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Nottingham City Council

Commissioning and Procurement Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Loxley House, Station Street, NG2 3NG, on 12 March 2024 from 9.30 am - 10.07 am

Membership

Present

Councillor Audra Wynter (Chair)
Councillor Jay Hayes
Councillor Linda Woodings

Absent

Councillor Cheryl Barnard
Councillor Corall Jenkins

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Karla Banfield	-	Head of Commissioning, Children's Services
Trevor Bone	-	Head of Building Services and Facilities Management
Alison Brown	-	Director of Property Services
Matt Corder	-	Public Health Principal
Rachael Harding	-	Homelessness Strategy Manager
Mark Lawson	-	Executive Assistant and Head of NCH Registered Provider
Mark Leavesley	-	Governance Officer
Steve Oakley	-	Head of Procurement
Cath Stocks	-	Head of Housing Options

Call-in

Unless stated otherwise, all decisions are subject to call-in. The last date for call-in is 20/03/2024. Decisions cannot be implemented until the working day after this date.

66 Apologies for absence

Councillor Barnard – other Council business

67 Declarations of interests

None.

68 Minutes

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2024 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

69 Housing Services HRA: Supply, delivery and installation of large kitchen appliances and furniture - key decision

Councillor Hayes, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the report.

Cath Stocks, Head of Housing Options, presented the report and stated the following:

- a) the report sought approval to commence a procurement process for the supply, delivery and installation of residential equipment and furniture, such as cookers,

washing machines and beds, to enable the council to provide furnished tenancies for council tenants;

- b) the provision of furnished tenancies supported tenancy sustainment for many vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens allocated Council housing by providing an affordable option for tenants needing to furnish their new home, many of which have no furniture or appliances when they sign up for a tenancy, nor the savings to purchase them. This could either delay moving in, incurring rent arrears, or tenants resorting to credit, incurring high-cost borrowing and long-term debts;
- c) an inability to fund the essentials to make a home, or being burdened with rent arrears or high debts to do so, can reduce tenancy sustainment levels, incurring additional cost for the Council's HRA in void turnaround costs, rent loss and potentially a subsequent homelessness duty;
- d) the cost of renting basic furnishings in a furnished tenancy is eligible for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit housing costs, making it affordable for all tenants that need it;
- e) tenants can choose a fully furnished home or just kitchen appliances depending on their requirements and, in the year to 1 April 2023, 885 current council homes had furnished tenancies (3.5% of council tenancies);
- f) furnished tenancies contribute to the Council's Housing Strategy and the Together for Nottingham Plan through the provision of good quality, affordable housing for Nottingham families and citizens, including Council Plan outcome nine - *Better Housing: We will tackle poor-quality housing in Nottingham, regardless of tenure, and continue to drive up housing standards in the city, ensuring sustainable communities and neighbourhoods for residents.*

Resolved to

- (1) approve undertaking a procurement exercise to identify a supplier and issue an open tender, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, for a 5-year contract at a maximum cost of £2.7m;**
- (2) delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development to enter into contracts with the successful supplier;**
- (3) delegate authority to the Head of Service to set up Contract Purchase Agreements (CPAs) to cover the works to be delivered, and to raise purchase orders under the signed contract, including CPAs for the duration of the contracts.**

Reasons for recommendations

- a) Nottingham City Council has provided new tenants with the option of a furnished tenancy since 2016. The provision of furnished tenancies supports tenancy sustainment for many vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens allocated to Council housing. It provides an affordable option for tenants needing to furnish their new home, many of which have no furniture or appliances when they sign up for a tenancy, nor the savings to purchase them. This can either delay moving in -

