



REPORT TITLE: Community and Accommodation Based Support – two-year option to extend existing contracts

Cabinet Date	12 th June 2024
Cabinet Member	Councillor Stephan Fifield, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery.
Key Decision	Yes
Purpose of Report	To seek Cabinet Member approval to exercise the final 2-year option to extend the term of the council's existing Community and Accommodation Based Support (CABS) contracts described in Appendix 1, following the expiry of their initial 3-year term and the first 2-year extension term on 31 st March 2025.
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet approves the final 2-year extension to the term of the council's call-off contracts described in Appendix 1 hereto under the council's Multi Provider Pseudo Framework Agreement for the provision of Community and Accommodation Based Support Services for Homelessness and People in Vulnerable Circumstances that was awarded pursuant to a decision by Cabinet dated 30th January 2019. Such extensions shall commence on 1st April 2025 and be effected in accordance with the extension option provisions of such call-off contracts.</p> <p>Provider and contract details are outlined in Appendix 1 to this report.</p>
Reasons for Recommendations	The agreement to allow the final option to extend for 2 years the above-mentioned call-off contracts will ensure the continuation of support to people who are homeless and in vulnerable circumstances across Gloucestershire and in accordance with the aims of the Council's Strategy, Building Back Better in Gloucestershire (2022-2026) and the Government's Ending Rough Sleeping for Good Strategy (2022) .

Resource Implications	<p>In January 2019, Cabinet approved a tender process for the award by the Council of a number of contracts (Appendix 1) for the provision of Community and Accommodation Based Support Services, each contract being for a term of 7 years comprising an initial term of 3 years with 2 options to extend for a further period of 2 years in each case, with an estimated aggregated total value of all contracts awarded by the council of £66.3M.</p> <p>The total maximum value of the proposed 2-year extension to the term of the said contracts is £13.2M which will be funded from within existing budgets.</p>
Background Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People Grant (England) Directions 2002 under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2000 • The Care Act 2014 • Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence July 2016 • Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations 2020 • Cabinet Decision (30/01/2019): Tendering of Services for Homelessness and People in Vulnerable Circumstances • Cabinet Decision (21/09/2022): 2-year Option to Extend community and accommodation-based support contracts
Statutory Authority	<p>Supporting People Grants (England) Directions 2002 under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2000</p>
Divisional Councillor(s)	<p>All</p>
Officer	<p>Name: Helen Flitton Tel. no: 01452 328602 Email: helen.flitton@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p>
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate preferred recommendation/intention to extend contracts to relevant providers. • Extension decision June Cabinet 2024 • If approved, enter into contract extension arrangements with incumbent providers for the period 01.04.25 – 31.03.27

Background

1. On 30th January 2019, Cabinet approved the establishment of a 4-year multi supplier, multi purchaser Open Pseudo Framework for the procurement of Community and Accommodation Based Support Services (CABS).
2. On 1st April 2020, following a competitive tender process, the Council procured several contracts (see Appendix 1) for the provision of Community and Accommodation Based Support. Each contract being for a term of 7 years comprising an initial term of 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 periods of 2 years each. The first option to extend was exercised in April 2023 following a decision by [Cabinet in September 2022](#).
3. Community Based Support (CBS) Services assist people in any form of accommodation and across a continuum of need from early intervention and prevention through to intensive support for people in crisis with high level and complex needs such as substance misuse, mental health, and offending. CBS delivers short term support that build on an individual's existing strengths to help them develop the skills and resources to become self-reliant and resilient. This could include practical support to develop skills for maintaining independent living; support to access training, volunteering and/or employment; rebuilding family relationships and developing links with other people, neighbourhoods, and community networks to enable an individual to live independently in the long term.
4. Where appropriate, CBS will signpost individuals to other more specialist housing related support, including Accommodation Based Support and resettlement into the community. A small number of specialist CBS Services are also funded for specific groups, e.g., refugee and asylum seekers and those with sensory impairment.
5. Accommodation Based Support (ABS) provides short term accommodation for homeless individuals who have a range of complex needs e.g. substance misuse, mental health and contact with the criminal justice system. On-site support enables individuals to develop the living skills to enable them to move on to live independently in the community.
6. CABS services operate within a broader partnership of Local Authority Housing Services, Mental Health Services, Drug and Alcohol Services and Health Services that work together to intervene as early as possible to prevent further risk of harm and escalation of need for individuals in vulnerable circumstances. This is coordinated through the Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership made up of representatives from the six District Councils; the County Council; NHS Gloucestershire and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
7. The services also work effectively together to identify and support rough sleepers, contributing to the Government target of ending rough sleeping by 2027.

