contract	£423,288 per Year
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

No direct savings are achieved from this contract however, this contract supports the MTFs Mental Health Accommodation Pathway savings of £571,28 delivered in 2021/22 through repatriation of out of Borough placements. A further savings target of £174k has been identified for 2022/23. These placements will be supported under this contract.

Background

This Appendix 1 was originally presented and approved at Cabinet on 25/01/2023 whereby authority to undertake a competitive procurement exercise was granted. [Appendix. 1 for Contracts Forward Plan 202223 - Quarter 3.pdf \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)

This exercise has since commenced and is in the advanced stages of completion. A contract extension is being sought due to the volume of concurrent procurements requiring competitive public tenders during this period, to facilitate the conclusion of the procurement exercise.

A 6-month contract extension is requested (1/07/24-31/12/24) at a cost of £239,351 based on 2023/2024 contract values to enable this procurement process to take place allowing for a minimum necessary transition and mobilisation period. Whilst a 6-month extension period is being sought, the contract award will take place as soon as is possible and only the required extension period will be utilised for the minimum necessary period

Scope of Contract

The new contract is intended for service users with mental ill-health who may have had a significant admission to institutional care. The services will have a strong focus on supporting service users with their journey towards recovery and independence, providing support that is tailored and flexible and delivered in accordance with individual's needs. Services will be provided as part of the Authorities duties under the Care Act.

This procurement will bring together 3 contracts across three mental health supported living services. This grouping reflects the ambition to provide a more joined up accommodation pathway that is able to reduce out of area placements and improve system resilience.

- Service one comprises 39 units of supported accommodation, 20 high support and 19 step down.
- Service two comprises 19 units of supported accommodation, 11 high support and 8 step down.
- Service three comprises 32 units of high support accommodation.

The emphasis of these services is on preparing individuals to move on to independence. The support service is provided 24 hours a day 365 days per year with tailored flexible support delivered in accordance with needs of users. The future contract service will help achieve the Tower Hamlets Health and Well-being Board's vision for improving outcomes for people with mental health problems in the borough. Additional outcomes for this service include: -

- Enhancing the strengths and resilience of service users through therapeutic risk-taking to promote personal recovery.
- Maintaining individuals' growth and recovery.
- Treating disability with respect, promoting social inclusion, and reducing stigma.
- Improving users' holistic quality of life.
- Enhancing life-skills and supported users into long term independence.

Spend

The calculated total contract value over the life of the new contract period, will be the maximum amount that may be considered following a decision to procure. The figures provided represent the maximum final value in 2024-25.

Any decision to uplift the contracts will be determined through a process of negotiation and in full understanding of evidence-based cost pressures prior to any agreement, and confirmation of annual increases to LLW and inflationary pressures.

Contracting Approach

The contracts have been tendered through a Single Stage Open Procedure and issued via London Tender Portal, compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

The procurement timeframe is as follows:

Tender phase	Expected completion
Design and preparation	November 2023
Contract award	July 2024
New contract start	December 2024

The final contract value will be based on submission within the budget from the winning bidder and will be determined through a weighted score as part of the procurement process.

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract. An indication of the benefits that may be requested within the procurement process are listed below:

- Ensuring accessibility for all eligible service users with due respect to their culture and religion
- Ensuring acceptance by local community leaders and that they are fully informed about our services and supportive of them,
- employing people with mental health problems in their service,
- employing Tower Hamlets residents in their service.

Contract Ref & Title	HAC5382 Mental Health Recovery, Wellbeing and Employment Service (Lot 4 Employment Hub)		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	New Procurement Details 3 + 1 = 4 Years Contract Extension Details 4 months 8 days (24/08/24 – 31/12/24)
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	33201-R5600-A2395		
Value Total:	£837,108 (across 4-year term) £123,948 (value for extension period)	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£349,308 per Year	Budget	23/24 budget £349,308 (£265,609 LBTH funding) (£83,699 ICB funding)
Current annual value	£349,308 per Year	Revised Annual Contract	£209,277 per Year (for the new contract) (£153,037 LBTH funding) (£56,240 ICB funding)
Savings Annual Value	£140,031 per annum		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

A total cashable annual saving of £140,031 is being delivered through the re-procurement of the Employment service with a reduction in contract value from £349,308 to £209,277.

Background

This Appendix 1 was originally presented and approved at Cabinet on 26th July 2023 [Appendix. 1 for Contracts Forward Plan 2023/24 - Quarter 1](#) - providing authority to commence a procurement exercise for the provision of a Specialist Employment Hub service for people with lived experience of mental health.

A contract extension is now being sought due to the volume of concurrent procurements requiring competitive public tenders during this period. This Appendix 1 is being presented in the Quarter 4 Contracts Forward Plan for Cabinet consideration and approval.

There is work ongoing to procure a new contract through an open process. A 4 month and 8 day contract extension is requested (from 24/08/24 to 31/12/24) to enable this procurement process to take place allowing for a minimum necessary transition and mobilisation period. Whilst a 4-month 8 day extension period is being sought, **the contract award will take place as soon as is possible and only the required extension period will be utilised** for the minimum necessary period

Scope of Contract

The Employment Hub service aims to increase the number of people with lived experience of mental health into employment in Tower Hamlets through one-to-one support, signposting, support to enter work experience and self-employment opportunities.

The current service also delivers an employed peer support model, allowing local residents to utilise their lived experience to support others to meet their employment goals, as well as building a culturally competent approach to mental health employment support.

It also aims to increase the numbers of people able to sustain employment despite mental health challenges and increase the ability of borough employers to support their employees and retain them in the workforce. This has a positive impact for individuals and the wider health and social care economy by reducing avoidable and prolonged reliance on statutory social care and health systems, and reduction of negative health and social outcomes associated with poor mental health.

The procurement of this contract is aligned with several strategies and commitments and will perform as a deliverable to achieve key outcomes within those strategies:

- Council's Strategic Plan priorities to increase business and jobs in the community and invest in public services by providing early support for adults at risk of poor mental health and loneliness.
- The Adult Mental Health Strategy sets out outcomes related to mental health and employment which people with mental health said were important to them. It identifies employment as the most strongly evidenced determinant of mental health.
- The commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of residents and tackling inequality through improving access to employment opportunities is further articulated in the Tower Hamlets Community Plan (2018-23) and the TH Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2021-25).
- Creating paid employment opportunities for people with mental health needs is one of the key priorities for the TH Mental Health Partnership Board.
- Nationally, the NHS Long Term plan identifies health and employment as an area of focus recognising that 'Stable employment is a major factor in maintaining good mental health and is an important outcome for recovery for people with a mental health problem.'

The service is currently delivered by a long-standing local Tower Hamlets VCSE provider - Working Well Trust. It is co-located and co-delivered alongside the LCF grant funded employment service Upskill, and the NHS / ICB funded employment Individual Placement Support (IPS) service. All three mental health employment services are delivered by Working Well Trust and whilst co-located within a Council building, staff work across the borough delivering a community based integrated service – the three contracts utilise different approaches based on the needs of the individual and also offer different points of connection for the service-user. The Employment Hub benefits from the expertise of a team with specialist skills, knowledge and experience of mental health and employment.

The Employment Hub also works in partnership with the other commissioned Tower Hamlets Mental Health Recovery and Wellbeing Services, including Mind Connecting Communities (Information, Advice, Navigation and Day service), Hestia 1-2-1 Recovery Support Service and the ELFT Recovery College. The Recovery and Wellbeing partnership has a joint governance and delivery approach aiming to ensure local services are better connected to support the holistic needs of our local residents with lived experience in the community.

The co-location and integration of the local employment services alongside the co-delivery and collaboration of the voluntary sector services that make up the recovery and wellbeing services has created an agile, knowledgeable and intrinsically motivated existing workforce within the borough working across established networks for the benefit of our residents. A competitive open tender therefore remains the optimal option for delivering high quality specialist mental health employment support provision.

The provision of its services supports the implementation of Care Plans and enables the local authority to meet its statutory duty under the Care Act to provide prevention services, with a link to the principle of promoting wellbeing. The Authority must ensure that people who live in its area:

- can get the information and advice they need to make good decisions about care and support (including finances, health, housing, employment)
- have a range of provision of high quality, appropriate services to choose from.

Spend

The calculated total contract value over the life of the new contract period, will be the maximum amount that may be considered following a decision to procure. The figures provided represent the maximum final value and do not include any assumed inflationary uplifts.

Any decision to uplift the contracts will be determined through a process of negotiation and in full understanding of evidence-based cost pressures prior to any agreement, and confirmation of annual increases to LLW and inflationary pressures.

The 23/24 ICB contribution for the contract is £83,699 and future NHS uplift contributions will be determined by the annually set NHS net inflator.

Contracting Approach

The Employment Hub will be procured as a stand-alone contract.