- incurring rent arrears, or tenants resorting to credit - incurring high-cost borrowing and long-term debts;
- b) there is provision in the HRA budget for the continuation of the furnished tenancy programme and provision has been made for future expenditure. The 2023/24 budget is £529,400. The 2024/25 budget is £555,870;
 - c) the current contract to supply large kitchen appliances and furniture has come to an end and we need to tender and issue a new contract for the supply of household furnishings and large kitchen appliances in Council furnished tenancies;
 - d) the contract will cover the delivery and installation of residential furniture and large kitchen appliances, and the removal and correct disposal of old equipment and furnishings where required;
 - e) the internal business case to continue with furnished tenancies and the ongoing HRA budget was approved in September 2023 by the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development;
 - f) the provision of furnished tenancies is a demand-led service. Take-up has increased dramatically in recent years as the hardship of Covid, lost jobs, homelessness and the cost-of-living crisis have contributed to a rising inability to fund essential items for the home. As of 1 April 2023, 885 current Council homes had furnished tenancies (3.5% of Council tenancies); 75 dating from prior to 2018 and 810 from that point on;
 - g) this service provides all new Council tenants with the option to have an unfurnished tenancy or a furnished tenancy prior to sign-up. The furnished tenancy can be either kitchen appliances (cooker, fridge-freezer, washing machine) only or a fully furnished home (kitchen appliances, settee, dining table/ chairs, beds, wardrobes and drawers);
 - h) furniture cannot be added to an existing tenancy. It can only be added at the beginning of a new tenancy, but it can go with a tenant if they transfer to a new home and therefore a new tenancy;
 - i) with a furnished tenancy, tenants also rent the furniture and kitchen appliances, with service charges levied to recover the costs. Furniture and appliances remain the property of Nottingham City Council and cannot be gifted or sold to the tenant at any time under benefit regulations. Variable charges are levied in addition to the tenant's rent, dependent on the furniture package needed;
 - j) tenants pay a weekly service charge to rent the furnishings and/ or kitchen appliances to repay the investment. Nottingham City Council levies the service charge through the tenant's rent account and the charges are fully eligible for Housing Benefit / Universal Credit housing costs for qualifying tenants. Weekly furnished tenancy service charges recoup the original investment, cover losses, wear and tear, early tenancy terminations, electrical testing and provide modest surpluses for future investment and to ensure furnished tenancies are not subsidised by all tenants;

- k) furnished tenancies are reviewed at the 5th anniversary of the commencement of the tenancy. At that point, the tenant has the option to continue with a furnished tenancy – and items subject to wear and tear can be replaced – or switch to an un-furnished tenancy. With the latter, the furniture and appliances and their associated charges are removed. Tenants cannot be gifted or sold the furniture and appliances;
- l) the furnished tenancy programme is on-going, and provision has been made for future expenditure in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget. The 2023/24 budget is £529,400. The 2024/25 budget is £555,870;
- m) the current contract to supply large kitchen appliances and furniture has come to an end and we need to tender and issue a new contract for the supply of household furnishings and large kitchen appliances in Council furnished tenancies;
- n) the contract will cover the supply, delivery and installation of residential furniture and furnishings such as cookers, washing machines, fridge freezer, beds, dining tables and sofas. The intended supply contract is for a period of three years plus the option to extend the contract a further two years subject to satisfactory performance reviews. The estimated spend within the contract for the HRA is £2.7m over a maximum five-year period.

Other options considered

- a) none, as the Council has a duty to supply, deliver and install the items required in council-owned furnished residential properties.

70 Housing Services HRA: Capital Programme delivery - key decision

Councillor Hayes, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the report.

Alison Brown, Director of Property Services, presented the report and stated the following:

- a) the Council are required by regulation to ensure that all its social housing meets the government's Decent Homes Standard, which sets out a minimum standard for social housing and is underpinned by four criteria linked to a statutory minimum standard based on the 29 hazards detailed in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), reasonable state of repair, having modern facilities and meeting identified levels for thermal comfort;
- b) the Council maintains decency through the delivery of repair, maintenance and investment works to homes, blocks and estates, done through a mixed service delivery model of directly employed staff, trade colleagues and external contractors who provide additional capacity and technical expertise;
- c) the report seeks approval to appoint two contractors to form part of the mixed delivery model as the Council do not have sufficient internal capacity or expertise to deliver the scale and scope of works to ensure the Council maintain decency across its housing assets;

- d) a decision from Committee is required urgently due to the impact on delivery of works after one of the key partners for investment works went into administration and also with the current lack of ability to recruit staff;
- e) the HRA Capital Investment programme, which this work will be carried out under, was reported to Executive Board on 13 February 2024 as part of the Capital Programme;
- f) the 2006 Decent Homes Standard is currently under review as part of one of the most significant regulatory reviews of social housing in the last decade. Using the consultation that has taken place to date, there are likely to be additional measures the Council will have to take on as a landlord to ensure it is compliant with the decency standard;
- g) the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 ('Act') introduced a requirement for landlords to evidence how they ensure compliance with the decency standard through the Consumer standards, specifically the Safety and Quality standard;
- h) many of the provisions in the Act are responses to the tragedies of the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire, and the death of two-year old Awaab Ishak, who died in 2020 from exposure to serious mould;
- i) the Act allows the Regulator of Social Housing to take action against social landlords before people are at risk and hold landlords to account with a reintroduced regime of service inspections;
- j) the Act also gives the Secretary of State power to require social landlords to investigate and rectify serious health hazards, possibly including intervention within the Property Service.

