

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 24 May 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Housing Support Grant Commissioning Programme
Purpose of Report:	To approve the Housing Support Grant Commissioning Programme for 2021 and to agree arrangements to award the necessary support contracts.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter, Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Operational Manager Accountancy, Resource Management; Committee Reports; Legal Services; Mike Ingram, Head of Housing.
Policy Framework:	This report is consistent with the Policy Framework and Budget and is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Support Grant (HSG) Programme is the policy and funding framework for delivering housing related support to vulnerable people in different types of accommodation and across all tenures. At a local level the programme takes forward a number of strategic aims, reflecting community safety, health and social care and wellbeing objectives. It aims to deliver high quality and strategically planned housing-related support services that are cost effective, complement existing services and provide service users with the best possible outcomes. • There are no direct resource implications associated with this report. All funding requirements identified for resourcing under the Housing Support Grant Programme are financed through grant funding from Welsh Government. • In order to comply with UK procurement rules and Vale of Glamorgan Council Procurement Policy the Supporting People Team, which administers the HSG funding, is required to carry out a procurement exercise for all housing related support contracts. • The Supporting People Team carried out 3 tendering exercises for contracts that were due to expire in early 2021 and emergency powers were requested from and granted by the Managing Director to award these contracts to avoid service disruption.

- 10 existing housing support contracts are due to expire in summer 2021 (as detailed in the HSG Commissioning Schedule which is appended) and need to be retendered in accordance with UK procurement rules. The Supporting People Team intends to streamline the existing contracts by commissioning 7 new contracts that incorporate all existing services with no loss of service provision. Due to the high value of these individual contracts (above £300,000), delegated authority is being sought from Cabinet to enable the award of these contracts to the successful providers.

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Support Grant Commissioning Programme 2021 is approved.
2. That Cabinet agreed delegated authority to the Director of Environment and Housing to undertake tendering exercises to secure the services outlined in the Housing Services Grant Commissioning Programme 2021.
3. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Environment and Housing, in consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services, Managing Director and Head of Finance, to award contracts to the most economically advantageous suppliers resulting from the procurement process as described in this report.
4. That delegated authority is granted to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services to agree the terms and execute the contracts.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that the Council complies with the requirements of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Guidance (Wales) July 2018.
2. To secure services in accordance with the Housing Support Grant Commissioning Plan.
3. To ensure that contracts can be awarded in a timely manner to avoid disruption to services and the vulnerable people the Programme supports.
4. To ensure that the contracts are properly executed.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing Support Grant (HSG) Programme is the policy and funding framework for delivering housing related support to vulnerable people in different types of accommodation and across all tenures.
- 1.2 The HSG is an amalgamation of three existing grants; the Supporting People Programme Grant, the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant.
- 1.3 The programme contributes to meeting the aims of 'Improving Lives and Communities - Homes in Wales', the National Housing Strategy and the ten-year Homelessness Plan, with a strong emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. It is also essential in assisting the local authority to fulfil its duties under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, and the Vale of Glamorgan's Homelessness Prevention Strategy.
- 1.4 At a local level the programme takes forward a number of strategic aims, reflecting community safety, health and social care and wellbeing objectives. It aims to deliver high quality and strategically planned housing-related support

services that are cost effective, complement existing services, and provide service users with the best possible outcomes.

- 1.5** The HSG allocation for 2021-2022 is £4,718,683.58, an increase of £1.2 million on last year's allocation of £3,586,847.52.
- 1.6** The Supporting People Team's role is to commission, monitor & review housing related support services funded through the HSG programme.
- 1.7** Housing related support services are provided by service providers through contracts with the Council. There are 10 contracts that expire in summer 2021. Formal tenders are required for the tendering and re-tendering of housing related support services in order to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules. The contracts which will require re-tendering are set out in the HSG Commissioning Schedule 2021 attached at Appendix 1.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** In order to comply with relevant legislation and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules, a procurement exercise is required to be undertaken for the ten contracts due to expire in 2021. In addition to this, contracts will need to be put in place for any new or re-configured housing related support services to ensure that the Council is meeting its duties under the Housing (Wales) Act 2015 and meeting the needs of the community.
- 2.2** The total value of the contracts within scope of this exercise is approximately £5.5 million (over 5 years) with final costings to be decided at tender stage. The current contracts range from £36,000 to £269,000 per year and include services for a number of client groups including, people experiencing domestic abuse, homelessness, substance misuse issues, mental health issues and vulnerable families.
- 2.3** In 2015 Cabinet approved the establishment of an Approved Provider List for the provision of housing related support services funded by Supporting People Programme Grant, (29th June 2015 - Cabinet Minute: C2829).
- 2.4** The Approved Provider List (2015) for the provision of housing related support services was in place for four years and during that time was used to tender new Supporting People services and to re-tender for existing services when contracts expired.
- 2.5** The Approved Provider List (2015) has now expired and consideration has been given as to the most appropriate approach to secure housing related support services. The use of an Approved Provider List restricts the number of organisations able to tender for HSG contracts and this has led to very few bids being received for each tender. Therefore, the preferred route for tendering