The procurement will be compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process with the requirements being developed and defined during the preparation of the Tender Pack. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract.

Examples which Suppliers may be asked to meet targets around the areas are listed below.

- Number of new contract related roles that are filled in by Tower Hamlets residents.
- Two-week paid work experience placement for Tower Hamlets residents.
- Attendance at local SME forums
- Number of Contracts let to businesses located within the geographical boundaries of Tower Hamlets.
- Commitment to provide Management time (4 - 7 years' experience) - bid writing, marketing, project management, data collection.

For the period of the contract extension, Social Value will be delivered as originally specified within the contract.

Contract Ref & Title	HAC5382 Mental Health Recovery, Wellbeing and Employment Service - Lot 1 Connecting Communities - Lot 2: One to One Community Support		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	New Procurement Details 3 + 1 = 4 Years Contract Extension Details 4 months 8 days (24/08/24 – 31/12/24)
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	33201-R5600-A2395		
Value Total:	£3,771,564 (across 4-year term) £334,574 (value for extension period)	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£942,891 per Year	Budget	23/24 budget £942,891 (£716,961 LBTH funding) (£225,930 ICB funding)
Current annual value	£942,891 per Year	Revised Annual Contract	£942,891 per Year
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

A total cashable annual saving of £140,031 is being delivered across the HAC5382 Mental Health Recovery, Wellbeing and Employment Service as a whole. This will be delivered through the re-procurement of the Employment service with a reduction in contract value.

Background

This Appendix 1 was originally presented and approved at Cabinet on 26th July 2023 [Appendix 1 for Contracts Forward Plan 2023/24 - Quarter 1](#) - to commence a procurement exercise for the provision of a Mental Health Adult Recovery and Wellbeing Service to include an Information, Advice and Navigation service, Day Opportunity service and One to One Community Support for people with lived experience of mental health.

A contract extension is now being sought due to the volume of concurrent procurements requiring competitive public tenders during this period. This Appendix 1 is being presented in the Quarter 4 Contracts Forward Plan for Cabinet consideration and approval.

There is work ongoing to procure a new contract through an open process. A 4 month and 8 day contract extension is requested (from 24/08/24 to 31/12/24) to enable this procurement process to take place allowing for a minimum necessary transition and mobilisation period. Whilst a 4-month 8 day extension period is being sought, the **contract award will take place as soon as is possible and only the required extension period will be utilised for the minimum period necessary.**

Scope of Contract

The proposed tender and extension for a Community Recovery and Wellbeing service will enable the continuation of an integrated, coordinated, outcomes focused, community-based system of recovery focused mental health provision based around the service user. The service aims to provide the right support at the right time, according to personal wellbeing goals. This will have a positive impact for individuals and the wider health and social care economy by reducing avoidable and prolonged reliance on statutory social care and health systems, and reduction of negative health and social outcomes associated with poor mental health and will provide meaningful opportunities for individuals with mental health needs for whom the local authority has a statutory duty under the Care Act. The service is currently delivered as below:

- Personalised one to one medium term confidential support virtually and face to face in the community.
- Assessments and co-produced support planning
- Support includes both mental health and non-mental health issues which positively impact on recovery such as support with accommodation, increased social contacts and physical health linked to healthy eating, smoking cessation, and alcohol awareness etc.
- Access to wider services to increase social-inclusion

MIND - Connecting Communities -with staff and volunteers working across the borough delivering a community based integrated service, working closely with carers, primary care and secondary statutory health and social care services. The service offers:

- Advice and information and a specialist support service) both on the phone and face to face which facilitates access and connection to the correct community, health or social care resources.
- Specialist welfare advice support
- Access to a range of recovery-based groups and activities
- Delivery of service user co-produced programme of classes and sessions
- Provision of a community 'place of safety' in the form of a drop in bi-monthly café in their premises.

The Community Recovery and Wellbeing Services also works in partnership with other commissioned services, including the Working Well Trust Employment Hub and the ELFT Recovery College. The Recovery and Wellbeing partnership has a joint governance and delivery approach aiming to ensure local services are better connected to support the holistic needs of our local residents with lived experience in the community.

The procurement and extension of this contract is aligned with several strategies and commitments and will perform as a deliverable to achieve key outcomes within those strategies:

- The Council's Strategic Plan priority to provide early support for adults at risk of poor mental health and loneliness.
- It addresses the main themes highlighted by residents, service users and professionals in the TH Adult Mental Health Strategy around the need to tackle stigma, increased focus on prevention and holistic flexible support for people with their mental health.
- The service is essential to the borough's wider strategic plans enabling delivery against three of the four themes of the Tower Hamlets Community Plan (2018-23) and TH Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The services support the local authority to meet its statutory duty under the Care Act to provide prevention services, promote wellbeing, support meaningful day opportunities and keep people out of hospital where possible.

The co-delivery and collaboration of these voluntary sector services that make up the recovery and wellbeing service has created an agile, knowledgeable and intrinsically motivated existing workforce within the borough. This includes peer support workers with lived experience who support the delivery of community-based interventions for people with severe and enduring mental health needs. A competitive open tender therefore remains the optimal option for delivering a high-quality community-based specialist Mental Health Recovery and Wellbeing service.

Spend

The calculated total contract value over the life of the new contract period, will be the maximum amount that may be considered following a decision to procure. The figures provided represent the maximum final value and do not include any assumed inflationary uplifts.

Any decision to uplift the contracts will be determined through a process of negotiation and in full understanding of evidence-based cost pressures prior to any agreement, and confirmation of annual increases to LLW and inflationary pressures.

The 23/24 ICB contribution for the contract is £225,930 and future NHS uplift contributions will be determined by the annually set NHS net inflator.

Contracting Approach

The Community Recovery and Wellbeing Service will be procured as a stand-alone contract and we will look for opportunities to work with the VCSE to deliver the contract to ensure we are working together to support local residents and ensure a culturally competent model is developed by community providers.

The procurement will be compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process with the requirements being developed and defined during the preparation of the Tender Pack. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract.

Examples which Suppliers may be asked to meet targets around the areas are listed below.

- Number of new contract related roles that are filled in by Tower Hamlets residents.
- Two-week paid work experience placement for Tower Hamlets residents.
- Attendance at local SME forums
- Number of Contracts let to businesses located within the geographical boundaries of Tower Hamlets.
- Commitment to provide Management time (4 - 7 years' experience) - bid writing, marketing, project management, data collection.

For the period of the contract extension, Social Value will be delivered as originally specified within the contract.

Contract Ref & Title	HAC5983 Culturally Sensitive Substance Misuse Service		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	3 + 1 = 4 Years
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital
Cost Code	21533		<input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Value Total:	£1,250,000 (Over the entire maximum contract period)	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Non Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£250,000 per Year	Budget	£250,000 per year
Current annual value	£0 per Year	Revised Annual Contract	£250,000 per Year
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

Nil savings as a new contract funded through ring fenced Substance Misuse Supplementary Grant Funding

Background

According to data from the last census, the Bangladeshi community make up over a third of the population of Tower Hamlets at 34.6% (Census 21). This is a significant population; therefore, we must provide a space for the treatment of substance using Bangladeshi and BAME individuals taking their cultural and social needs into consideration. These groups are also statistically, among the most disadvantaged in the borough. Tower Hamlets has the largest Muslim population in England and Wales, and with that, there will be a level of cultural appropriateness that we need to consider when catering to Bangladeshi and Muslim communities in the borough. The borough's current Equality Assessment identifies several inequalities facing BAME communities including employment, health inequalities, housing, and safety.

In March 2023, the Mayor identified six priority projects, one of which was to provide a culturally sensitive misuse treatment centre, as set out in our Strategic Plan 2022-2026, where inequalities, particularly those faced by Bangladeshi and Somali communities are key priority areas for the council. This project aims to support this commitment and deliver a range of services to help mitigate these inequalities .

Following on from the Mayors Priority Projects Update on the 29 March 2023, the Public Health Substance Misuse Needs Assessment identified certain areas for improvement:

- 1) Need to increase capacity in treatment
- 2) A range of culturally appropriate recovery options for the Muslim and Bangladeshi communities
- 3) A need to simplify pathways and referrals between different parts of the system that support people

Scope of Contract

This centre will provide a range of culturally sensitive services and interventions for adults at risk or in need of substance misuse treatment and recovery services in the borough.

This new provision will be delivered to compliment those currently commissioned through existing core substance misuse treatment and recovery services currently delivered via Change Grow Live, providing an alternative access and intervention offer. Services will be delivered in a culturally sensitive manner, prioritising the Muslim and Bangladeshi communities as part of the Mayors Priority Projects.

