

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 24 October 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Contract for the Provision of Supported Accommodation for Children and Young People in the Vale of Glamorgan.
Purpose of Report:	To seek authority to undertake a tender process relating to the provision of the above services and seek delegated authority to award the contract to the successful provider(s).
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Lance Carver, Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Natalie Eddins, Team Manager, Commissioning Louise McGowan, Senior Contracts Officer, Commissioning Shannon Purdey, Contracts Officer, Commissioning Karen Conway, Operational Manager, Children’s Services Ceri O’Dare, Team Manager, Fourteen Plus Team
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by the Cabinet.

Executive Summary:

This report seeks authority to undertake a tender process for accommodation for children and young people across 3 areas described below.

Lot 1 – Temporary Accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

To seek authority to undertake a tender process relating to the provision of shared temporary accommodation for vulnerable unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people between the ages of 16 and 21 within the Vale of Glamorgan, and to enter into a contract with the successful provider.

The contract is to be awarded for 5 (five) years initially, with an option to extend for up to a further 2 (two) years in negotiation with the successful provider(s), subject to the ongoing award of the UASC Local Authority Funding grant from the Home Office.

The contract is envisaged to commence by July 2025.

Lot 2 – Temporary Supported Living Accommodation and Housing-Related Support

To seek authority to undertake a tender process for an existing service relating to the provision of temporary supported living accommodation for vulnerable young people under the age of 23 years who are leaving care within the Vale of Glamorgan, and to enter into a contract with the successful provider following the tender process.

The contract is to be awarded for 5 (five) years initially, with an option to extend for up to a further 2 (two) years in negotiation with the successful provider.

Following commission, the contract is envisaged to commence by July 2025.

Lot 3 – Emergency Supported Lodgings

To seek authority to undertake a tender process for services currently commissioned under a Letter of Understanding relating to the provision of emergency supported lodging placements for vulnerable young people up to and including the age of 18 years within the Vale of Glamorgan, and to enter into a contract with the successful provider following the re-tender process.

The contract is to be awarded for 5 (five) years initially, with an option to extend for up to a further 2 (two) years in negotiation with the successful provider.

Following the recommissioning process, the contract is envisaged to commence by July 2025.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet authorises the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health to undertake competitive tender processes for the provision of shared temporary accommodation services for vulnerable unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people, temporary supported living accommodation for vulnerable children and young people, and emergency supported lodgings for vulnerable young people in the Vale of Glamorgan.
2. That Cabinet authorises the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health to award the contract(s) for these services for an initial period of 5 (five) years with an option to extend for up to a further 2 (two) years, following the completion of a tender process.
3. That Cabinet authorises the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services and the Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer in the Vale of Glamorgan Council to execute a contract with the successful Provider(s).

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that the Council provides shared temporary accommodation for vulnerable unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people within the Vale of Glamorgan in a cost-effective way that meets the requirements of Welsh Government UASC Guidance and the required standards of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
2. To ensure that the Council provides temporary supported living accommodation and emergency supported lodging placements for vulnerable children and young people within the Vale of Glamorgan in a cost-effective way that meets the requirements of Welsh Government Supported Living Guidance and the required standards of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
3. To ensure that the Council meets the requirements of its Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules.

1. Background

Lot 1 – Temporary Accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

- 1.1** The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Placement Commissioning Strategy April 2022 to April 2025 identifies a significant rise in the numbers of Children Looked After in the Vale of Glamorgan. One of the reasons for this is the increased number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

- 1.2** An Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child is defined as a young person who: is under the age of 18 years when their application for asylum is submitted, is not being legally cared for by an adult, is separated from their parents and who has applied for asylum in the UK in their own right. These young people may have arrived in UK via the National Transfer Scheme, or even spontaneously.
- 1.3** The primary aim of the UASC accommodation service is to improve outcomes for vulnerable asylum-seeking young people aged between 16 and 21 years by providing shared supported living housing situated within the Vale of Glamorgan, alongside long-term support planning and proactive assistance with their transition to independence.
- 1.4** The Regional Partnership Board's (RPB) Market Stability Report (MSR) October 2023 to March 2027 acknowledges that the Vale of Glamorgan is now part of the National Transfer Scheme, which reflects the UK government's statutory requirement for Local Authorities to accept UASC. All UASC transferred to the Vale of Glamorgan automatically become Children Looked After.
- 1.5** Since the implementation of the National Transfer Scheme, the Council has received 18 UASC, with 16 of these children and young people currently remaining under the care of the Vale of Glamorgan. 10 of the Vale of Glamorgan UASC are currently accommodated in Cardiff due to the shortage of in-county accommodation.
- 1.6** It is anticipated there will be a potential year on year increase in the number of children placed under the National Transfer Scheme. The Vale of Glamorgan Council will need to ensure that there is sufficient in-county accommodation, services, and placements available to support this specific group of vulnerable children and young people.
- 1.7** The successful provider will be expected to manage the UASC temporary accommodation service within separate Local Authority owned properties.
- 1.8** In the event that the Council is no longer in receipt of the Home Office UASC Local Authority Funding grant, or the demand for UASC housing within the Vale of Glamorgan is significantly reduced, both CIW standard properties will be appropriate for use as Residential Homes for Children and Young People.