Resolved to delegate authority to the

- (1) Corporate Director for Growth and City Development to enter into contracts with United Living and Lovells to enable delivery of the HRA Capital Programme up to 31 March 2025, with an option to extend for a further 2-years to 31 March 2027, up to a maximum total cost of £80,000,000;**
- (2) Head of Service to set up the required Contract Purchase Agreements to cover the works to be delivered, and to raise purchase orders under the signed contracts for the duration of the contracts.**

Reasons for recommendations

- a) Nottingham City Council Housing Services team are required to ensure that all of its Social Housing homes meet the governments Decent Homes Standard which means that they will meet the minimum statutory standard for housing including no category one failures under the Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), properties are in a reasonable state of repair, we have reasonably modern facilities and services, and homes provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort;

- b) the Act includes a requirement to meet our obligations under the newly introduced Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety Act 2021 and the forthcoming Awaabs Law to ensure that Social Housing is free from damp and mould, disrepair, HHSRS hazards and are structurally sound and safe. We are required to demonstrate our compliance using the consumer standards, specifically for property the safety and quality standard. We have adopted a mixed delivery model to help us manage and maintain decency across our Housing assets. This is to reflect the scope, scale and timescales, capacity and technical expertise needed to deliver the required works. External contractors form part of this mixed delivery model;
- c) The types of works we deliver to maintain decency includes:
- replacements works and refurbishments works to key building elements and components including roofs, structural works, doors, windows and heating systems;
 - replacement of key facilities including Kitchens and bathrooms;
 - control measures to manage Hazards including damp and mould, falls, electrical hazards and fire;
 - preventing disrepair by dealing with property deficiencies within a reasonable timescale;
 - work to improve thermal efficiency including external wall insulation or alternative heating systems;
 - decent neighbourhoods work, including boundary issues, garages and HRA pathways;
 - support for development of mixed communities including HRA shop conversions and works to properties bought on the open market.

Other options considered

- a) carry out the work with internal resources, rejected as not achievable to scale, scope, volume and timescales;
- b) award to a single contractor - rejected. To apply learning from what has happened during 2023 and mitigate against a contractor going into receivership we have proposed two contractors to spread the risk. It also provides an opportunity to benchmark to demonstrate value for money.

71 Corporate landlord procurement requirements 2024-25 - key decision

Trevor Bone, Head of Building Services and Facilities Management, presented the report and stated the following:

- a) the report sets out Building Services (BS) and Facilities Management (FM) procurement requirements for planned, reactive maintenance and minor works during the financial year 2024-25, including the Property Team's procurement

requirements due to the formation of a Corporate Landlord Service, which BS / FM fall under;

- b) the Council has a statutory duty to be compliant with all applicable asset legislation in relation to its asset portfolio. This duty is met by carrying out planned, reactive and minor works on its asset portfolio;
- c) whilst works are performed in-house wherever possible, there are occasions where specialist contractors or additional resource is required, and the report details (in the appendix) how those requirements are to be procured to provide a seamless ability to meet the Council's statutory duty.

Resolved to

(1) delegate authority to the Head of Building Services and Facilities Management and/or the Director of Economic Development and Property to:

(a) procure and award the frameworks and contracts as set out in the annual procurement plan (in the appendix) to a maximum value of £17,730,000;

(b) award call-off contracts under the frameworks (as set out in the appendix) within established budgets and in compliance with the terms of the frameworks, without having to seek further approvals up to the financial limit for officer decisions in force at the time (for the avoidance of doubt, in respect of awards of contract(s) other than provided for in this recommendation, approval appropriate to the delegated limits of authority set out in the Constitution at the time will be sought);

(2) approve expenditure of at least £1m of the £3.1m planned maintenance budget for 2024-25 on services delivered through in-house provision.

Reasons for recommendations

- a) there are a number of contracts which the Building Services and Facilities Management (BS&FM) department use that are coming to the end of their term in March 2024 onwards. The contracts set out in the appendix 1 require re-procurement to enable BS&FM to keep the Council's asset portfolio compliant with regulatory, legislative and insurance obligations. Through the proposed procurement routes the Council can continue to improve efficiency and service of supplier delivery across multiple high-risk work streams and improve value for money for Directorates across the Council. Our annual procurement programme has proven to be the best approach to securing a competent specialist supply chain with the lowest costs possible;
- b) the report details how orders are placed with Contractors through the Council's robust system. To ensure a smooth and timely process for placing orders it is recommended that the Director of Economic Development and Property has delegated authority to approve any contracts and call-offs made under frameworks for their duration. No award will be made without evidence that the budget has been approved for the ordered requirement;

- c) it has been identified that at least £1m of the 2024-25 planned maintenance budget can be delivered through use of in-house services.