This centre will aim to provide the following core services:

Addressing stigma and promoting services

- Deliver and facilitate awareness-raising about the service and alternative treatment options in the borough to attract more users into treatment
- Deliver training as part of a borough wide schedule to share good practice within the borough and work in partnership with other treatment providers

Recovery and Treatment Interventions

- Flexible access including evening and weekend services
- Screening and assessments including screening using Audit C
- Harm reduction advice and information, including Naloxone, to both injecting users and their significant other/s
- Drop-in advice and information services
- Brief Interventions and advice around alcohol and if appropriate referral on to the alcohol service
- Groupwork programmes and 1:1 keywork sessions
- Access to Blood Borne Virus (BBV) screening and vaccination via BBV nurses
- Facilitate access to inpatient and residential services
- Women only space
- Services for partners, friends, and significant others with a focus on improving the lives of those who use substances and those affected by someone else's substance use

Sustained recovery

- Peer mentors, service user groups and co-production
- Culturally sensitive fellowship meetings
- Services to concerned family members, friends, and significant others
- Life skills kitchen

Spend

The calculated total contract value over the life of the new contract period, will be the maximum amount that may be considered following a decision to procure. The figures provided represent the maximum final value and do not include any assumed inflationary uplifts.

Any decision to uplift the contracts will be determined through a process of negotiation and in full understanding of evidence-based cost pressures prior to any agreement, and confirmation of annual increases to LLW and inflationary pressures.

Contracting Approach

The contracting approach will be finalised after completing the pre-sourcing activities which may include the analysis of the business need, market analysis / market engagement and development of the sourcing strategy. The procurement will be compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

The procurement timeframe is as follows.

Tender phase	Expected completion
Design and preparation	May 2024
Tender Open	July 2024
Contract award	August 2024
New contract start	October - November 2024

The final contract value will be based on submission within the budget from the winning bidder and will be determined through a weighted score as part of the procurement process.

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process with the requirements being developed and defined during the preparation of the Tender Pack. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract. An indication of the benefits that may be requested within the procurement process are listed below:

- Ensuring accessibility for all eligible service users with due respect to their culture and religion
- Ensuring acceptance by local community leaders and that they are fully informed about our services and supportive of them.
- Employing people with mental health problems in their service
- Employing Tower Hamlets residents in their service

Contract Ref & Title	HAR5984: SHAP Housing First		
Procurement Category:	Construction & FM	Contract Duration & Extensions:	*New Procurement Details 36 months (plus 2 months mobilisation costs) *Contract Extension Details 1 + 1 Subject to Funding
One-Time / Recurrent	One-Time	Funding Source:	<input type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	10166		
Value Total:	£ 1,237,653.16	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Non Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£ 247,364.53 2024/25 £ 396,455.89 2025/26 £ 393,759.96 2026/27 £ 200,072.78 2027/28	Budget	£____,_____m per Year *From Finance
Current annual value	N/A	Revised Annual Contract	N/A
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

Achieving savings should not be required – this is a new contract full funded by grant from central government.

Background

This project aims to provide housing outcomes for some of the most multiply disadvantaged and excluded LBTH residents. Specifically, this is a Housing First project which will provide 24 homes and intensive support to people rough sleeping. The primary target group are those within the T1000 cohort (i.e. the people with the longest histories of rough sleeping) and 50% provision is targeted for women. This project will have a significant impact on reducing numbers on the streets, removing pressure on existing rough sleeping, homelessness and hostel services, and improving housing and health outcomes for those accommodated.

Scope of Contract

The aims and outcomes of the contracted service align with the Tower Hamlets Strategic Priority 2: Homes for the Future and the specific aim to “house the homeless (including, as a priority, to house street sleepers)”. Delivery will also form a part of the action plan underpinning the strategic objectives of the forthcoming Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29. Finally, the programme also aligns with the aims of the Tower Hamlets “Ending Rough Sleeping Action Plan”, generated as DLUHC to support the delivery of our Rough Sleeping Initiative grant funding.

Contracting Approach

The contracting approach will be finalised after completing the pre-sourcing activities which may include the analysis of the business need, market analysis / market engagement and development of the sourcing strategy. The procurement will be compliant with the Council’s Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020). The contract will be procured via an open market tender for a total of 36 months plus two months mobilisation costs. The service is expected to be fully operational by October 14th 2024.

Cabinet Approval	May 2024
Design and preparation	May to June 2024
Tollgate approval	June 2024
Tender Period	July – August 2024
Contract award	August 2024
Mobilisation	August – October 2024
New Contract start date	14/10/2024

Community Benefits

Social Value will have 10% overall weighting in the tender evaluation process with the requirements being developed and defined during the preparation of the Tender Pack. This will include consideration of Social Value benefits that can reasonably be delivered within the proposed contract.

Contract Ref & Title	Co5980 Specialised Vehicle Maintenance Contract		
Procurement Category:	Corporate Services	Contract Duration & Extensions:	3 Years + 2 Years = 5 Years Total
One-Time / Recurrent	Recurrent	Funding Source:	<input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On Going <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves
Value Total:	£9m		
Value Per Annum:	£1.8m	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Non Statutory
Cost Code	53150/R3022	Budget	£2 m
Current annual value	£1.6m per Year	Revised Annual Contract	£1.6m per Year
Savings Annual Value	Not Applicable		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

Subcontracting the specialised aspects of waste vehicle maintenance to expert service providers brings savings through discounted rates on specialised parts, reduced vehicle downtime and the potential for extended vehicle lifespans, thanks to expert refurbishment of vehicle bodies. This strategy ensures our vehicles get the best care, improving their efficiency and lifespan. Furthermore, this approach reduces operational costs and improves service quality for residents.

The contract will account for projected non-scheduled repairs, which will be closely managed in conjunction with the waste services management team to ensure a constant focus on and reduction of these costs where possible.

Background

The contract due for renewal is a service maintenance contract for our specialised waste vehicles, including refuse collection vehicles and mechanical road sweepers. We are currently within a 5-year contract that began in April 2020 with Dennis Eagle, initiated as waste services were brought in-house. Our existing in-house maintenance capabilities are insufficient, primarily due to the limitations of our facilities and the specialised nature of waste collection vehicle equipment, which requires expert knowledge. This situation highlights the need for a supplier with the necessary skills and facilities to meet our specialised requirements and ensure compliance with Operator's Licence requirements.

Scope of Contract

The scope of the contract involves providing service maintenance for our fleet of specialised waste vehicles. This includes maintenance for refuse collection vehicles and mechanical road sweepers. The contract, set to be renewed, requires a supplier capable of addressing the unique maintenance needs of this specialised equipment. The supplier must possess the expertise and facilities necessary to ensure that our fleet operates efficiently, meets all regulatory compliance standards, including Operator's Licence requirements, and supports our internal waste management operations effectively.

Opting for a 5-year contract is advantageous, as frequent changes in suppliers will not result in financial savings and long-term agreement encourage suppliers to provide more competitive rates due to the continuity of service and deep familiarity with our vehicles. Additionally, aligning the contract term with the expected lifespan of the vehicles incentivises suppliers to ensure superior care, reflecting a commitment over an extended period. This strategy is expected to enhance the quality of maintenance significantly, ensuring that our vehicles remain in optimal condition.

Despite the contract being specifically for vehicles utilised by waste services, its oversight and financial management fall under the purview of the Fleet department. This arrangement ensures monitoring of Operator Licensing compliance, which is one of the primary functions of the Council's Fleet Department. It will also enable effective cost management and the integration of technical expertise. The Fleet Department's close monitoring and management of the contract, along with all associated expenditures, are critical for maintaining financial discipline and ensuring that the contract delivers value for money while adapting to the evolving needs of the waste management services.

The anticipated price of the new contract is expected to be higher than the price of the current one, primarily due to overall economic inflation and age profile of our vehicles. Additionally, the price will reflect the contract's built-in flexibility for future expansion, including the anticipated addition of vehicles for borough-wide food waste collection, URS and other service expansion and other growth initiatives. It is also important to highlight that the annual costs associated with this contract are expected to progressively increase with the age of the vehicles. This is a standard industry practice that accounts for the increased maintenance needs of older vehicles.

Contracting Approach

The contracting approach will involve either using an established and trustworthy framework, or if no suitable frameworks are available an advertised, open tender process, ensuring compliance with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

Community Benefits

As part of this procurement, a Social Value requirement will be included. The social value will be considered in the evaluation criteria for the overall tender as per the Council's procurement procedures. Bidders will be required to offer social value and community benefits based on a pre-populated matrix agreed upon by the service and procurement before the competition is issued.

Contract Ref & Title	Co5982 Purchase of URS vehicles for Waste services		
Procurement Category:	Corporate Services	Contract Duration & Extensions:	New Procurement
One-Time / Recurrent	One-Time	Funding Source:	<input type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	53150		
Value Total:	£1,460,000	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Statutory
Value Per Annum:	n/a	Budget	£1,460,000 CIL
Current annual value	n/a	Revised Annual Contract	n/a
Savings Annual Value	n/a		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

The financial savings will be realised through reduced maintenance costs, which typically accompany older equipment. Additionally, the service provided to the public will become more reliable owing to decreased downtime resulting from fewer breakdowns. This improvement will not only offer significant environmental benefits to the local community but may also lead to indirect financial advantages by avoiding potential fines or claims.

