

TITLE OF REPORT

Provision of advice and support to single homeless clients at the Greenhouse

Key Decision No

RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL RATING (Low / Medium)	Medium
CONTRACT VALUE (for duration of the contract including extensions)	£1,407,335
APPROVAL ROUTE (Director for Low Risk, HPB for Medium Risk)	HPB
CONTRACT DURATION (including extensions e.g. 2 yrs + 1 yr + 1 yr)	3 yrs + 1yr

HPB MEETING DATE 12th April 2022	CLASSIFICATION: If exempt, the reason will be listed in the main body of this report.
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WARD(S) AFFECTED

CABINET MEMBER

GROUP DIRECTOR

1. GROUP DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hackney Council remains committed to preventing and reducing homelessness, tackling the causes of homelessness and supporting those in need.
- 1.2. Homelessness in the borough is rising, and the council continues to adapt and refresh its response in a period of unprecedented change, including rapidly rising property values and rents, an increased demand for social housing across the board, and supporting residents through significant welfare reform. The Council has put in place a comprehensive Homelessness Strategy that builds on the achievements, whilst responding and adapting to the changing environment in which homelessness and support services are delivered.
- 1.3. The Greenhouse Centre is core to this activity. It is a high performing service providing health, employment, benefits and housing advice services to single people. It provides a walk in service and appointment based service for single homelessness, with comprehensive housing, welfare and employment advice and support to all single people, coupled with the health offer. In addition it offers showering facilities for the street homeless.
- 1.4. The Greenhouse is based in Tudor Road and was initially launched in 2007, as a partnership between Hackney Council, NHS England and Thames Reach. Thames Reach was commissioned to deliver the frontline customer interaction as a specialist service that very few other providers can replicate.
- 1.5. The Greenhouse has been an innovative approach to meeting the needs of that section of the community that finds it most difficult to engage. It provides a welcoming and relaxed environment that is more approachable for service users than a Council building. Combining the expertise of ThamesReach and the Benefits & Housing Needs Service has improved outcomes and established a clear pathway into housing, with options that increase a service user's likelihood of a positive conclusion.
- 1.6. The Greenhouse currently operates as a commissioned service delivered by Thamesreach who are contracted to 31st August 2022. Undertaking a tendering exercise at this time will ensure a compliant contract is in place to meet future requirements. This will adhere to the Council Standing Orders and also Public Procurement Regulations. A new contract will commence from 1st September 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1. **That the Hackney Procurement Board approve procurement, by competitive tender, of a frontline advice service for single people**

to start 1st September 2022 for a period of 3(+1) years at an estimated value of £1,407,335.

3. RELATED DECISIONS

- 3.1. The current Greenhouse frontline service is being delivered by Thamesreach. The initial contract commenced in 2007 and ran through to present. This contract is due to expire 31/08/2022

4. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

- 4.1. This report is to seek approval for the commissioning of a provider to deliver frontline customer engagement and housing advice to single clients approaching the Greenhouse service. The reasoning for this request is set out within paras 1.1 to 1.6 of this report.
- 4.2. Since its launch, the Greenhouse has been regularly reviewed and extended, and in September 2015 the Council's Benefits and Housing Needs Service merged their single homeless assessment team with the Greenhouse, delivering a joint housing service that is also working alongside the NHS provision consisting of a GP surgery and nursing facilities including mental health provision.
- 4.3. The Homelessness Reduction Act came into effect in April 2018 and represented the biggest single change to Homeless Legislation since the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. It was driven by increases in rough sleeping and the numbers of households living in temporary accommodation nationally.
- 4.4. Following its implementation, the Greenhouse became crucial to the Council's response. The HRA considerably widened the responsibilities of local authorities with regard to homelessness/potential homelessness, particularly for single households. The aim of the HRA is to promote a more person-centred approach. That the HRA requirements in many ways reflected the established Greenhouse ethos meant that we were able to adapt more readily to the new requirements.
- 4.5. The current frontline service is being delivered by Thamesreach through a single tender agreement at a cost of £307,964. The funding for the service is being drawn down from existing Benefits and Housing Needs budgets.

5. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND ELECTORAL SERVICES

- 5.1. This Report has been classified as Medium Risk. Therefore this Report is being submitted to Hackney Procurement Board at Business Case

stage and in line with paragraph 2.7.7 and 2.7.11 of the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

- 5.2 The services to be procured in this Report are classified as Social and other Specific Services under Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and are of an estimated value above the threshold of £663,540 (including VAT) for such services. Therefore it will be necessary to publish a Find a Tender notice in respect of the procurement of the services. However as these are Schedule 3 (light touch) services the Council will then be subject to a smaller number of procedural rules in regard to how it procures such services. It will, however, be important to ensure that it complies with the obligations to treat economic operators equally and without discrimination and act in a transparent and proportionate manner in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

6. COMMENTS OF THE PROCUREMENT CATEGORY LEAD

- 6.1. The proposed contract is valued above the relevant UK public procurement threshold (Social and Other Specific Services “light touch” regime) and must be awarded in accordance with the relevant procedures set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Council's Contract Standing Order 2.5.2 requires that the Business Case for a medium risk procurement of this value be approved by HPB.
- 6.2. Procurement of the contract via an Open competitive tender process is supported as an appropriate route, compliant with Contract Standing Orders as set out in the report.
- 6.3. Relevant KPIs and performance measures are proposed, aligned to strategic and corporate targets.
- 6.4. The timeline for the procurement process is reasonable to ensure contract commencement in September 2022 and will be supported by the Central Procurement Team.

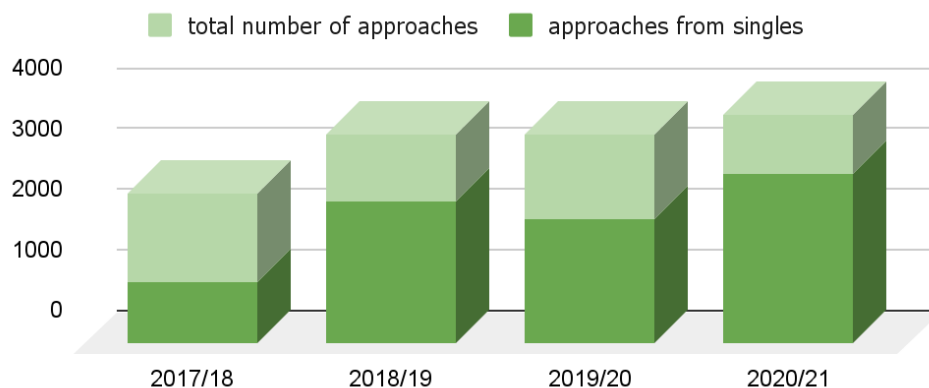
7. OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND BUSINESS CASE (REASONS FOR DECISION)

- 7.1. **Reasons for the decision**
- 7.2. The BHN service is responsible for the assessment and allocation of temporary and permanent accommodation on behalf of the Council. Ensuring that the most vulnerable individuals are both able to access the service and receive an adequate response is extremely challenging when factoring the level of demand and the resources available to us.

7.3. The housing crisis, along with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017 has meant that local authorities have a much more extensive responsibility to homeless households in general and to single people in particular.

7.4. There have also been changes in the way personal data is recorded, allowing for a more informed view of the level of need. One aspect of the introduction of the HRA is that the additional granularity of the data being collected has exposed the significant level of need within the single homeless cohort and in particular those with complex support needs.

7.5. Looking at the data, in addition to the rise in approaches, there has been a marked increase both in the proportion of single people for whom we have a duty and in the proportion of those with complex needs.



7.6.

7.7. In 2020/21, over 3700 approaches were made to the service, and while for 2021/22 the number of approaches is down 3.4% due to covid factors, approximately 70% were from single applicants, 19% of total approaches were from applicants aged between 16 and 24 and there has also been an increase in people with multiple and complex needs.

7.8. The Benefits and Housing Needs Service has adapted and realigned its service delivery offer in response to the increased complexity of the clients approaching. Core to this is the Greenhouse, to provide a more effective service to single homeless clients with multiple needs and often chaotic lifestyles. As a one-stop specialist service, the Greenhouse aims to build and nurture engagement with a range of statutory, community organisations, so that support is provided in a holistic and trauma informed way.

7.9. Commissioning a specialist provider to deliver this service will not only bring expertise and a broader perspective, but also help to promote engagement from a client cohort who traditionally are uncomfortable in approaching the Council directly.

7.10. Strategic Context:

7.11. Tackling homelessness is one of the nine cross cutting challenges identified in the Corporate Plan. Tackling homelessness within our single residents is one of the key themes within the Council's wider homelessness strategy and has a statutory duty to house homeless residents. The Council has also committed to ending rough sleeping in the borough and the Greenhouse is a key component in both prevention and relief of rough sleeping.