future contracts and re-tendering existing contracts is to go out to the open market in order to increase the number of bids received and ensure best value for money for each service.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** Looking to the long term - the Housing Support Grant Programme supports vulnerable people to attain the life skills required to maintain their home, integrate into the community and to live independently in the long term.
- 3.2** Taking an integrated approach - local service decisions are made by the Supporting People Planning Group which includes representatives from Housing, Social Services, Health and the Probation Service. In addition, consultation is carried out with managers of providers of services, front line workers and people who have lived experience of our services.
- 3.3** Involving the population in decisions - not only are the needs of service users monitored to ensure that the correct services are delivered to meet their individual needs, but feedback is collated from them during each service review to inform service improvement and future commissioning decisions. In addition, each service provider is required to work with the service user to enable them to solve problems themselves in the future. A key message delivered by the Housing Support Grant programme is "doing with" rather than "doing for" the service user in order to reduce dependency on services and enable the service user to live independently in the future.
- 3.4** Working in a collaborative way - the Housing Support Grant Programme places collaboration and coproduction at the core and these principles are monitored on a local, regional and national level through regular service reviews.
- 3.5** Understanding the root causes of issues and preventing them - the Supporting People Team is required to collect needs data on clients on an annual basis in order to inform service commissioning and delivery.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** There are no direct resource implications associated with this report. All funding requirement identified for resourcing under the Housing Support Grant Programme is financed through grant funding from Welsh Government.
- 4.2** It should be noted that the Council has not developed an exit strategy for Housing Support Grant funded services, as the effect of a total loss of funding from Welsh Government would affect support services throughout Wales, leading to the closure or severe restrictions to the services of voluntary support

organisations that are funded in this way. This is an unlikely scenario given that Supporting People, which makes up the substantial part of the Housing Support Grant was introduced in 2003 and the number of people requiring the services is continuing to increase across Wales. It is expected that this trend will continue in the future with the introduction of the changes to the Homelessness Legislation in April 2015 from the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and, continuing roll out of Universal Credit and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting additional housing duties placed on local authorities.

Employment

- 4.3** There is a requirement on the Supporting People Team in the Council to continue on an annual basis to ensure that all projects remain strategically relevant to the Council and to reconfigure them if they are no longer required. In addition, the projects are monitored by the Team to ensure that they continue to provide suitable value for money support to vulnerable people, including where appropriate assistance into training and employment.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.4** The development and publication of the Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan is a requirement of Welsh Government to comply with the Housing Support Grant Guidance (Wales).
- 4.5** Legal Services will be instructed in connection with the contracts that will be entered into as a result of the procurement exercise.

5. Background Papers

None.



APPENDIX 1

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL



Housing Support Grant Commissioning Schedule

2021

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Housing Support Grant Commissioning Schedule

2021

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Housing Support Commissioning Schedule

2021

1. Introduction

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is an amalgamation of three existing grants; the Supporting People Programme Grant, the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant.

The HSG is an early intervention grant programme to support activity, which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation. The HSG does not fund the statutory duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, instead HSG funded services augment, complement and support the statutory service to ensure that the overall offer authorities provide helps people into the right homes with the right support to succeed. It supports vulnerable people to address the, sometimes multiple, problems they face, such as debt, employment, tenancy management, substance misuse, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and mental health issues. Support is person centred, aimed at supporting people to secure and maintain sustainable housing by addressing their needs and working with them to develop the skills needed to maintain a tenancy.

The HSG came into being in April 2019 following the Welsh Government funding flexibilities pathfinder project. A Ministerial decision was made in October 2018 to form two grants from the Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Grant (EIPS) work, separating the housing-related grants from non-housing elements for all local authorities. Consequently, from April 2019, the Welsh Government established a Children and Communities Grant (CCG), encompassing Flying Start, Families First, the Legacy Fund, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, St David's Day Fund, Communities for Work Plus and Childcare and Play; and the single HSG. Welsh Government has set clear expectations that the CCG and the HSG should work in a seamless fashion, providing integrated services where appropriate.

At the core of the HSG is the prevention of homelessness. There is substantial flexibility in the use of the HSG funding, compared to the previous grants which it replaces.