Background

Our goal is to acquire four Underground Refuse Storage (URS) vehicles to enhance our service. These specialised vehicles are used by Council Waste Services for collecting domestic waste and recycling material from underground refuse storage systems, a modern solution that has been installed at numerous communal properties throughout the borough. This innovative system replaces standard wheelie bins and is recommended to developers as a viable waste management option during the planning phase.

Scope of Contract

This procurement is designed to modernise and expand our fleet with Capital-approved funding, in response to service demands and industry standards. We aim to replace three vehicles—one that is now 12 years old and two that are 5 years old—with modern equivalents and to add a fourth vehicle as a reserve. This necessity arises from the vehicles' surpassing their typical seven-year operational lifespan, leading to increased maintenance issues and reduced reliability, which can interrupt services.

Additionally, the acquisition of an extra vehicle is critical to address the growing need created by new properties with Underground Refuse Collection systems. This will not only ensure service continuity and reliability but also support the sustainability of future services. Ultimately, this initiative will allow the Waste Services department to operate a fleet of three to four modern URS vehicles, crucial for regular preventative maintenance, MOTs, and the enhancement of safety and reliability.

The procurement and subsequent delivery of these new vehicles, executed through a 'build on-demand' model, are anticipated to take over a year due to governance and production times. This timeline highlights the urgency of replacing our aging fleet to prevent service disruptions, exacerbated by wear and tear.

Contracting Approach

The procurement process will adhere to the Council's Procurement Procedures and comply with The Public Contracts Regulations 2015, as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020.

Community Benefits

The vehicle provider will be expected to supply new, environmentally friendly models. This initiative aims to improve local air quality, reduce pollution, and align with the Council's commitment to zero-emission operations.

As part of this procurement, a Social Value requirement will be included. The social value will be considered in the evaluation criteria for the overall tender as per the Council's procurement procedures. Bidders will be required to offer social value and community benefits based on a pre-populated matrix agreed upon by the service and procurement before the competition is issued.

Contract Ref & Title	HAC5815 Extra Care Supported Housing		
Procurement Category:	Health & Care	Contract Duration & Extensions:	4 months from 1 st June to 1 st September
One-Time / Recurrent	One-Time	Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> HRA <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves <input type="checkbox"/> S106 <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue Generating
Cost Code	R5600.10242.A0559		
Value Total:	Extension value: £1,332,000	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Statutory
Value Per Annum:	£3,997,000	Budget	£3,512,853 plus uplift of £484,147 through MSIF
Current annual value	£3,997,000	Revised Annual Contract	£3,997,000
Savings Annual Value	No savings will be achieved through the contract extension period. The budget is required to deliver the current level of service, guarantee service quality and adhere to the Ethical Care Charter during the extension period. The expectation of the new contract is that the successful provider will be able to manage and sustain the care and support needs of service users with greater complexity and consequently reduce the circumstances in which users are moved from extra care sheltered housing into care homes.		

Summary of how savings will be achieved

Background

The incumbent provider of the service is Creative Support. They have been the provider since the contract was previously tendered and have consistently met the KPIs set out in the contract.

The contract has been monitored through the duration of the service and has performed, well; service users and their families have generally feedback that they are satisfied with the service provided.

CQC inspected the services in 2019 and rated them as 'good' overall.

Scope of Contract

The contract is to provide a single service that covers 6 schemes dispersed across the borough comprising 214 units. These are at Duncan Court (40 units), Donnybrook Court (40 units), Coopers Court (41 units), Sonali Gardens (40 units), Sue Starkey House (40 units) and Shipton House (13 units).

In accordance with the specification this provision provides:

- A core service at each of the 6 extra care schemes comprising 3 hours per person per week; night cover; management cover and an out of hours service.
- To those people living in extra care sheltered who need care and support above the core service they receive a flexible and responsive service based on assessed need from the provider.
- A quality premium through which the provider delivers 105 hours across the 6 schemes specifically to ensure people are engaged in meaningful opportunities both on-site and in the community.

In addition to the current specification a new service was developed during the course of the contract at 4 of the units at Sue Starkey House (included and not extra to the 214 units). This service offers 4 units of accommodation that are used to support people who are clinically able to be discharged from hospital but unable to return to where they were immediately before being admitted to hospital (commonly known as 'step-down' units).

This is a statutory service supporting vulnerable residents in need of care and support living across the Borough, there is a requirement to provide it in the interim whilst the tendering process is concluded, and a new extra care sheltered housing contract is awarded.

Contracting Approach


The current contract ends on 31st May 2024 and whilst the recommissioning and tendering process for the extra care sheltered housing services has already started with the following areas having already been finalised, the pre-tender market analysis and engagement, the preparation of revised tender documentation including a service specification, contract schedules and agreed price: quality weighting and scoring mechanism. The remaining tender process, contract award, subsequent transition and contract mobilisation still need to be undertaken. For this reason, an extension is required to accommodate this until 1st September 2024.

The procurement will be compliant with the Council's Procurement Procedures and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended by the EU Exit Regulations 2020).

Community Benefits

For the period of the contract extension, Social Value will be delivered as originally specified within the contract. In addition, as of the procurement examples of the Social Value that the Council may seek include local recruitment, apprenticeships, support for schools and young people as well as local small and medium enterprises.

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<p>Cabinet</p> <p>16 May 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Julie Lorraine, Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director – Resources</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Improving Our Homelessness Services</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development & Housebuilding
Originating Officer(s)	Nicola Klinger, Programme Lead Karen Swift, Director of Housing Leah Sykes, Interim Director of Customer Services
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Reason for Key Decision	Financial threshold
Forward Plan Notice Published	Special Urgency to be requested from Chair of OSC.
Exempt information	None
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Providing Homes for the Future Tackling the cost-of-living crisis Investing in public services

Special Circumstances justifying urgent consideration / Reasons for urgency

The cost to all local authorities of meeting their obligations to those experiencing homelessness has increased exponentially recently. Higher levels of investment have been made by Tower Hamlets. However, the additional investment made has been driven by substantial increases in 3rd party costs of temporary accommodation for a higher number of people. The consequent burden and pressures faced by internal staff teams to support the substantial increase in demand now needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Although there has been heavy investment, the lack of a suitable structuring of the service fit to deal with the changing external service landscape and demands – coupled with the omission of a comprehensive service review, redesign and new delivery plan – has compounded these issues.

This paper seeks significant additional investment to the resources available to the service, to address its fundamental structural issues driven by lack of a cogent and adapted service design and delivery plan and missing front-line resources that have been offset by an increase in management positions. This has led to a drop in

service-satisfaction for residents and inability to meet exponentially increasing demand. The investment will help to strengthen and support the invaluable work being undertaken by our skilled and professional staff teams in our current operations, and to complete a full service review and redesign underpinned by a robust delivery plan.

Executive Summary

The complexity and significance of the national housing crises alongside the London wide additional pressures associated with the characteristics of the capital's housing landscape have an amplified impact on Tower Hamlets due to the unique demographics of the Borough.

The Council's Housing Options Service is facing unprecedented levels of increasing demand and levels of complexity in homelessness cases. This is the underlying driver constraining the services' ability to discharge our statutory duties effectively. Housing is a primary corporate priority for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The Council's commitment to ensuring accessible high-quality customer centric public services drives our ambition to exceed, rather than simply meet the minimum levels of statutory housing duties.

The exponential increase in volumes of homelessness cases in Q4 (Figure 1, p3.26) to the last financial year drives an immediate call to action. Over the years, there has been reconfiguring of resources, which has seen resources moved from the front end of the service into management positions. This – alongside the growing demand on the service – has had a negative impact on the service's ability to adapt to these demands and deliver. We do not have the luxury of waiting for longer term transformation to materialise - we need to act now, or we will not resource the bigger changes effectively.

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Although there has been heavy investment, the lack of a suitable structuring of the service fit to deal with the changing external service landscape and demands – coupled with the omission of a comprehensive service review, redesign and new delivery plan – has compounded these issues.

This paper seeks significant additional investment to the resources available to the service, to address its fundamental structural issues driven by lack of a cogent and adapted service design and delivery plan and missing front-line resources that have been offset by an increase in management positions. This has led to a drop in service-satisfaction for residents and inability to meet exponentially increasing demand. The investment will help to strengthen and support the invaluable work being undertaken by our skilled and professional staff teams in our current operations, and to complete a full service review and redesign underpinned by a robust delivery plan.