Other options considered

- a) do nothing and allow contracts to end, which will remove statutory, regulatory, and legislative compliancy across the Council's portfolio of assets and increase the risk of prosecution and reputational damage to Nottingham City Council. This option was considered unacceptable and rejected;
- b) in-source all the activity covered by the contract areas under consideration for renewal. Due to the complexity and high risks involved with this task, including a lack of competency-based skills and training, equipment, and specialised resource, it was considered unacceptable and rejected;
- c) allow Nottingham City Council's directorates to purchase their own asset compliancy services. This is a very high-risk approach to asset safety and compliance across the portfolio and the Council would find it very hard to track actual compliance through our current systems. In 2024 under the Corporate Landlord Services programme all Statutory testing across the Council is now the responsibility of Corporate Landlord Service BS/FM team. Such an approach would lead to additional expense and the general safety of the asset compromised as well as going against the principles of the Corporate Landlord model introduced in 2023. This option was considered unacceptable and rejected.

72 DHSC grant funding to support current smokers to quit smoking in Nottingham - key decision

Councillor Woodings, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health, introduced the report.

Matt Corder, Public Health Principal, presented the report and stated the following:

- a) the report requests approval to accept and spend funding of up to £2,726,075 over the 5 years 2024/25 to 2028/29 (up to £545,215 per annum) awarded to Nottingham City Council by the Department of Health and Social Care to support our stop smoking service and help more City residents stop smoking;
- b) the additional time-limited grant funding has been issued to all Local Authorities and the funding uplift for each area is based on the number of smokers in each local authority, thereby targeting local authorities with the most smokers;
- c) the government has already confirmed additional funding of £70 million a year for 5 years, from 2024/25 to 2028/29, and allocations will continue to be based on the average smoking prevalence over a 3-year period to ensure the allocations are based on the most robust and recent data;
- d) approval of the recommendations within the report will allow for the improvement, expansion and additional targeting of the support offered to smokers to quit over the next 5 years (2024-29).

Resolved to

- (1) approve receipt of additional Public Health Grant funding from the Department of Health and Social Care up to a total of £2,726,025 over a period of 5 years from 2024/25 to 2028/29 (up to £545,215 per annum);**
- (2) delegate authority to the Director of Public Health to:**
 - (a) enter into Grant Agreements, under S31 of the Local Government Act 2003, with the Department of Health and Social Care for receipt of the grant funding as detailed in resolution (1) above:**
 - (b) spend the total grant on the ‘Integrated Wellbeing Service – smoking services and support contracts’, subject to compliance with grant conditions imposed under S31(4) of the Local Government Act 2003, and modification procedures under ‘Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023’;**
 - (c) enter into relevant contract modifications / variations for the ‘Integrated Wellbeing Service - smoking services and support contract’, in consultation with the Director for Legal and Governance / Head of Legal and Governance where sealing of a deed is necessary to give effect to the delegation.**

Reasons for recommendations

- a) stop smoking services are funded through the ring-fenced Public Health Grant (PHG). The PHG funding is awarded under a s31 Local Government Act 2003 Grant Agreement and subject to grant conditions (s31(4)). The government’s command paper lays out the vision to create a smokefree generation unaffected by the extraordinary harms of addiction-driven smoking, and tackle youth vaping. This includes a programme of funding to support current smokers to quit smoking, with £70 million additional funding per year nationally for local stop smoking services and support;
- b) Smoking rates in Nottingham are the second highest in England with higher prevalence of smoking in pregnancy (13.4%), routine and manual workers (27.8%) and adults with mental health conditions (32.8%) when compared to the England average. Helping these individuals successfully quit is essential, the additional funding will therefore help target these groups and support these smokers through their quit journey;
- c) the new funding is in addition to the existing ring-fenced Public Health Grant and will be provided through a new section 31 grant on top of the current public health grant allocations, in 2024/25 and annually thereafter until 2028/29;
- d) Department of Health and Social Care will provide the grant. The aim of this additional funding is to ensure there is a nationwide comprehensive offer to help people stop smoking across England and to increase the number of smokers engaging with effective interventions to quit smoking;