The Case for Continuation of Services

8. Research into the financial benefits of supported accommodation was carried out in 2009 when the Supporting People programme was still in place¹. The report found that

¹ [Supporting people programme: financial benefits research - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

the 'provision of the Supporting People intervention was estimated to provide a net financial benefit – i.e. the financial benefits of supporting the individual using the most appropriate positive alternative to SP were higher than, and outweighed, the costs of doing so using SP services.

9. The Government's 'Funding Supported Housing' policy statement in 2017² noted: DCLG analysis estimates that the net fiscal benefit of capital investment in supported housing is £3.53 billion per year. It is an investment which brings savings to other parts of the public sector, such as health and social care and the NHS, helping those services to deliver better outcomes for vulnerable people.
10. More recently, a report from the National Housing Federation³ (NHF) presents analysis on the need for supported housing, including housing for older people, in England to 2040 and the cost of meeting this need in terms of development, rent, service charges, and support. They argue that costs should be seen within the context of more costly alternatives to supported housing, such as homelessness, residential care or hospital. The research estimates that nationally, without supported housing (for working-aged people), there would be:
 - An increase in core homelessness of around 41,000 people (and an additional 30,000 at significant risk of future homelessness), with long-term homelessness estimated to cost the public purse over £40,000 per person per year.
 - An additional 14,000 inpatient psychiatric places at approximately £170,000 per place per year.
 - Increased demand for 2,500 places in specialist residential care, many for people with multiple needs including substance misuse issues, and mental ill-health, which cost in the region of £45-£50,000 per year.
 - A need for a further 2,000 prison places due to licences or court orders being revoked, at an average cost per place of £32,700 per year.
11. The NHF published research into the supported housing sector's impact on homelessness prevention, health and wellbeing in March 2023⁴ which found that the average annual total cost for a supported housing place (including housing benefit) was £21,000 which compares favourably with the average costs of the alternatives. They broke this figure down into housing costs and support costs with the average annual support costs coming in at £11,500.
12. Locally, the council commissions over 400 ABS bedspaces delivered in more than 30 buildings across the County with an average of 7 hours of ABS support per person per week. An average annual cost per bedspace is around £6,552 which compares

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a822f7940f0b62305b92ef5/Funding_supported_housing_-_policy_statement_and_consultation.pdf

³ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Supported-housing-in-England_Estimating-needs-and-costs-to-2040.pdf (2024)

⁴ <https://www.housing.org.uk/globalassets/files/resource-files/imogen-blood-research-into-the-supported-housing-sectors-impact-on-homelessness-prevention-health-and-wellbeing.pdf>

favourably with the average costs identified in the NHF report.

13. In 2022/23, 259 individuals who were homeless moved into placements in ABS; 100 individuals already in placements positively moved on from ABS to their own independent accommodation; and 28 individuals positively moved on to accommodation with family and friends.
14. The council's performance reporting data also shows service users generally experience an improvement in mental wellbeing after a period of support in ABS and where relevant, the risk of suicide is shown to be reduced.
15. The council's 16+ accommodation-based support services bridge the gap between care and independence for most care leavers in Gloucestershire, in a supportive, person-centred environment. They provide a safe and tested pathway for transitioning from commissioned care placements and reduce the risk of significant high-cost placement drift. The CABS commissioning model delivers cost effective housing options for care leavers, without which GCC would be reliant on an expensive care provider market.
16. Community Based Support services provided more than 3000 individuals with support through 1-1 sessions in 2022/23. 3677 individuals had issues resolved at first point of contact and 1947 drop-in sessions were held at locations around the County. Providers operate 20+ regular community groups with 3540 recorded attendances throughout 2022/23 e.g. walking groups, cooking groups, local history, and photography all of which help with social connectedness, life skills and health and wellbeing.
17. CBS providers totalled £566,362.86 in external grants, resolving benefit back-payments, and written off debts for people in vulnerable circumstances. 1298 additional volunteer hours were also provided through CBS.
18. Supported housing also underpins a range of Government policy objectives including the commitment to tackle homelessness through prevention, and tackling poverty and disadvantage by helping vulnerable people transition to independent living.

Options

19. The following options were considered:

- a. *Option A: Invoke the final contract extension period and extend the existing Community and Accommodation Based Support call-off contracts for 2 years from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2027.*

CABS services offer good value for money and achieve positive outcomes for some of the county's most vulnerable residents. They help to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping by giving people the skills and resilience to manage challenges in their lives and maintain their accommodation. This in turn helps avoid further pressure on statutory services.

Commissioners are currently reviewing CABS services within the wider homelessness and rough sleeping pathway and are looking at whether future

changes to services should be made to respond to the changing patterns of need, increasing cost pressures and the level of resource available. By extending the current contracts we can ensure that any changes are introduced in a managed way that will support the market and ensure that we can continue to deliver positive outcomes.

