

Cabinet

14 December 2023

Accommodation Related Support Services Approval to Tender

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Approves proceeding with the proposals to re-structure Housing Related Support (HRS) services to support delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings 2025 – 2026; endorsing the recommendations on the service redesign outlined in section 5 of this report.
2. Authorises the commencement of procurement activity to implement the proposals and delegates to the Executive Directors for Children and Young People and Social Care and Health (in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Children and Families and Social Care and Health) the implementation of the proposals, including the de-commissioning of existing Housing Related Support services and the subsequent award of the redesigned Accommodation Related Support contracts and entering into of agreements required to implement this decision on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director of Resources.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Accommodation Related Support Services are offered to young people (16 - 25 years) and adults (25+). Young People and Adult Accommodation Related Support Services offers early intervention and prevention and supports the Local Authority to meet the requirements outlined in Children and Families and Adult Social Care legislation.
- 1.2. The Council MTFS savings require a budget reduction of £1 million in 2025-26. To align with current contract length new services will be procured to commence from April 2025.
- 1.3. A public consultation on the redesign proposals opened on 22nd May 2023 and closed on 11th August 2023. (Appendix 1 - HRS Redesign Public Information Document). The consultation report outlines feedback on the redesign proposals which have informed the final redesigned service model to be commissioned. (Appendices 2 and 3). Key messages from the consultation feedback are summarised in this report.

- 1.4. The proposed new services will be referred to as Accommodation Related Support Services. The services will offer holistic and personalised support to meet need; promoting wellbeing, safety, resilience, independence, recovery and reablement to prevent, reduce and/or delay an individual's need for on-going care and support.
- 1.5. To realise our duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and having due regard for the impact of these proposals on protected groups under the Act, we have reviewed and updated the Equality Impact Assessment after the consultation and final service redesign proposed; Equality Impact Assessment Summary (Appendix 4), Equality Impact Assessment Version 2 Updated (Appendix 5).
- 1.6. The procurement for the new Accommodation Related Support Service will commence with publication of the notice in February 2024, followed by Contract Award in June 2024 and Contract Start in April 2025.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 As part of the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget each year, in February 2023 Warwickshire County Council reapproved a saving of £1million from the Accommodation Related Support annual budget from the 2025/26 financial year.
- 2.2 Consultation has been completed on the proposal for the redesign of these services to become more efficient and effective and improve the customer journey, within the reduced budget. The final proposals will to some extent reduce the impact of the funding reductions whilst targeting the resource at those in greatest need, preventing escalation to care services and maintaining a focus on positive outcomes.
- 2.3 Following development and consultation about the service redesign, finalised proposals have been reached to support the £1 million savings by 2025/26. The current total contract value across Adults and Young People (16-24 years) of £3,855,468 p.a. will reduce to £2,855,468 p.a. subject to any inflationary uplift that occurs in April 2024.
- 2.4 It is proposed that Warwickshire County Council commission the services with a contract term of five years, with options to extend for up to a further five years (5 + 5 years). The aggregate cost of a five-year term at £2,855,468 p.a. would be £14,277,340 million, and £28,554,680 million if the full ten-year extension period is realised, subject to any annual inflation award agreed by the Council. This supports greater efficiencies and reduces the risk of the reduced budget being unattractive to providers and helps stimulate the market. This ultimately provides the Council with greater choice and improved chances of securing good value for money services for its customers.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 There are some environmental implications regarding the delivery of this work; key factors are: energy and water use, waste management, recycling, emissions and eco-friendly office and business travel policies.
- 3.2 We would look to undertake a rigorous tendering process and expect providers to demonstrate a good awareness and commitment to environmental factors. This may include:
- ISO 14001 approved Environmental Management System or equivalent
 - All staff/volunteers receive environmental awareness training
 - Targets around reduced energy consumption year-on-year in delivery
 - Low emission for any company vehicles
 - All offices/homes contain recycling equipment
 - Preference given to refurbished and/or re-cycled products
 - IT waste wiped, re-purposed, or recycled under The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE).

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Council undertook a 12-week public consultation period on the redesign proposals (22 May 2023- 11th August 2023). The aim of the consultation was to inform Warwickshire citizens about the proposals to redesign the current Services, to ask for views on these proposals and their impact and to gather alternative proposals. The consultation also asked people's views on the equality impact assessment that was produced in relation to each proposal; whether people felt all impacts were identified, anything missing and ideas about how to reduce the impact.
- 4.2 Social Engine and Kaizen were commissioned to help target and tailor consultation methods and approaches for people whose voices are heard less frequently and those with lived experience and to produce an independent HRS Redesign Consultation Report. The full Consultation Analysis Report is provided at Appendices 2 and 3. The consultation report has informed the service redesign, with the key findings, feedback and all relevant factors that need to inform the redesign of the service model (Appendix 8). A consultation Community Report has also been produced. (Appendix 9).
- 4.3 A range of consultation methods were used to ensure the consultation was informed by a wide range of people, with regular reviews throughout the 12-week period to consider how to extend the reach of the consultation and target any groups that were not represented who wanted to feed back on the HRS redesign and give views on the options. There was good engagement with the consultation, with 583 responses across the various engagement methods and channels.