- e) this will be achieved by stimulating more quit attempts by providing more smokers with advice and swift support; linking smokers to the most effective interventions to quit; boosting existing behavioural support schemes designed to encourage smokers to quit (for example the 'swap to stop' scheme); building capacity in local areas to respond to increased demand; and strengthening partnerships in local healthcare systems;
- f) payments will be given to local authorities every 6 months. In the first 6 months, local authorities will receive 70% of their allocated financial year's funding. They will then be expected to provide grant reporting to the DHSC grants team to receive the second payment;
- g) local authorities will receive the grant agreement in February 2024. This will provide authorities with the full grant conditions. Once received, authorities will be asked to read and return a signed copy. The grant agreement will start from 6 April 2024
- h) the key success indicators for the funding are:
 - number of recorded quit dates set per 100,000 smokers;
 - percentage of people engaging with services who successfully quit smoking (recorded quit rate);
 - number of recorded quits per 100,000 smokers.
- i) local authorities will need to report data throughout the life cycle of the grant. This will take place through 2 methods:
 - the Stop Smoking Services Collection is an existing data collection and reporting system used to monitor the delivery of local stop smoking interventions. NHS England collects the data from local authorities and there is a requirement to submit activity for each quarter;
 - NHS England publishes submission dates and local authorities can return activity and outcome data associated with quit support provided. The collection requires local authorities to submit cumulative counts of activity using a template, which can be requested from the Strategic Data Collection Service;
- j) starting from the second payment, local authorities will need to complete a statement of grant usage to the DHSC grants team, before they receive the next payment. The statement of grant usage will ask local authorities to provide the funding amount they received, their actual eligible spending, and a reason for any differences;
- k) over a 5-year period, grant conditions may be subject to change as are the activities required to meet local need. The recommendations outline a governance approach embedded in public health expertise to assure decision making and best value.

Other options considered

- a) to not accept the funding awarded - this is rejected as there is a significant health need in line with the aims of the grant. Not accepting the funding would mean the

Council are unable to realise the benefits of expanding the local service offer and would disadvantage Nottingham residents in comparison to other areas in England.

73 Specialist Residential Children's Homes - key decision

Karla Banfield, Head of Commissioning, Children's Services, presented the report and stated the following:

- a) Local Authorities have a statutory duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within its local authority area to meet the needs of the children that it is looking after (S22G of the Children Act 1989; its 'sufficiency duty');
- b) to satisfy this duty, Nottingham City Council provides a range of accommodation options through in-house and externally commissioned services;
- c) the D2N2 partnership is proposing to tender for four 2-bed homes (1 within each locality area) to meet the needs of children and young people who present with emotional / psychological issues and / or challenging behaviour;
- d) these specialist health residential homes will be jointly commissioned across the D2N2 footprint, utilising the existing D2N2 Residential and Fostering Framework, incorporating D2N2 local authority partners (Derbyshire County, Nottinghamshire County and Derby City) and Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Integrated Care Boards;
- e) a D2N2 Inter-Agency Agreement will underpin risk sharing / funding / placement decisions, building on the current D2N2 governance;
- f) the proposal will be funded through the existing Children in Care Budget, using funding currently allocated to individual placements, and it is expected to go out to market during quarter one 2024/25.

Resolved to

- (1) grant approval to undertake a tender process in partnership with D2N2, through the existing D2N2 Framework Contract, for a single provider to deliver 2 units of specialist residential care in Nottingham City, on an initial 5-year contract, with an option to extend for a further 4 years (5 + 4 years);**
- (2) delegate authority to the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships to:**
 - (a) enter into an Inter-Agency Agreement with D2N2 partners within the scope of the existing partnership arrangements governing the D2N2 Framework contract;**
 - (b) approve the outcome of the tender process for the Specialist Childrens Residential Homes and agree for Nottinghamshire County Council to make that award on behalf of Nottingham City;**
- (3) delegate authority to the Head of Contracts, Quality and Personalisation to sign the contract once awarded.**

Reasons for recommendations

- a) Nottingham City is a partner in the D2N2 framework for residential and foster care. This enables us to call off the framework for residential homes as and when a young person requires a placement;
- b) we currently have approximately 60% of our residential placements sourced through this framework and where we are not able to source a placement through the framework, we will go out to the wider market;
- c) the tender seeks to establish 4 specialist homes of 2 beds each across the D2N2 footprint, with the potential to increase over the course of the contract. Using a block funding agreement and keeping the homes within 20 miles of each other, should enable development of a cost-effective service with all four authorities sharing the risk of the block funding to enable this;
- d) one, two bed home will be established within each local authority area with the 'host' local authority providing the block funding for the home;
- e) Nottinghamshire and Derby City are providing accommodation as part of the contract. Derbyshire and Nottingham City will require the provider to provide the accommodation. The agreement between the four authorities will outline the process for reimbursement between the authorities in the event a child is placed into a partner's home and the circumstances this would be agreed.