This report sets out a recommendation to immediately invest in additional resources for frontline services to:

- Develop capacity on the frontline to provide an empathetic and dignified response to every service user seeking support.
- Address the pressures within the service caused by increasing demands including high caseloads and backlogs.
- Alleviate pressures on the workforce and build capacity for staff to access additional support and development.
- Implement expanded face to face service hours to provide those in need with wider access to the service including later opening hours on weekdays and on a Saturday morning.
- Secure improvements to the council's telephony services providing benefits to the wider organisations.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the immediate release £1.93m additional revenue allocation from the council's budgeted service contingency general fund provision for improvements to the Housing Options homelessness services as summarised in section 3.5 and detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
2. Agree that the service improvements will include:
 - Development of capacity on the frontline to provide an empathetic and dignified response to every service user seeking support by identifying gaps, shortages and whether there are capacity and skills issues.
 - A full and complete service review and redesign, with immediate reorganisation to be initiated.
 - Cultural and structural changes, to prevent staff churn and ensure that the newly recruited frontline workers are retained within the organisation.
 - Review of the structural composition of the service to identify key issues that may be affecting service delivery.
 - Review senior management arrangements and the performance across the service to understand the relationship with frontline workers, both outward-facing and in the back office.
 - Establish a service review, with a view to creating a revised and refreshed service delivery plan to address key areas of cultural concerns and staffing shortages in the service.
3. Establish a special taskforce designed to give focused and prioritised attention to overseeing the recruitment and restructuring of the service. This will include the Corporate Directors for Resources and Housing and Regeneration (or representative), a representative from the Mayor's Office, representatives from the Council's recognised Trade Unions and delegates from the service.

4. Note the allocation of this additional funding in the current year will be built into the Medium-Term financial planning for future years and is not forecast to compromise the council's sustainable financial position across the current medium.
5. Note contingency sums for the current year have been set aside within the approved budget for exactly such specific purpose. Our MTFs was approved by members with explicit reference to demand-based risks relating to temporary accommodation. Further information and assurance are set out in the Chief Financial Officer's comments at section 6 of this report.
6. Note all impact on staffing will be compliant with the council's stated principles of focussing investment in front line services, protecting the lowest paid and avoiding compulsory redundancy situations wherever possible.
7. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4 of this report.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The national housing crisis is a pressing issue affecting millions of people across the United Kingdom. The national crisis affects London more than other places because of its large population, economy, and housing market conditions, and this is especially true in Tower Hamlets.
- 1.2 The Mayor and Elected Members have made clear their expectations for the service delivery model the council seeks to secure. Concerns with the performance of the service expressed publicly by the Mayor and elected members have been underpinned by feedback from several residents who have expressed dissatisfaction at their customer journey. It is evident that there is a critical need for a service review, redesign and robust delivery plan.
- 1.3 The Housing Options Service is facing increasing demand and increasing levels of complexity in cases, which is constraining the services' ability to provide the best service to residents, address staff concerns and mitigate risks to the council's ability to discharge its statutory service obligations to a high standard. Frontline staff feel under-resourced and overworked, and in need of additional resources and support.
- 1.4 The exponential increase in demand is evidenced in the remarkable increase in those we owe a homelessness duty to - up 7% on the previous quarter and 9% compared to Q4 in the previous year.
- 1.5 The consequent pressure on the homelessness service is illustrated by the volume of caseloads, caseload volumes which have significantly increased and double that of the optimum level.

- 1.6 There is also a cultural issue between senior management and frontline staff. Staff have formally raised this through a collective grievance as well as staff engagement sessions. The lack of support felt by frontline staff is resulting in an inhibited ability to support residents and provide an empathetic and dignified service. Frontline workers cannot be reasonably expected to provide the best support to residents if they do not feel supported themselves.
- 1.7 The Service Improvement Programme will see a full review of the processes, organisation, and structures of the entire Housing Options service. Changes need to be made to the most senior management structures both to drive and enable improvements, and to respond to the current high demand.
- 1.8 The Service Improvement Programme for Housing Options will deliver transformative improvements including expansion of the service operating hours; however, these improvements will not be realised unless the immediate cultural, structural, and resourcing challenges are resolved at pace. The timeline for the wider transformation programme is attached at appendices 2.
- 1.9 The following guiding principles set out the outcomes required of the transformation programme:
- Monday – Friday 9am to 8pm opening hours
 - Saturday morning 9 am to 12 noon opening hours
 - 24-hour access to a form of service that can be accessed virtually
 - An analysis of the capacity of the front end of the service through service design to identify gaps and shortages, with findings to be addressed through a new service delivery plan.
 - An appropriately resourced and enhanced rota available during out of hours in order that we can respond more efficiently to those in need.
 - A re-alignment of generic and specialist front and back-office resources to secure and enhance telephony service that will benefit the housing options service and the wider council.
- 1.10 By investing in frontline services now, the Council will:
- Develop capacity on the frontline to provide an empathetic and dignified response to every service user seeking support.
 - Identify the gaps and issues with the current structure and delivery model of the service to facilitate and implement a long-term service plan and redesign to address ongoing pressures.
 - Address the pressures within the service caused by increasing demands including high caseloads and backlogs.

- Alleviate pressures on a dissatisfied workforce and build capacity for staff to access additional support and development.
- Develop and implement expanded face to face service hours to provide those in need with wider access to the service operating longer opening hours on weekdays and on a Saturday morning.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

2.1 The first alternative option is to not invest additional resources (or invest less resources) in the service. The risks of this are:

- Lack of capacity within the service and failing to mitigate the risk of repeating service failures. For example, mitigating actions committed to ensuring the issues recently been identified by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman are never repeated.
- Inability to provide the best service to service users and residents.
- Low service user satisfaction and increasing complaints.
- Low workforce satisfaction, high workplace stress and increasing sickness absence/retention issues.
- Inability to transform service and achieve improvements.

2.2 The second alternative option is to invest further resource (beyond that recommended), which would further build capacity within the services.

2.3 However, alongside the budgetary impact of further investment, it should be considered that the Service Improvement Programme will be assessing best use of resources, focussing on improving productivity and creating capacity by streamlining processes with significant investment in outcome focussed innovative technology. This in turn may drive a comprehensive reorganisation of the service. Any further need for additional resource over and above that requested at this time will be subject to detailed consideration by elected members.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 National policy and context

3.1.1 The Homelessness Act (2002) sets out the definition of homelessness, and the duties that local authorities owe to applicants who are accepted as being homeless or threatened with homelessness, while Part 7 of the Housing Act (1996) provides the primary homelessness legislation setting out the statutory duties on local housing authorities to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to those who are at risk of being homeless or actually homeless. The Localism Act (2011) also amended the 1996 Housing Act by allowing local authorities to discharge their homelessness duty by arranging

a suitable offer of accommodation in the private rented sector.

3.1.2 The most recent and notable change in legislation came from the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA 2017). The Act implemented on 3 April 2018 placed new duties on local housing authorities to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, not just those that have priority need under the Act. This legislation sought to provide increased protection to people facing homelessness. It extended the length of time an individual or household could be seen as at risk of homelessness, from 28 to 56 days, which in turn increased the length of a local housing authority's prevention duty.

3.1.3 The changes the HRA (2017) effected from 3 April 2018 included:

- A new 'prevention duty', requiring local authorities to take reasonable steps to assist those likely to become homeless earlier, so within 56, rather than 28 days.
- A new 'relief duty', which applies to those already homeless when they ask the local authority for help. It requires local authorities to provide support for 56 days.
- A requirement to carry out a holistic assessment of the applicant's housing and support needs (free advice to anyone in a local authority, whether they are owed a duty or not) and to set out how these will be addressed in a 'personal housing plan' which sets out the steps that will be taken by the applicant (and the local authority) to stay in or find suitable accommodation.

3.1.4 More recently, the enactment of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) has placed a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to survivors of domestic abuse and their children. All eligible homeless survivors of domestic abuse automatically receive 'priority need' status for homelessness assistance - providing re-assurance and certainty for individuals and their families presenting as homeless because of domestic abuse and simplifying the decision-making process for officers.

3.1.5 The Act also introduced a new definition of domestic abuse and requires that local housing authorities, should provide a secure lifetime tenancy to applicants who held a similar security of tenure in the past. The new priority need category means councils should no longer assess whether someone at risk of domestic abuse is also vulnerable to access assistance.

3.1.6 Tower Hamlets has not been immune to the nationwide cost of living crisis which has seen increasing fuel and energy prices coupled with negative economic growth - resulting in a dire situation for the national and local economy. This poses a significant challenge to all of our residents but particularly those already facing precarious financial situations and struggling

to meet housing costs.