Lot 2 – Temporary Supported Living Accommodation and Housing-Related Support

- 1.9** The primary aim of the temporary accommodation service is to improve outcomes for vulnerable young people leaving care up to the age of 23 years who are at risk of homelessness and unable to be accommodated in multi-occupancy residences due to highly complex and overlapping support needs by providing temporary supported living accommodation, alongside flexible housing-related support services and resources to enable informed decision-making and increased independence.

- 1.10** Currently, the service provides supported accommodation for up to two vulnerable young people at any one time, alongside an emergency accommodation room suitable for a single occupant, within one large Local Authority owned property with 24-hour staffing.
- 1.11** Following the commissioning process, the successful provider is expected to manage the service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- 1.12** The successful provider will also be expected to provide a flexible model of support tailored to meet the needs of each young person within the service to ensure the best opportunity for independent living as a responsible member of the community. It is an expectation of the service that the young care leaver will occupy the 24-hour supported accommodation until the skills to live independently have been demonstrated; this could be for a period of time as short as a 3–6-month period.

Lot 3 – Emergency Supported Lodgings

- 1.13** The primary aim of the Supported Lodgings Scheme is to improve outcomes for vulnerable young people aged 18 years and under by providing emergency supported lodgings accommodation on both a short- and long-term basis. The Vale of Glamorgan currently commissions a minimum of 30 supported lodgings placements.
- 1.14** The successful provider will be expected to ensure that staffing is adequate to meet the needs of the young people using the service and that all staff are aware of the need to protect and safeguard children and young people as well as adults at risk. The successful provider is expected to ensure that they and their staff work in line with both 'Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 5 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk' and Section 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 'Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 6 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Adults at Risk.'

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The tender processes will be managed by a project group which includes representatives from Children's Services, Procurement and Commissioning teams. The group has been meeting frequently to allow timely discussions to be held with regards to issues that may occur within the tender processes. Informed debate and discussion will be allowed for decisions to be agreed, ensuring continued progress of the tender processes within required timescales.
- 2.2** Following advertising of the tender processes, organisations will complete an Invitation to Tender (ITT).

- 2.3 The quality element of the submissions will be evaluated through several means and will cover areas that have been weighted appropriately in accordance with importance.
- 2.4 Providers may make a submission for any number of lots within this multi-lot contract, each of which will be evaluated separately. There will be a maximum of three Providers (one per lot) unless best value from the evaluation can evidence a single Provider for all three lots; there will be no more than one Provider per lot.
- 2.5 The price submission will require Providers to submit a price for each lot individually (the standard price). In addition, Providers will need to evidence economies of scale should they tender for more than one lot. Initial evaluations of price will be based upon the standard price, to ensure equality within the evaluation process. The evaluation criteria for tenders are 70% quality and 30% price.
- 2.6 All Providers will be asked to provide written submissions against quality questions included within the ITT document. Their written submissions will be assessed by an internal evaluation panel.
- 2.7 Providers will also be evaluated on their quality through an interview and presentation process. Providers are to be asked to present their proposals and answer a series of formal questions to the evaluation panel. Their responses will be evaluated and scored by the panel.
- 2.8 Young People will be fully engaged with at every stage of the commissioning process and will be actively involved in the evaluation of quality and decision-making elements of the process, with them asking direct questions of the potential providers during the interview stage. The Young Person's Evaluation Panel will be of equal weighting as the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Evaluation Panel.
- 2.9 Following the evaluation of overall quality and price, this will be combined with the Provider's due diligence responses within their Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) to identify the preferred Provider(s) for the service.
- 2.10 The contracts for all 3 (three) lots are to be awarded initially for 5 (five) years with an option to extend for up to a further 2 (two) years in negotiation with the successful Provider(s).

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

- 3.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

3.2 To make sure we are all working towards the same purpose, the 2015 Act places seven well-being goals on the Council. The 2015 Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two, with these being:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

3.3 By embedding the five ways of working, the Council is working in a more sustainable way. The Council aims to meet these as detailed below:

Long Term

3.4 The Vale of Glamorgan Council currently has no provision within the county to accommodate UASC. This new service would ensure that there would be long-term provision within the area; thereby addressing the unmet need in accordance with the MSR and reducing the ongoing revenue costs associated with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.