- b. *Option B: Do not invoke the contract extension period but instead vary the existing Community and Accommodation Based Support contracts for a period of one year from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.*

As noted above, we are reviewing services within the wider homelessness and rough sleeper pathway and are looking at whether future changes to services should be made in response to changing patterns of need, increasing cost pressures and the level of resource available. Extending the contracts for a period of one year would enable us to implement any agreed changes more rapidly but would introduce a level of uncertainty to the market which together with the current cost pressures that providers are experiencing may risk disrupting current provision, with negative consequences.

- c. *Option C: To end the current Community and Accommodation Based Support Services at the end of the first two-year extension period on 31st March 2025.*

Ending these services would leave people in vulnerable circumstances without accommodation or support, potentially leading to higher rates of rough sleeping and homelessness across the County, reputational damage and higher demand for the Council's other statutory Children's and Adult Social Care services.

20. Option A. is the preferred option. Extending our current contracts for a period of two years provides stability in the market and gives us sufficient time to engage with partners, services users and providers around any future changes. CABS contracts offer value for money and effective prevention for homelessness and rough sleeping through support to vulnerable individuals which in turn, helps prevent further pressures on statutory services.

Risks

21. The following risk has been identified:
22. Risk that existing providers are unable or do not wish to continue with service delivery beyond March 2025. The current climate of inflationary and workforce pressures may make this risk more likely.
23. This risk will continue to be regularly reviewed as part of the project management process, and any significant changes will be reported to the Lead Cabinet Member.

Financial implications

24. In January 2019, Cabinet approved a tender process for the award by the Council of several contracts (Appendix 1) for the provision of Community and Accommodation Based Support Services each contract being for a term of 7 years comprising an initial

term of 3 years with 2 options to extend for a further 2 years in each case. The total maximum value of the proposed 2-year extension to the term of the said contracts is £13.2M which will be found from within existing budgets.

Climate change implications

25. A Climate Impact Assessment Template (CIAT) has been completed and areas for improvement have been flagged. This is namely via air quality, greenhouse gases, sustainable travel, energy use and waste.
26. Commitments will be made where possible to mitigate negative impacts on climate such as; opting to award call-off contracts to those who exhibit sustainable and carbon neutral practises, utilising buildings which practise energy saving methods including behaviour change, encouraging staff to travel sustainably, avoiding purchasing of single use products and buying second hand where possible etc.
27. Positive outcomes in the social tab of the CIAT have been noted including health and wellbeing, economy and jobs, and education to name a few.

Equality implications

28. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed.
29. The EIA which reflects the impact and understanding of the existing CABS service is attached to this report. Service users and providers will continue to be encouraged to provide equality impact information to test the robustness and inclusivity of the provision going forward.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications

30. A data impact assessment has been completed for the CABS Framework and was reviewed and updated as part of the contract extension process. Data impact will continue to be monitored and any identified risks highlighted to senior officers within the Public Health and Communities Hub and the Data Protection Officer.

Social value implications

31. The opportunity to test CABS providers' commitment to embedding social value (including working with local suppliers, approaches to waste reduction, recycling, and volunteering) into their contracts formed part of the original tender process and this is regularly reviewed as part of the quarterly contract monitoring process. The CABS contracts continue to focus on improving the lives and outcomes of the service users and the communities within which they live.

Consultation feedback

32. A wide range of consultation with service users and other stakeholders took place prior to the commencement of the Framework and significantly shaped the content of the contracts and the outcomes required. The impact of 5 years of these contracts has seen positive feedback from partner agencies including District Councils, Probation and

Safeguarding. Service user satisfaction levels as well as exit interviews are completed regularly to ensure ongoing development of service delivery. Satisfaction levels for CABS services are reviewed through quarterly monitoring and a range of wider partnership meetings.

Officer recommendations

33. To approve the recommendations set out in this report.

Performance management/follow-up

34. The CABS contracts will continue to include specific and measurable standards and outcomes. The contracts will continue to be actively monitored through the analysis of quarterly key performance indicators and regular meetings with the relevant providers.

Appendix 1

Community and Accommodation Based Support Call-Off Contracts

Call-Off Contract	Provider
Community Based Support	P3
Community Based Support	CCP
Community Based Support (Asylum Seeker/Refugees)	GARAS
Community Based Support (Specialist sensory)	Q-Care
Assessment Service Accommodation Based Support	P3
18+ Accommodation Based Support	Elim
18+ Accommodation Based Support	Riverside
18+ Accommodation Based Support	Homegroup
18+ Accommodation Based Support	YMCA
Mental Health Accommodation Based Support	Rethink
16+ Accommodation Based Support	Homegroup
16+ Accommodation Based Support	CCP
16+ Accommodation Based Support	Riverside
16+ Accommodation Based Support	Elim
16+ Accommodation Based Support	YMCA