- A public survey was hosted on Ask Warwickshire with an Easy Read version available on request and to download. Surveys could be completed online or on paper, with the option to receive the questionnaire in a different format or language and to request support with completing the survey. The consultation survey was promoted in a number of ways, including press, social media and direct mail to individuals and organisations. EQUIP and CAVA supported access and promotion to the voluntary sector and community groups. The survey is available at Appendix 1 and Easy Read version Appendix 6, with a summary of the Communication Log at Appendix 7.
- The Ask Warwickshire survey was completed by 129 people, which included 9 organisational responses. The Easy Read consultation was completed and returned by 25 people.
- Four email responses were received including one from Warwickshire Heads of Housing and three interested citizens.
- Social Engine facilitated a consultation workshop with organisations who work with people who are homeless and with HRS services across the voluntary and third sector including commissioned and non-commissioned services and public sectors with a focus on those that refer people to HRS services and receive referrals for specialist support. 30 professionals participated.
- Kaizen undertook outreach work in community settings to reach those with lived experience and seldom heard individuals and groups reaching 310 people. This included visiting services for homeless and vulnerably housed people and those in financial hardship, as well as conducting outreach within the wider community, speaking to current, previous and potential users of HRS services.
- Social Engine and Warwickshire County Council held seven focus groups. This included:
 - Three young people's groups, involving 19 young people.
 - Two community groups, involving 44 people.
 - Two Social Care and Support teams, involving 22 workers.

4.4 For each proposal, people were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal, and their reasons for this, how the proposal would impact on them and other people/organisations and what could be done instead.

The proposals consulted on were:

- Retaining both floating and accommodation-based support in the same proportions as the current services. Please note these are the current terminology for the types of support offered and the language used by the provider market.
 - floating support is support for those people in their own accommodation or temporary accommodation. It is not linked to any specific accommodation but moves with the person receiving it wherever they live.
 - Accommodation-based support is where temporary housing and short-term support are delivered together. The support is linked to their

accommodation and can only be received whilst living in the allocated accommodation.

- Stopping the dedicated disabled floating support service and creating two inclusive floating support services one for young people 16 –24 years and adults 25+ that continues to support people with disabilities.
- Introducing a range of flexible shorter, tailored interventions accessed through triage based on needs.
- Reducing the maximum duration of services.
- Views on a new name for the services from HRS services to ‘Supporting Independence Services’.
- Additional services delivered by the incumbent provider beyond the service specification, proposed not to be included in future tendering

4.5 Across all methods of consultation a broad range of people participated including age, gender, sexuality, ethnic background, and people who identified as having a disability or long-term condition. The outreach approach enabled the consultation to reach people facing multiple disadvantages who may not always engage in traditional consultation channels. Equality data was gathered in the Ask Warwickshire survey and within outreach to demonstrate this.

- A range of ages responded to the consultation. While fewer young people 16-25 years responded to the Ask Warwickshire survey, other methods such as focus groups and outreach were targeted to reach this group.
- In terms of ethnicity, the consultation was less successful at reaching people who described themselves as Asian. This is an area identified within the equality impact assessment and we will continue to explore how we address this.
- During the consultation, concern was expressed that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller were not identified specifically within the equality impact assessment and were only included in the ‘other’ classification. To address this, stakeholders were asked to promote the surveys and engagement with diverse communities via EQUIP and the Council’s Gypsy, Roma and Traveller team.
- There was very good engagement with people living with disabilities, who were identified in the equality impact assessment for consideration due to the potential impacts of the changes, with the proportion of responses from people with disabilities higher than the proportion of people with disabilities in Warwickshire.
- The consultation gathered a range of views in terms of gender, although more women than men participated.
- In terms of sexual orientation this was only asked within the Ask Warwickshire survey, 68% identified as heterosexual, (the Warwickshire population total is estimated at 90.9%), 13.96% of respondents described themselves in a variety of non-heterosexual orientations and 13.95% preferred not to say.
- Geographically we have a good distribution of responses across the county.

- 4.6 The consultation asked for feedback on Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), whether people felt all impacts had been covered and the impacts could be mitigated or reduced. The consultation included considerations for young people, particularly 16 –17 years, disabilities, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated and an Equality Impact Assessment Summary produced, which will inform the service specification and performance monitoring of the contract. (Appendices 4/5).