- 3.1.7 Increasing house prices, rising private sector rents and the reduced income many households have experienced because of the pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis have all contributed to the rise in homelessness.
- 3.1.8 The current cost-of-living crisis has seen a decline in households living standards with lower wages, higher inflation, rising energy, fuel and housing costs all contributing to and increasing the pressures on households and in turn driving demand for support and assistance on local authorities and the third sector. Rising rent costs in the Private Rent Sector as well as mortgage interest rate rises are already increasing the pressures on local authorities' homelessness services who (prior to the pandemic) had already been beset by austerity and reductions in public finance.
- 3.1.9 These pressures undoubtedly put further strain on people's finances and will in many cases lead to homelessness as stagnating wages struggle to keep up with rising rents, food, and energy costs.

3.2 Local context

- 3.2.1 Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) has brought additional assistance for those at risk of homelessness but has increased the number of applicants qualifying for assistance, further stretching the resources of local authority housing needs teams. While new burdens funding was provided by the government to assist local authorities with their new responsibilities, the rising costs for local authorities has increased due to the increased costs of providing assistance.
- 3.2.2 The pressures on homelessness and temporary accommodation are London-wide challenges, with London Council's latest data collection (published on 3 May 2024) finding that:
- Homelessness presentations continue to increase year-on-year, rising by 17% in January 2024 compared to the previous year.
 - In January 2024, 28 London councils reported the number of households owed a prevention or relief duty increased by 6.3% on a year earlier.
 - The number of households living in temporary accommodation in January 2024 was 8.4% higher than the year before, rising from 52,963 to 57,437 households.
 - The number of families living in B&B accommodation over 26 boroughs in January 2024 rose by 70% compared to the prior year, and there was an increase of 131% of those living in B&Bs for beyond the six-week limit,

compared to the prior year.

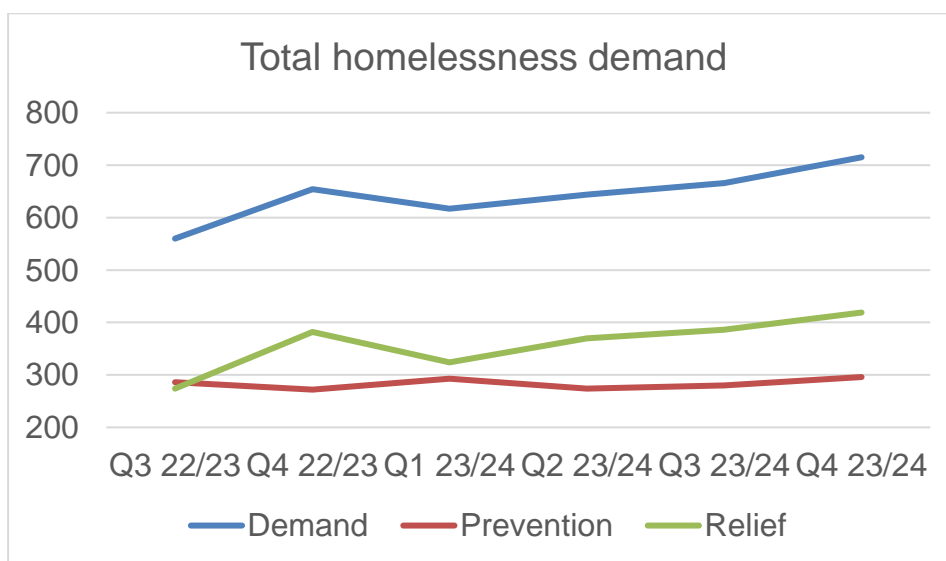
- Data from 22 councils shows the gross total monthly TA spend for January 2024 is up 28.1% on the year before, reaching £65.2m.

3.2.3 Since 2018, data suggests that the Council has seen a higher number of households accessing our housing options and advice services, as well as an increase in the number of residents who have been placed in temporary accommodation.

3.2.4 Currently, there are more than 24,000 applicants on the Council’s Housing Register; this number has continued to increase over the last year (a 4% increase compared to April 2023).

3.2.5 In the last quarter, there were 715 households assessed as owed a homelessness duty; this represents a continuous rise in demand (15% rise when compared with the same quarter of the previous year). In total, homelessness demand in the year 2023/24 increased by 17% compared to 2022/23. This followed a 20% increase seen in the year 2023/24 compared to the prior year, demonstrating the consistent rise in homelessness and demand for homelessness services.

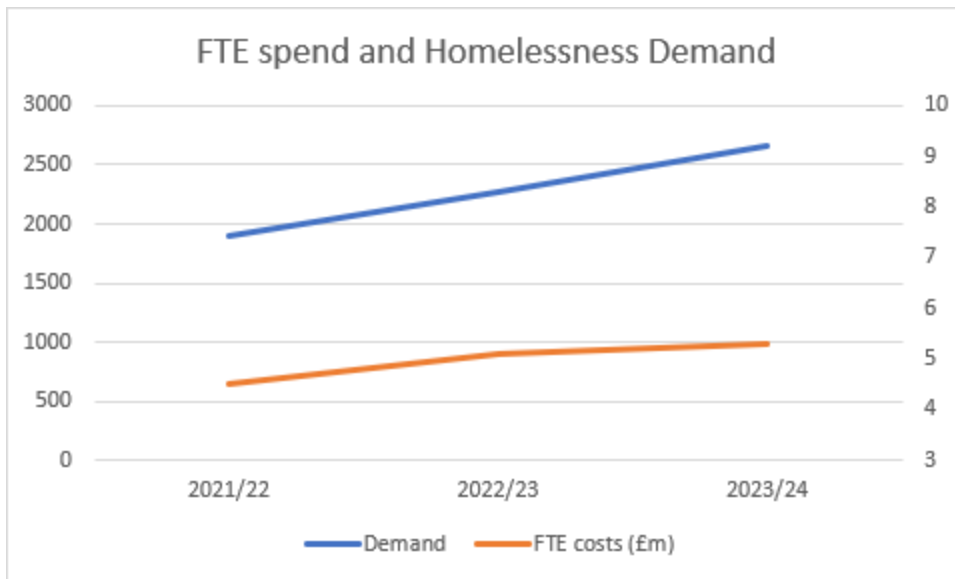
3.2.6 Figure 1: Exponential increase in homelessness demand over time



3.2.7 The continued increase in demand can be seen in Q4 2023/24, with households owed duty increased by 7% on the previous quarter, and 9% compared to Q4 in the previous year.

3.2.8 This follows on from increasing demand in previous years, with homelessness demand consistently increasing over the past three years.

3.2.9 Figure 2: Increase in homelessness demand and staff costs



- 3.2.10 Figure 2 demonstrates the rising demand in homelessness and full-time equivalent spend between 2021/22 and 2023/24.
- 3.2.11 In an average month, the service receives 3,800 phone calls and 1,400 visits to the Residents' Hub related to Housing. There has been a 25% increase in demand since moving to the new Town Hall in Whitechapel (with 251 extra applications from Jan – June 2023 compared to the previous 6 months).
- 3.2.12 Key causes of homelessness are eviction by friends and family and end of private rented tenancy, with cases of PRS homelessness doubling in 2022/23, a rise of 97% compared to the previous year. Following that rise, Q1 2023/24 of PRS homelessness was up by 49%, compared to Q1 2022/23.
- 3.2.13 This overall increase in demand has led to a continuous rise in the number of households living in temporary accommodation. At the end of Q4 2023/24 there were 3,110 households living in temporary accommodation, an increase of 21% compared to the same time last year.
- 3.2.14 Our latest estimates indicate that 2024/25 we will see at least a 10% increase in those customers presenting as homeless although this could be higher due to the current financial climate. To ensure we are prepared, we will continue to use data to plan and work in an agile way. Our resourcing decisions are data led and agile and the above case load analyses has been used as the basis for the additional front-line resources recommended, this will help us future-proof our ability to meet best value obligations.

3.3 Caseload analysis

3.3.1 Figure 3: Increase in caseload volumes

Period	Grand Total	Monthly Average	Average Caseload
2020	2,069	172	34
2021	2,170	181	36
2022	2,298	192	38
2023	3,173	264	53
2024	1,145	286	57

3.3.2 There has been a rapid increase in caseload volumes, particularly over the past year, with the increase in cases rapidly rising in 2023 and continuing that trajectory into 2024.

3.3.3 The optimum casework volume is thirty (almost half the current caseload), which would allow the service to provide a high-quality service to our customers and improve staff wellbeing.

3.3.4 This evidences the sheer pressure and overwhelm on frontline resources, and immediate need for additional investment in the service to meet demand.

N.B: It cannot be guaranteed that all cases have been identified and it is likely that there are more cases yet to be identified; this is under investigation. The caseload is an average for all teams, and some teams may have higher caseloads than the average.

3.4 Analysis of current situation

3.4.1 There is a high demand and limited supply of social housing and suitable temporary accommodation, which is putting the service under significant pressure.

