

Report of Strategy & Commissioning

Report to Director of Environment and Housing

Date: 15th July 2014

Subject: Extension of contracts with Connect Housing and Leeds Housing Concern for the provision of Accommodation Based Housing Related Support for Vulnerable Women and Homeless Families.

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of Main Issues

1. Leeds City Council has contracts with Leeds Housing Concern (LHC) and Connect Housing for the provision of Accommodation Based Housing Related Support for vulnerable women, and homeless households through a mixture of hostel, self-contained, dispersed and furnished temporary accommodation. It is part of the programme of Housing Related Support commissioned by Strategy and Commissioning, Public Health on behalf of Environment and Housing.
2. Leeds Housing Concern through the Oakdale House and Women's Sector service supports a total of 65 vulnerable women in housing need through the hostel and dispersed community based properties including floating and accommodation based support in Assured Short hold tenancies (AST's)
3. Connect Housing through the Re-connect service supports a total of 37 homeless households in dispersed community accommodation of various sizes to achieve independent living through 6 month AST's.
4. Contracts for these services are due to expire on 30th September 2014 (LHC) and 7th October 2014 (Connect) with the option of a one year extension. Both services have been in place since 2012 following the homelessness sector review when 2 (+1+1year) contracts were awarded. Approval is sought to extend the Oakdale House and

Women's Sector and Re-Connect services using the first 12 month extension available at a cost of £342,267.00 and £119,849.76 per annum respectively.

1 Recommendations

1.1 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve the request for 12 month contract extensions with the following services:

- Leeds Housing Concern for the ongoing provision of the Oakdale House and Women's Sector service from the 1st October 2014 at a cost of £342,267.00 per annum.
- Connect Housing for the Re-connect service from the 8th October 2014 at a cost of £119,849.76 per annum.

2 Purpose of this Report

2.2 The purpose of this report is to request that the Oakdale House and Women's Sector service with Leeds Housing Concern and the Re-connect service with Connect Housing is continued through a one year extension to the existing contracts.

3 Background Information

3.3 A contract has been in place with Leeds Housing Concern to provide the Oakdale House and Women's Sector service since 1st October 2012. The service is divided into the following model; 10 direct access hostel units in Oakdale House, 8 units in Cross Francis Street and 47 units in dispersed accommodation. The contract is due to expire on the 30th September 2014.

3.4 There are two parts to this service, the direct access hostel accommodation including out of hours access. And the dispersed community properties where accommodation is provided in shared or self-contained accommodation.

3.5 A contract has also been in place with Connect Housing for the Re-connect service since the 8th October 2012 to provide accommodation based housing related support in 37 units to homeless adults and families. This contract is due to expire on the 7th October 2014.

3.6 These contracts were put into place following the homelessness sector review which was concluded in 2012. Homeless services have been redesigned and remodelled to provide self-contained dispersed accommodation with visiting support rather than hostel based provision.

3.7 Providers self-assess against the Quality Assessment Framework annually (the quality standards framework for housing related support). Self-assessments have been completed by both services with the following outcomes;

- Leeds Housing Concern- Oakdale House and Women's Sector self-assessed at level A against the standards. Following the recent validation in March 2014 the service has been assessed as providing a high quality service to

vulnerable homeless women, which has been reflected through consultation with services users.

- The Re-connect service has self –assessed at Level B against the framework standards. An audit of support files was undertaken in March 2014 which showed evidence of clear and comprehensive assessment of need. A further validation is planned to assess the service, recent quality checks have indicated that the service is performing well.

3.8 Both services continue to provide a strategically important high quality service to vulnerable homeless people.

4 Main Issues

4.1 Approval of the extensions for these contracts will ensure continuity of service to those people requiring housing related support and will provide an important part of the model for housing and housing related support in the city supporting vulnerable women, adults, families and care leavers.

4.2 Whilst the number of placements made into temporary accommodation is reducing there is still an ongoing need for this provision for vulnerable homeless women, adults and families. Both services are strategically and operationally relevant and the best option would be continuing with the current services.

4.3 Performance for both services is excellent with positive outcomes being achieved for vulnerable people in housing need. Ensuring that service users have the skills and options available to achieve confidence in living independently and support around health, parenting, education, training and employment.

4.4 Oakdale House (LHC) is the only direct access hostel for single women, where referrals and placements are made via the Leeds Housing Options service.

4.5 The Re-connect service is one of only two services that provide accommodation for families in self-contained dispersed community properties. There is an ongoing need for these services to continue.

4.6 Both services have developed effective partnership working with Leeds Housing Options and other services across the city to assist with establishing effective move on options and housing pathways.

4.7 Re-Connect also take referrals from Children Services for young people leaving care. They also attend the weekly case conferences chaired by Children Services and Leeds Housing Options.

4.8 The contracts are currently being monitored and managed by a Commissioning and Contracts Officer within Strategy and Commissioning including regular contract management meetings to discuss service delivery and performance monitoring. Both will continue during the extension period.