Other options considered

- a) do nothing - rejected. This is an identified gap in the market and due to current insufficiency of supply we are currently placing in unsuitable accommodation at significant cost;
- b) commission the service outside of the D2N2 partnership arrangement - rejected. It is anticipated by offering a provider up to 8 units of accommodation within a relatively small footprint, this will offer economies of scale and be more attractive to providers;
- c) procure more than 2 units - rejected. While needs suggest that we could use higher levels of placements, we are using this approach to test the viability of the model. The health offer will also need to be considered and whether this can be expanded or reconfigured to provide dedicated support to more units.

74 Booking arrangements of private rented accommodation for emergency temporary use for homeless households - key decision

Councillor Hays, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the report.

Rachael Harding, Homelessness Strategy Manager, presented the report and stated the following:

- a) over recent years there has been an increase nationally in the number of households at risk of homelessness;

- b) Nottingham City Council's primary approach is to try to prevent and relieve homelessness, but when this is not possible, the council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to households who are eligible, homeless and considered to be in priority need;
- c) the council has significantly increased supply of temporary accommodation, but not at a sufficient rate to keep up with demand, and the council has been required to rely upon emergency use of hotels;
- d) hotels are also used by other departments in the council, such as adults and children social care, communities and public health, to fulfil other statutory, humanitarian and public protection duties, and responsibilities to vulnerable households;
- e) currently, 90% of emergency accommodation for citizens is accessed via a procured online booking system. However, this system was not specifically designed to meet citizen accommodation needs and is not representative of the market of privately owned, instantly accessible accommodation options, and crucially does not provide the ability to secure discounted rates for multiple and / or block booking arrangements;
- f) at its meeting in January 2024 (minute 55), this Committee noted the requirement to explore alternative compliant procurement arrangements for emergency accommodation for households to whom the council owes a duty, in order to secure best value for the council and to provide a more suitable and appropriate form of emergency accommodation to households with dependent children.

Resolved to

- (1) approve the establishment of a flexible framework (under a light-touch procurement regime) of providers of privately owned, short-term rental accommodation as a mechanism for the compliant future contracting of the services to fulfil statutory duties for accommodating vulnerable households;**
- (2) note that the value of this contract is spend redirected from the existing booking system (approved by this Committee in January 2024, minute 55) and is not additional spend to be incurred by the Council;**
- (3) approve a maximum total expenditure of £6,461,560 under the regime, and delegate authority to award individual contracts under the framework agreement to the Corporate Director of Growth and City Development (and other Corporate Directors as appropriate for use), in line with s114 procedures;**
- (4) delegate authority to the Head of Housing Solutions and Head of Housing Strategy and Regeneration (and other Heads of Service as appropriate for use) to obtain services via the framework within the budget value;**
- (5) extend the contracts as interim arrangements pending the introduction of the framework.**

Reasons for recommendations

- a) the council has a statutory duty to provide emergency accommodation for vulnerable citizens in accordance with relevant legislation (including housing, homelessness, and social care);
- b) the council is required to source the accommodation in a way that is compliant with procurement regulations, and which offers best value, quality assurance and auditable use;
- c) the council has reviewed current arrangements and has identified a process to access additional market options that have been assessed as deliverable at lower cost and are more appropriate for family use.

Other options considered

- a) not to establish a compliant process for procuring a variety of forms of privately owned short-term furnished rental accommodation and:
 - (i) to continue to use existing arrangements to secure emergency accommodation for vulnerable households. This was rejected because it is not considered that the current system allows for the best value options;
 - (ii) explore ad-hoc arrangements with individual suppliers. This was rejected because this would not be compliant with procurement regulations.

75 Exclusion of the public

The Committee agreed to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

76 Exempt appendix - Specialist residential children's homes

The Committee noted the exempt appendix.

77 Exempt appendices - Booking arrangements of private rented accommodation

The Committee noted the exempt appendices.

78 Exempt minutes

The Committee agreed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2024 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.