3.4.2 This also leads to complex and challenging issues such as overcrowding, damp and mould, and rough sleeping.

3.4.3 As well as the volume of demand, the complexity of casework is also increasing.

3.4.4 This, alongside high staff attrition and elevated levels of sickness absence, is creating significant pressure on the service meaning there is no time or resource within the service to do anything but be reactive.

3.4.5 For example, due to resource pressures, the service is not able to adequately quality assure casework (as identified in a recent internal audit) or manage casework so that it is completed in a timely way, preventing backlogs. This

has a serious impact on the service and customer experience.

- 3.4.6 There is also a cultural issue between senior management and frontline staff. Staff have formally raised this through a collective grievance as well as staff engagement sessions. The lack of support felt by frontline staff is resulting in an inhibited ability to support residents and provide an empathetic and dignified service. Frontline workers cannot be reasonably expected to provide the best support to residents if they do not feel supported themselves.
- 3.4.7 Further, frontline staff and managers' emotional capacity to be empathetic and support customers with complex/challenging needs is diminished. There is limited space for reflection or ability to get/provide wellbeing support "on the job", for example after a frontline worker has managed a complex case involving prominent levels of trauma, they need to immediately address the next case due to pressures in the system. This is undoubtedly impacting customers' experience and the customer journey, as well as staff attrition and workplace stress.
- 3.4.8 Staff within the service have low satisfaction with their working environment and have raised several concerns. While immediate concerns raised by staff about their working environment are being addressed, particularly in relation to concerns around health and safety, additional resource is required to support staff wellbeing, capacity to develop and general satisfaction by alleviating the significant pressure on staff individually and the service as a whole.
- 3.4.9 For example, by increasing resource on the frontline, the Residents' Hub could be opened for longer hours while simultaneously ensuring rotas are developed so that shifts are staggered, and staff are not working long hours. This will be reviewed within the Service Improvement Transformation Programme.
- 3.4.10 It is indisputable that the current situation demonstrates that a service wide review, restructure, redesign, and improvement plan - that empathises and focuses on culture and trust between frontline staff and Senior Management, and by extension between frontline staff and residents - is critical.
- 3.4.11 It is known that improvements are required to the entire service across multiple areas (e.g. service standard, ICT, strategy and vision, policies and procedures, customer journey, Value for Money, staff wellbeing and training, trust and culture, and partnership working) and these will be addressed by the Service Improvement Programme. That said, there is currently limited capacity to affect change and drive these improvements at the pace required, particularly while the service is facing significant pressure and largely reactive.
- 3.4.12 While both challenges and solutions are well understood, there is a lack of resource (both within the service and by way of dedicated support) to rapidly implement solutions, react strategically to challenges and develop sustainability within the service.

3.5 Immediate investment in resources

3.5.1 The required investment in services is concentrated on frontline roles with the investment creating thirty-four new roles with a sustainable funding source to meet the increasing demand and footfall and address backlogs, as well as extend hours that residents can access a face-to-face service.

3.5.2 Of the thirty-four posts, thirty are frontline posts across teams within either Homelessness and Rough Sleeping or Temporary Accommodation and Procurement including:

- “Front door” Lead Professional team
- Vulnerable singles – HOST Complex
- Complex Assessment Team
- Emergency Bookings and Allocations Team (Temporary Accommodation)
- Customer services – Whitechapel Residents’ Hub

3.5.3 The remaining four roles will help us ensure we are continuously improving and increase our capacity for quality assurance. These roles will assist in identifying trends to improve the customer experience and reduce the volume of complaints and ombudsman cases. This is a crucial step in our commitment to provide the best possible service to our customers

- Head of Homelessness– to bring together homelessness and temporary accommodation functions under one operational manager.
- Service Improvement Practitioner – to be ringfenced and recruited to from service to ensure staff voice is heard, implanting service improvements with operational expertise at pace and bringing staff along on the transformational journey, while also offering opportunity for an existing staff member to develop.
- Senior Legal Officer – to take the significant increase in judicial reviews and complaints and local government Ombudsman complaints, relieving pressure on frontline staff who are currently drafting responses as part of their roles.
- Accommodation Procurement Specialist – to support the increase required in Private Rented Sector (PRS) and Temporary Accommodation (TA) properties to reduce the number of households in unsuitable accommodation including B&Bs/hotels.

3.5.4 The roles set out in Appendix 1 are either additional roles to those currently in the establishment, or the conversion of fixed term roles to permanent roles. This approach will support recruitment and retention as well as sustainability and security within the service.

3.5.5 These additional roles and their impact on the service will be reviewed as part of the broader service review; delivery plan; and special attention given to a prospective service-wide restructuring.

3.6 Specialist triage team

- 3.6.1 A realignment of generic and specialist front and back-offices resources will be undertaken to secure and enhance telephony services.
- 3.6.2 A specialist triage team will be created both to improve the customer experience and to streamline the entire process, creating efficiencies within the service and wider corporate customer services.
- 3.6.3 The team will provide expert homelessness advice at the first point of contact, making sure that 'the first advice is the best advice'. This will significantly improve the customer experience and ability to get customers the right support straight away.
- 3.6.4 It will produce efficiencies by creating capacity within the wider teams to complete casework, which will in turn reduce the creation of backlogs and requirement to dedicate additional resources to casework and backlogs.
- 3.6.5 Further, efficiencies will be generated by gaining capacity within the wider telephony service, which serves customers across the wider council.

3.7 Separation of strategic and operational functions

- 3.7.1 The Service Improvement Programme will see a full review of the processes, organisation, and structures of the entire Housing Options service.
- 3.7.2 At this stage, proposals for the new structure of the Housing and Regeneration directorate propose that changes are made to the most senior management structures both to drive and enable improvements, and to respond to the current high demand.
- 3.7.3 This will separate the strategic and operational roles and responsibilities of the current Housing division, so that there would be:

An operational-focused Housing Solutions division which will focus on reducing homelessness and improving the customer journey for people needing temporary accommodation under the Council's statutory obligations and accessing homes through a strengthened acquisition approach and PRS function.

A strategic Housing Policy and Strategy division which will be a strengthened policy function for housing and homelessness strategy, embedding coherent forward-looking governance, shaping future services and ensuring that we have a robust approach to compliance with regulation and new national policy initiatives.

- 3.7.4 These proposals are in formative stage, the high-level indicative structure of the housing and regeneration directorate is included in a report to the HR committee on 16th May 2024. Many of the essential and more immediate

changes described above, such as changes to line management of the homelessness team will be subject to any relevant staff consultation, however, immediate temporary arrangements will be made to respond to the immediate context and needs of the service.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Investing additional resources in the frontline will have a positive impact on vulnerable residents or groups who may be experience inequalities in housing by increasing the capacity and ability of services to provide a tailored and empathetic service to residents.
- 4.2 Increasing capacity and alleviating pressure on individuals and the service will support staff health and wellbeing and contribute all round to the improvements being sought within the Service Improvement Programme.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 places a statutory duty on the Council to prevent homelessness (the Prevention Duty) and to give relief to those already homeless (the Relief Duty).
- 5.3 The Council has a statutory duty to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness; Duty can be discharged through offer of a suitable home in the private rented sector (PRS).
- 5.4 S.188 interim accommodation duty – temporary accommodation duty to homeless families and vulnerable adults ('priority need' groups) with recourse.
- 5.5 S.193 full housing duty – owed to unintentionally homeless households with priority need. Duty can be discharged through offer of a suitable home in the private rented sector (PRS).

- 5.6 The Housing Act 1996 requires local authorities to have an allocation scheme. Within this they must give reasonable preference (i.e., give certain groups an advantage over other groups that have a lesser or no housing need), in their allocations policies to people with high levels of assessed housing need.
- 5.7 In keeping with our commitment to best value, these additional resources seek to secure immediate capacity improvement. This agile investment is not being done in isolation, in parallel we are currently considering options for further efficiencies in our supply chain and fast-tracking acquisitions to grow our own TA stock within the Housing Revenue Account as the cost of TA is the greatest single pressure the general fund currently faces.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The report requests funding of £1.93m to address and improve Housing options homelessness services. This will be met from the approved current year's revenue contingency budget. This budget is set aside to address critical risks such as Homelessness and to avoid any additional cost pressures. Future ongoing costs will be accommodated within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) during the 2024-2025 budget setting, ensuring that this can be achieved without reliance on reserves or contingency budgets.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 This report requests additional funding for the improvement of the Housing Options Service to include the provision of additional staffing resources and a review of the current service which may include potential changes to current terms and conditions relating to hours of work and shift patterns for existing staff.
- 7.2 Improvements to the service will assist the Council in meeting its statutory obligations with regard to homeless assistance and the increasing demands on the current service.
- 7.3 Any proposed changes to terms and conditions of existing employees must be implemented in line with the Council's Organisational Change process.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Details of Additional Investment Required
- Appendix 2 - Housing Options Transformation Programme Timeline