4.9 There are no issues of contract compliance or complaints about the service.

5 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1.1 Extensive consultation took place with service users and key stakeholders prior to the initial contract being put in place and as part of the homelessness sector review in 2012. The outcome of the review is reflected in the current service model delivered by Leeds Housing Concern and Connect Housing.
- 5.1.2 Leeds Housing Concern and Connect Housing have robust systems in place for ongoing consultation with service users and actively involve and engage them.
- 5.1.3 The quality assessment process for the Housing Related Support programme involves detailed consultation with staff, service users and key stakeholders. This was carried out at the last quality assessment visit to Oakdale House and Women's Sector (LHC) in March 2014, where service quality was good. A group consultation was held with a number of service users and clients expressing a high level of satisfaction with the service.
- 5.1.4 An audit of support planning files was undertaken in March 2014 for the Re-Connect service which showed evidence of clear and comprehensive engagement with service users around assessment of need.
- 5.1.5 A validation visit is planned with Connect Housing. A consultation exercise will be carried including staff members, volunteers and stakeholders as part of the review process to assess demand and to ensure that satisfaction levels with the service remain high.

5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.2.1 Equality, diversity and cohesion are considered as part of the quality assessment framework for housing related support. The assessment tool includes 5 core objectives including Assessment and Support Planning and Safeguarding. The providers, Leeds Housing Concern and Connect Housing have been assessed against the standards set out in the framework which confirmed the quality and standards have been met.
- 5.2.2 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening has been completed and included as background information to this report. The screening indicates that a full assessment is not required because there will be minimal if no disruption to existing services, staff or stakeholders for the period of the contract extensions.

5.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 5.3.1 The Housing Related Support programme directly contributes to the delivery of the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 to be the best city in the UK and will contribute to the delivery of the priorities set out in the City Priority Plan 2011 to 2015. The services will especially contribute to the Health and Wellbeing Leeds City Priority Plan 2011 to 2015 to ensure that '*people are supported to live safely in their own homes*'.

- 5.3.2 The services contribute directly to the priorities set out in the Leeds Homelessness Strategy 2012 to 2015. In particular these services will contribute to priority three- *Minimise the use of temporary accommodation and deliver an effective and modern programme of housing related support.*
- 5.3.3 The Oakdale House and Women's Sector (LHC) service will also contribute to Priority one – *minimise new, long term and repeat rough sleeping*'. And ensure that no new rough sleeper needs to sleep out for more than one night. The service will contribute to this key priority by providing accommodation and an effective housing related support service to single women who may otherwise be sleeping rough.
- 5.3.4 The Re-connect (Connect) service will also contribute to the Children and Young People City Priority Plan 2011 to 2015 by supporting homeless families with dependent children.
- 5.3.5 They also support the delivery of objectives within the Leeds Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2015 by promoting healthier lifestyles by helping people to stay healthy.

5.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 5.4.1 As this report relates to the extension of existing contracts, there is financial provision within the Environment and Housing commissioning budget for housing related support services managed by Strategy and Commissioning, Office of the Director of Public Health.

5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 5.5.2 The compelling reasons for seeking to extend the contracts with Leeds Housing Concern and Connect Housing are in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules 21.1 and the recommendations are outlined in section 3 and 4 of this report.
- 5.5.3 There is provision remaining for a further 12 month extension for both services within the original contract.
- 5.5.4 The total contract value of the Oakdale House and Women's Sector contract is £342,267.00 per annum. This is therefore a Key Decision as the value is over £250,000 and as such will be subject to a call in period. A notice was published on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions on the 1st July 2014.

5.6 Risk Management

- 5.6.1 The 12 month extension is required to enable continuation of these services which are meeting demand. Both services provide a key part of the city-wide housing related support service for vulnerable people in housing need. Decommissioning these services would leave vulnerable people without the support which they require to live independently.
- 5.6.2 The contracts will continue to be performance managed by officers in Strategy and Commissioning. This includes regular reviewing of performance information and quarterly contract management meetings with the provider, at which any

delivery issues are discussed. Performance monitoring for both services will continue during the extension period.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Oakdale House and Women's Sector service provided by Leeds Housing Concern and Re-Connect Service provided by Connect Housing are high quality and well performing services for vulnerable people in housing need. The Services support and help people settle into independent living. The services are highly valued by service users and stakeholders.
- 6.7 The current contract periods expire on the 30th September 2014 (LHC) and 7th October 2014 (Connect Housing) but there is provision for a one year extension period and this report seeks approval to extend the contracts for both services.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve the 12 month contract extension for the following services:
- Leeds Housing Concern for ongoing provision of the Oakdale and Women's Sector with effect from the 1st October 2014 at a cost of £342,267.00 per annum.
 - Connect Housing for the provision of the Re-connect service with effect from 8th October 2014 at a cost of £119,849.76 per annum.

8 Background Documents¹

- 8.1 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening paper.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.