5. Recommendations

In relation to the specific proposed changes, the following recommendations are made following consultation:

- 5.1 **Recommendation 1 – keeping both floating and accommodation-based support, allocating budget in similar proportions as current commissioned services.** Both professionals and service users (and potential service users) welcomed the retention of both accommodation-based and floating support services. There was a widespread perception that demand for support was already higher than the services can meet. However, if reductions to the budget need to be made, then the general perception was that this way is both fair and reasonable.
- 5.2 **Recommendation 2 – integrating disabled people’s service into inclusive floating support services for young people 16-25 years and adults 25+ years.** To support consistency in service and quality, within the specification we shall strengthen the staff training requirements around trauma informed care, psychologically informed environments, autism, learning disability, visual impairment awareness training. Providers will be expected to evidence that staff members are adequately trained and experienced for supporting disabled customers. This may result in providers choosing to have specialist staff with dedicated caseloads or adopting alternative ways to address this. We will also build in monitoring of accessibility and outcomes to ensure we understand how inclusive our services are for people living with disabilities.
- 5.3 **Recommendation 3 – offering flexible, shorter interventions. We recommend proceeding with an enhanced triage process that offers early information, advice, signposting and brief intervention.** This supports resolving issues at the earliest stage and only offering short-term support for those that require on-going support. This will improve the customer’s journey to get the right service at the right time, telling their story only once to services.
- 5.4 **Recommendation 4 – shortening the maximum duration of services. For young people’s support services, we recommend not reducing the time limits. For adults’ support services we recommend the reductions are taken forward.** All services will offer holistic and personalised support to meet need, promoting wellbeing, safety, resilience, independence to prevent, reduce and/or delay an individual’s need for ongoing care and support. Clarity will be given within the specification with allowance for exceptions where

necessary to support clients whose outcomes have not been met within the expected timescale. This may be particularly challenging for accommodation-based services due to the lack of affordable move-on accommodation across Warwickshire. We will also work with District and Borough Housing to review their move-on protocol for the support services.

5.5 Recommendation 5 – not changing the current names to Supporting Independence services.

The proposal to change the name to Supporting Independence Services was not supported by the majority of respondents. Although some respondents were in favour of emphasising independence, a more substantial number were not in favour of the change. Many participants indicated that the proposed name lacks clarity and specificity in relation to the service being about housing support and may risk being confused with other services. We recommend tendering two services: Young People (16-25 years) and Adults (25+) and changing the name to Accommodation Related Support Services.

5.6 Recommendation 6 – current additional services (Street Outreach and Hubs in Nuneaton and Rugby) are not included in future service specification.

P3, the incumbent provider, chose to offer additional services in their tender submission which were not part of the specification required. These additional services were Street Outreach and Navigation Hubs in Nuneaton and Rugby. These services have been delivered by P3 without any additional budget. Warwick District Council (WDC) and Stratford upon Avon District Council (SDC) did supplement the street outreach team with funding for two workers up to 31st March 2023 and one worker from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.

Whilst these services were valued, opinion was fairly divided on the proposal not to include additional services in the revised service specification. There was concern that rough sleeping and homelessness may increase and put further burdens on community and voluntary organisations. However, there was an acknowledgment regarding the financial constraints facing the Council. It was suggested that the redesign with clearer signposting, more streamlined services and working smarter with other hubs/community spaces across Warwickshire could help mitigate some of the impact.

6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 6.1 The expected timescale for delivering the procurement and tendering of the new services is shown in Table 1. To mitigate impact on current and future customers a mobilisation plan will be drawn up with the successful providers to ensure a smooth transition, alongside decommissioning plans where required by incumbent providers.

Table 1: Procurement and Commissioning Time Plan

Description	Dates
Seek approval from Cabinet to procure final design	14/12/23
Find a Tender Contract Notice	February 2024
Tender Period	February- April 2024
Evaluation	April – May 2024
Bidder presentation and selection	May 2024
Approval and Tender Report/Contract Award Report	May 2024
Confirm award	June 2024
Commence mobilisation and implementation	June 2024 - 31/3/25
Commence decommissioning/reduction of services	June 2024 - 31/3/25
New Services contracts start date	1/4/25

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: HRS Redesign Public Information Document

Appendix 2: Consultation Report

Appendix 3: Consultation Report Appendices

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment Summary

Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment Version 2 Updated

Appendix 6: Easy Read Redesign Survey

Please note the Easy Read version on the Ask Warwickshire website had an error which was identified on 29.6.23 and removed with the corrected version uploaded on 30.6.23 (25 days). All Easy Read returns completed (25) were on the corrected version.

Appendix 7: Summary of Communication Log

Appendix 8: Summary of Consultation Findings

Appendix 9: Consultation Community Report

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Victoria Jones Commissioner	victoriajones@warwickshire.gov.uk
Director	Becky Hale Chief Commissioning Officer (Health and Care)	beckyhale@warwickshire.gov.uk
Executive Director	Nigel Minns, Executive Director for People	nigelminns@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Margaret Bell Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care & Health, Councillor Sue Markham Portfolio Holder for Children & Families	margaretbell@warwickshire.gov.uk suemarkham@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/A – This is a countywide matter.

Other members: Councillors Jo Barker, Barbara Brown, Tracey Drew, John Holland, Marian Humphreys, Kate Rolfe, and Jerry Roodhouse