The Supporting People Team administers HSG funding to service providers to deliver a range of housing related support services and the team's role includes:

- Mapping existing housing related support services
- Planning and shaping future service provision
- Monitoring and reviewing existing services
- Evidencing the need and demand for housing related support services
- Evaluating the 'outcomes' achieved
- Listening to service users views



- Ensuring service providers comply with grant and contract requirements
- Commissioning housing related support services

The Supporting People Team typically commissions housing related support services for a maximum contract length of five years and when contracts are due to expire the Supporting People Team is required to retender these services in accordance with UK procurement rules and Vale of Glamorgan Council procurement policy.

Due to the size of the contract values involved (above £300k) Cabinet approval is required under Council standing orders for new contracts to be awarded to successful providers. Therefore, the purpose of this report is to outline the Supporting People commissioning programme for 2021 including the details of the retendering programme and to request delegated authority to enter into new contracts with the providers that successfully emerge from the retendering process.

2. Contracts Recently Tendered

The Supporting People Team recently carried out retendering exercises for 3 separate housing related support contracts one of which was due to expire on 3rd of February 2021 and the remaining two on the 31st of March 2021. In order to avoid any disruption in services it was imperative that new contracts were awarded urgently and therefore 3 requests for emergency powers were submitted to the Managing Director to enable the Vale of Glamorgan Council to enter into each contract without any loss of service.

The first contract retendered was the Private Rented Service contract. The Private Rented Support Service (PRS) is a floating support service which provides support vulnerable tenants on the Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme (VATS) who are at risk of losing their tenancies and is a key part of homelessness prevention in the Vale.

The old Supporting People Contract for the Service expired on 3rd February 2021. In order to retender the existing PRS contract, the Supporting People Team undertook a tendering exercise in accordance with EU procurement rules and Vale of Glamorgan Council's procurement policy.

The Supporting People Team undertook the tendering process which went live on Sell2Wales on the 24th of November 2020. The deadline for submission was the 29th of December 2020 and the Supporting People Commissioning Panel carried out a tender process which was fully completed on the 4th of January.

A single bid was received from the incumbent support provider Pobl. Submissions were required to answer the standard Vale of Glamorgan PQQ (pre qualifying questions), 10 written questions set by the SP Commissioning Panel, and include an annual price to deliver the service along with a detailed breakdown of costs.



Pobl emerged from the process having comfortably passed the PQQ and the 10 set questions). Pobl submitted an annual price within the pricing envelope set by the Supporting People Team.

As outlined in appendix 1, on the 1st of March 2021 the Managing Director granted the use of emergency powers to award this contract to Pobl for a maximum duration of 5 years.

The second contract retendered was the Mental Health Service contract. The Mental Health Service includes supported accommodation, dispersed accommodation and floating support services for vulnerable people experiencing enduring mental health issues that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The service is a key part of homelessness prevention in the Vale.

The old Supporting People Contract for the Mental Health Service expires on 31st March 2021. In order to retender the existing contract for the Service, the Supporting People Team undertook a tendering exercise in accordance with EU procurement and Vale of Glamorgan Council procurement policy.

The tender went live via Sell2Wales on the 23rd of December 2020. The deadline for submission was the 3rd of February 2021 and the Supporting People Commissioning Panel carried out a tender process which was fully completed on the 12th of February.

Two bids were received for the tender including the incumbent support provider Platfform. The submissions were required to answer the standard Vale of Glamorgan PQQ, respond to 10 written questions set by the SP Commissioning Panel, and carry out a presentation and interview in front of the Supporting People Commissioning Panel. Platfform emerged from the process with the highest overall score and their submission was within the pricing envelope set by the Supporting People Team.

As outlined in appendix 2, on the 1st of March 2021 Managing Director granted the use of emergency powers to award this contract to Platfform for a maximum duration of 5 years.

The third contract retendered was the Young People's Service. The Young People's service is a supported accommodation and floating support service for vulnerable young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Vale and is a key part of homelessness prevention.

The old Supporting People Contract for the Young People's Service expires on 31st March 2021. In order to retender the existing contract for the Young People's Service the Supporting People Team undertook a tendering exercise in accordance with EU procurement rules and Vale of Glamorgan Council procurement policy. The deadline for submission was the 2nd of February 2021 and the Supporting People Commissioning Panel carried out a tender process which was fully completed on the 12th of February.

A single bid was received from the incumbent support provider Llamau. Submissions were required to answer the standard Vale of Glamorgan PQQ, respond to 10 written questions set by the SP Commissioning Panel, include an annual price to deliver the service along



with a detailed breakdown of costs and carry out a presentation and interview in front of the Supporting People Commissioning Panel.