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

Details of Additional Investment Required

Service Area	Title of post	Job function	Reasons for immediate investment	Number of post(s)	Grade	Cost 1 post p.a. (with on-costs)	Total cost p.a.
Lead Professional Team	Lead Professional - Specialist Triage	Case Officers	Unprecedented increase in approaches via all channels. Requirements of Homelessness Reduction Act resulting in extensive written casework and on-going engagement with clients.	6	I	£56,986	£341,916
HOST	Host Officers	Provide front-line homelessness service to complex single applicants with high needs	Exponential increase in footfall of homelessness approach and complexities of the support needs of clients requiring intensive case work and multi disciplinary interfacing to resolving homelessness.	5	H	£51,911	£259,555
HOST/LP	Housing Floating Support for Singles	Offer support and guidance to vulnerable and complex need applicants	Front line casework support, risks of serious incidents and to manage ASB and prevent eviction from T/A and street homeless	2	H	£51,911	£103,822
HOST	Team Principal	To manage a team of HOST officers to deliver front line service and tackle backlog	Increase number of case workers requiring TP to line manage them.	1	J	£62,620	£62,620
Complex Advice Team	Complex Assessment Officer	The Complex Advice Team works on cases that are complex in nature and is a specialist team, such as completing intentionality decisions and cases where thorough technical knowledge is required.	It has seen a growth and also is focusing on large numbers of back log cases that has formed across the service. Cases have gone past statutory time frames for processing, the Ombudsman has also requested an update on back log cases. It is essential that this additional resource is made available to tackle the backlog of homelessness cases.	2	I	£56,986	£113,972
Homelessness	Visiting officers	Casework and home visits for verification of homelessness.	To tackle increased homeless presentations. To confirm the veracity of homeless applications. Increase homeless prevention work which will include mediation.	1	H	£51,911	£51,911

Housing Management & Procurement	Housing Options Assistant	Admin support staff for front-line teams – Clearing mailboxes and all forms of backlog work for customer service delivery. Screening daily customer calls and emails for more bespoke advice on customer service and expectation management across the service provision for the 6 teams. Including, collating information for data returns, FOI's and being a single point of call to deal with complaints etc	To respond to growth and demand, clear backlog and be single point of contact to deal with complaints.	1	F	£44,954	£44,954
Housing Management & Procurement	Bookings officer	Front-line emergency officers. Clearing backlogs, undertaking suitability matching for applicants between TA	Frontline support people in hotels	2	H	£51,911	£103,822
Housing Management & Procurement	Housing Officer	Front-line officers for TA residents in B&B. Providing robust support to residents who need assistance from an officer for a range of enquiries relating to housing issues, repairs, Move-on, case management and contributing to increasing customer service level.	To respond to growth and demand and clear backlogs.	2	H	£51,911	£103,822
Housing Advice Team	Housing Advice Officers	1: Only deal with back log of HAT cases, where some officers have over 100 cases, one close to 200 2: Focus will be clearing this, will not be expected to cover duty	1: Increased demand and work load 2: Build up of back log cases 3: Increased complaints and Ombudsman escalations of HAT cases.	3	I	£56,986	£170,958
Housing Management & Procurement	Enforcement Officer	To deal with tenancy issues in TA accommodation, including complex ASB, sub-letting and fraud.	To extend this role to ensure people can sustain their tenancies and mediate between tenants and their landlords. This relieves pressure on housing officers and frontline services.	1	I	£56,986	£56,986
Housing Management & Procurement	Accommodation Procurement officer	To support the increase required in PRS and TA accommodation to reduce the number of households in unsuitable accommodation.	1 x growth, to increase supply of T/A critical to reducing B7B costs	1	I	£56,986	£56,986
Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation	Head of Homelessness	Manage front-line and service improvements	Bring together homelessness and temporary accommodation to provide operational	1	P	£114,746	£114,746

Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation	Service Improvement Practitioner	To join management team and be voice for staff, sitting on transformation board and providing operational input into service improvement.	Ensure staff voice is heard and service improvements can be made at pace and bringing staff along on this.	1	L	£73,369	£73,369
All	Senior Legal Officer	To assume responsibility and ensure detailed and adequate responses for: Judicial Reviews, complaint escalation (Stage 1&2's) Complex ME's, JRS and PAP's, LGO's. To oversee and lead on data return and reconciliation.	To tackle significant increase in judicial reviews and complaints and local government ombudsman's complaints.	1	K	£67,931	£67,931
Customer Service	Customer Service Advisor	Provide front-line service in resident hubs for the extended hours.	To enable extended opening hours at Whitechapel Residents' Hub	4	G	£50,268	£201,072
Total Number of posts				34		Total annual cost	1,928,442

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Housing Options High Level Transformation Programme Timeline

Aim:

Delivery transformative improvements to the Housing Options service, enabling enhanced service delivery and more efficient and effective support for those in need. Communication and engagement with staff and service users will be crucial throughout the programme.

Expected outcomes:

- Increased capacity to meet rising demand for Housing Options services.
- Improved service delivery through expanded operating hours and dedicated staff resources.
- Enhanced customer experience through faster response times and quality service interactions.
- Reduced staff stress and improved morale through workload management and support systems.
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness of the Housing Options service.
- Stronger foundations for future service enhancements and adaptation to meet evolving needs.

Note that the below timeline is subject to:

- Approval of the requested £1.59 million additional revenue allocation.
- Change based on unforeseen circumstances or project progress.
- Full support from staff, Trade Unions and corporate leadership.

Phase 1: immediate actions (May – June 2024)
May
Secure funding approval
Initiate recruitment for 26 – 27 new staff positions (confirmation needed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on frontline roles in homelessness, rough sleeping, temporary accommodation, and procurement - Include leadership positions (Head of Homelessness, Service Improvement Practitioner) - Prioritise staff wellbeing and retention by converting temporary positions to permanent
Finalise detailed Service Improvement Programme timeline reflecting confirmed number of new hires
June
Develop temporary arrangements for separation of strategic and operational functions within Housing (Housing Solutions and Housing Policy and Strategy divisions).

Conduct initial consultation with staff regarding potential service structure changes.
Phase 2: Implementation and Review (July – December 2024)
July
Finalise the new Housing and Regeneration directorate structure with separated divisions
Conclude staff consultations and implement revised service structure (including potential reorganisation of Housing Options)
Begin training and onboarding new staff members
August – September
Launch expanded service operating hours based on available resources (e.g.: weekdays, Saturday mornings)
Launch specialist triage with appropriate training.
Initiate reviews of service standards, ICT systems, customer journey, staff wellbeing, and partnerships
Develop and pilot key service improvement initiatives identified in the Service Improvement Programme
October – December
Implement and monitor effectiveness of service improvement initiatives
Make adjustments as needed on data and feedback
Begin developing long-term sustainability plans for service improvements
Phase 3: ongoing monitoring and development (January 2025 onwards)
Continuously monitor performance metrics to assess the impact of service improvements
Gather feedback from staff and service users to identify areas for further improvement
Implement new national policy initiatives related to homelessness
Conduct regular reviews of the Service Improvement Programme and adjust strategies as needed

Head of Homelessness – Overview of role and responsibilities

The occupier of this role will be responsible for the operational management and development of the Council's Homelessness service. They will be responsible for overseeing the functions of homelessness prevention, assessments, access to supported housing, rough sleeping, Reviews and delivery of homelessness services.

The post holder will be responsible for the implementation of strategies and service improvements, working collaboratively with the Director of Housing Options and Homelessness and other senior managers to deliver an effective multi-agency partnership which provides an excellent service for both customers and partner organisations.

Key responsibilities:

- Lead, direct, and be accountable for the performance of all staff within the Homelessness service. To develop and maintain a culture of customer-centric services and robust performance management.
- To have direct responsibility for the management of the homelessness prevention budget, working closely with Finance colleagues to track budgets and identify any efficiency savings required.
- To be responsible for driving consistent operational improvement and implementing a wider transformation of the Homelessness service.
- To advise on and ensure delivery of strategies and direct service improvements related to meeting the council's prevention and relief duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, including the council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- To manage relationships other local authorities, public sector and voluntary sector organisations and any other key stakeholders.
- Be responsible for issues around performance, conduct, sickness, disciplinary matters and grievance in accordance with Council policies.
- To be responsible for providing adequate resources, training and support for staff to enable them to fulfil their contractual duties and develop professionally.
- To oversee and protect the Council's reputation and position in Court as and when may be required either when challenged or when the council is pursuing a legal challenge against a landlord.
- To ensure effective management of resources through defining priorities and securing appropriate resources to meet requires standards and achieve the Council's objectives.
- To directly line manage the allocated Management posts within the agreed Service Area and the wider agreed service portfolio and oversee the management function of the service.
- To deputise for the Director of Housing or other senior managers and represent the Service internally and externally.

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