3.5 The Council's commitment to providing this service represents a focus on the long-term wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people, by promoting and fostering a culture of independence.

3.6 The Vale of Glamorgan has an increasingly significant issue of highly vulnerable young care leavers with varied care and support needs excluding themselves from the range of supported accommodation available to them, resulting in them facing homelessness, becoming even more vulnerable and potentially being put at risk. This service would ensure that these vulnerable care leavers are safely housed and supported on a temporary basis with the aim to becoming independent, responsible members of the community, thus reducing the numbers of young care leavers facing homelessness within the Vale and, subsequently, the need and cost of additional Council services.

3.7 The Vale of Glamorgan Council's commitment to providing this emergency short-term accommodation service represents a focus on the long-term safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people under 18 years of age, by promoting and fostering a culture of independence.

Taking an Integrated Approach

3.8 The Council expects the successful provider to work with Children's Services alongside third sector organisations to ensure that the appropriate level of care

and support is provided in order to meet the individual needs of each child and young person.

Involving People

- 3.9** Each individual UASC's support needs and life skills will be fully considered by the Council.
- 3.10** Each young person accessing the service will have their individual care and support needs considered by the Council and will be provided with a clear indication of the living skills required to enable them to live independently.
- 3.11** Young people using the service who are over the age of 18 years will be supported to participate in decisions affecting their supported living accommodation and be involved in planning reviewing and designing services. This ensures that they are safe, feel secure and listened to, have a say, and feel involved and confident in the service provided to them.
- 3.12** Young Peoples are to be involved with supportive activities and the promotion of abilities in order to obtain and maintain their own accommodation.
- 3.13** Young care leavers accessing the service will be assisted in acquiring appropriate permanent accommodation once they are deemed ready to live independently. Those who are identified as unready to move on from supported accommodation will be supported in finding alternative arrangements.

Collaborating with Others

- 3.14** Service provision is not effective without collaboration with those using the service, but also partner organisations. The service will involve collaboration with internal officers across Directorates of the Council as well as third sector organisations.

Prevention

- 3.15** This service would prevent the Vale of Glamorgan Council from having to place UASC out of county, therefore reducing the resulting long-term expenditure.
- 3.16** The aim of the UASC accommodation service is to provide shared temporary accommodation for highly vulnerable young people; providing safe, supportive housing aims to enable UASC to gain self-confidence and independence, thus reducing the demand for additional services and preventing negative outcomes upon their eventual transition to independent living.
- 3.17** This service would help to prevent vulnerable care leavers from facing the risk of homelessness and subsequent negative life experiences and outcomes.

- 3.18** The aim of this service is to provide temporary accommodation for highly vulnerable young people leaving care; providing safe, supportive housing aims to enable these young people to gain self-confidence and independence, thus reducing the demand for additional services and preventing negative outcomes upon their eventual transition to independent living.
- 3.19** The service also aims to engage young people in training, education, and employment, therefore improving outcomes and preventing the need for future additional services when living independently within the community.
- 3.20** The primary aim of the Supported Lodgings Scheme is to improve outcomes for vulnerable young people aged 18 years and under by providing emergency short-term supported accommodation.
- 3.21** This service would aid in preventing vulnerable children and young people from facing the risk of homelessness and subsequent negative life experiences, therefore improving outcomes, and preventing the need for costly additional intervention services in adulthood.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** In December 2020, the Climate Change Committee published its progress report “Reducing Carbon Emissions in Wales”. This is the first report on Wales’s progress towards meeting its emission reduction targets, as required under Article 45 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 4.2** The progress report and advice recognise the actions taken in Wales to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - including achieving some of the highest national recycling rates in the world, taking a proactive role in supporting the large-scale deployment of renewable energy generation, and integrating responses to the climate and nature emergency throughout its priorities for the reconstruction of the economy following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.3** The services will engage with staff, family members, friends, and care givers to use alternative modes of transport to reduce the environmental impact of any facilities and residences involved.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** It is the intention of the Vale of Glamorgan Council to undertake a procurement exercise to identify a suitable provider(s) for the three services set out above.
- 5.2** Services for Vale of Glamorgan Young Peoples will be funded from within the Social Services budget.

Employment

- 5.3** The process of monitoring the service will be undertaken by staff within the Social Services Directorate, making appropriate use of corporate expertise and processes in areas such as procurement, finance and HR where required.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.4** Any change of service provided as a result of a tendering exercise may result in TUPE being applied. If this occurs, Legal Services will be consulted as appropriate.
- 5.5** The review of all working arrangements between the Council and other agencies will ensure that services are provided through robust contracts that fully reflect the responsibilities of the Council and the Provider(s).

6. Background Papers

[Acquisition of Residential Properties in the Vale of Glamorgan – Cabinet Meeting 25th January, 2024](#)