Llamau emerged from the process having comfortably passed all aspects of the tender process and the price was within the price envelope set by the Supporting People Team.

As outlined in appendix 3, on the 1st of March 2021 the Managing Director granted the use of emergency powers to award this contract to Llamau for a maximum duration of 5 years.

Upcoming Tendering Exercises

The Supporting People Team has several housing related support contracts which are due to expire in summer 2021. In accordance with UK procurement rules and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's procurement policy all contracts need to be retendered by going out to market.

In all these cases each new contract will be advertised on the sell2wales website for a minimum of 30 days and a fair and robust tendering process will take pace overseen by the Supporting People Coordinator. In all cases an open tendering process will be used which will require all providers to pass the standard Vale of Glamorgan council pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ), provide a written submission with answers to questions set by the Supporting People Commissioning Panel and also attend an interview process with the Supporting People Commissioning Panel. Due to the high value of the new contracts (above £300k) under Council standing orders the Supporting People Team will need delegated authority from Cabinet in order to enter into new contracts following the successful conclusion of these tendering exercises.

The contracts due to retendered:

The Refuge Service:

This service specification applies to a 5 unit direct access accommodation for women and children who need a safe place to live as a result of having experienced domestic abuse and/or sexual violence. The aim of this service is to provide safe, secure, direct access to temporary accommodation in a confidential location in the Vale of Glamorgan. The service also offers support and information to women, in order to enable them to gain or maintain the skills and confidence they need to be able to live independently.

Contract expiration date: 30th June 2021



The Newlands Substance Misuse Service

This service specification applies to an 8 unit floating support service delivered through an independent living advisor for people who receive treatment at the Newlands Centre and need support because they are affected by substance misuse. The aim of this project is to provide housing support via an independent living advisor to improve outcomes for people with substance misuse issues to access information, advice, support and resources to enable them to make informed choices. The service provides flexible housing related support to a maximum of 8 individuals receiving treatment from the Newlands Centre.

Contract expiration date: 31st July 2021

Vale Vulnerable Families Service

This service specification applies to a 15-unit floating support service to be delivered for vulnerable families clients. 5 units are dedicated to service users living in 5 designated RSL properties in Barry and Penarth. The 10 remaining units are to be delivered to service users living in any tenure. This service provides housing related floating support to improve outcomes for vulnerable families to access information, advice, support and resources to enable them to make informed choices. The service working with individual service users involves a tailored support plan that best meets their needs in order that each person has the best opportunity of living independently as a responsible member of their community.

Contract expiration date: 31st July 2021

Tenancy Support Service (TESS)

This service is a 270-unit generic floating support service provided to people in their own home and is tailored to meet individual need. The service can assist people to move and settle into the community or provide long-term support to enable people to live independently and remain in their homes. This service is available to residents of the Vale of Glamorgan living in any tenure.

The TESS service is split across 7 individual contracts and different providers.

TESS 1 & 2 contract expiration date: 30th June 2021

TESS 3 contract expiration date: 31st July 2021

TESS 4 contract expiration date: 30th June 2021

TESS 5 contract expiration date: 30th June 2021

TESS 6 contract expiration date: 31st July 2021



TESS 7 contract expiration date: 31st July 2021

TESS 8 contract expiration date: 31st July 2021

Independence Service

This service is a 40-unit generic floating support service provided to people in their own home and is tailored to meet individual need. The service can assist people to move and settle into the community or provide long-term support to enable people to live independently and remain in their homes. This service is available to residents of the Vale of Glamorgan living in any tenure.

Contract expiration date: 31st July 2021

Due to the large number of individual contracts that requires tendering the Supporting People Team intends to streamline the number from 10 individual contracts down to 7 contracts. This will be done by issuing new contracts that incorporate multiple existing services that are similar in scope and will not result in any reduction in service provision. Not only will this improve the efficiency of the retendering process, but the aim is to provide contracts which are larger in scope and result in more robust service delivery for those using these support services. The total value of the contracts within scope of this exercise is approximately £5.5 million (over 5 years) With final costings to be decided at tender stage. The current contracts range from £36,000 to £269,000 per year and include services for a number of client groups including, people experiencing domestic abuse, homelessness, substance misuse issues, mental health issues and vulnerable families.

In conclusion permission is sought by the Supporting People Team from the Council Cabinet to carry out the retendering exercise for the housing related support contracts above and delegated authority is requested from the Council Cabinet in order to enter into new contracts upon the successful completion of the retendering processes for the services detailed above.