7.12. PREFERRED OPTION

7.13. The delivery of the Greenhouse service is a key component of the Council's homelessness response as well as its commitment to ending rough sleeping. Commissioning a provider to deliver the service allows an opportunity to ensure that there is little or no disruption in the delivery of the service, while also allowing adjustments to the terms of the contract and the delivery model to better reflect legislative changes and increasing demand.

7.14. Not tendering now runs the risk that there will be a break in service, with responsibility for providing a frontline service at the Greenhouse falling to the wider housing needs service. The level of service and support would be reduced while the service adapts accordingly at a time when the whole service area is under increasing pressure. This would increase costs in the medium to long term as the potential for some quick wins are missed.

7.15. Launching a tendering process at this time also allows for the contract specifications and wider services delivery plans to be revisited in light of new legislation, Covid compliance requirements and new partnerships with the NHS and Public Health services, as well as other third sector organisations.

7.16. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS (CONSIDERED AND REJECTED)

7.17. **Do nothing** - This is not recommended; the delivery of a frontline service that is targeted at single people is a key component in how we deliver on our statutory duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Housing Act. Not tendering for specialist service that is focused on the needs of this client cohort and allowing the service to lapse at the end of the current contract would result in increased costs. Opportunities to undertake early engagement with single clients may be lost leading to an escalation in need at a greater cost. There is also a considerable reputational risk to the Council where the numbers of single residents who are statutorily homeless increases and instances of reported rough sleeping increase.

7.18. **Insourcing** - At a time of cuts in funding to local government, putting in place a resource intensive service will have significant budgetary considerations. The authority does not have sufficient resources and

skills inhouse to manage the growing demand and would need to recruit for officers with this particular skill set within a highly competitive market. We also know that this cohort has traditionally been reluctant to engage directly with Council services and we may experience a drop off in early approaches, particularly from young single adults, until they have reached a crisis point and the opportunity for reconciliatory intervention has been lost. We would also potentially lose access to the wider network of agencies and structures that a third party provider can deliver.

7.19. SUCCESS CRITERIA/KEY DRIVERS/INDICATORS

7.20. The Homelessness Reduction Act came into effect in April 2018 and the statutory requirements and obligations within the Act as they pertain to single people are largely delivered through the Greenhouse Service.

7.21. WHOLE LIFE COSTING/BUDGETS

7.22. While the staffing structure of the Greenhouse Service will be part of the tendering process and subject to how the provider will meet the delivery requirements and performance standards set out in the specification, we estimate a whole life cost for the service as £1.4m, based on current provision.

7.23. This is based on the value of the current STA with Thamesreach currently in place of £307,954, adjusted annually for CPI of 5.4%.

7.24. Estimated costs for the contract (3 years plus 1) based on these estimates is:

■ Year one	-	£324,583
■ Year two	-	£342,111
■ Year three	-	£360,585
■ Year four	-	£380,056
■ total	-	£1,407,335

7.25. POLICY CONTEXT

7.26. S179 of the Housing Act 1996 (Part VII) places a duty on Local Authorities to ensure that advice and information on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness is provided free of charge to anyone in their area.

7.27. The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) strengthened the prevention emphasis by placing a new duty on Local Authorities to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent the homelessness of anyone eligible and threatened with homelessness, at an earlier stage. It also places a duty to take reasonable steps to help homeless applicants secure suitable accommodation.

- 7.28. The Homelessness Act 2002 places an overriding statutory duty on all housing authorities to review homelessness trends in their area on a 5 yearly basis, and produce an overriding strategic homelessness strategy which reflects the results of that review.
- 7.29. The Council has put in place a Homelessness Strategy that sets out our overall objectives to deliver accessible services that prevent homelessness and assist homeless households into suitable and sustainable long-term housing. However, whilst tackling rough sleeping is a key tenet of this strategy, such is the negative impact rough sleeping has on individuals and local communities, the Council has developed a separate but complementary Rough Sleepers strategy to ensure the issue is given sufficient focus, priority and impact.

7.30. CONSULTATION/STAKEHOLDERS

- 7.31. The internal stakeholders are the Housing Needs Service, Public Health, Housing and Adult Social Care.
- 7.32. The main external stakeholders are Public Health, the NHS East London Foundation Trust, the East End CAB, St Mungos, Shelter, Thames Reach and the Hackney Night Shelter.
- 7.33. The Council and our partners have made considerable efforts in recent years to respond to the housing crisis and its impact on single households. Working as a partnership, we recognise that single homeless people, especially those with mental health issues, face additional obstacles in securing and maintaining settled accommodation. We share the ambitions of improving the outcomes for vulnerable residents, while being mindful of the resources that are available. These efforts have been recognised as examples of how to provide a realistic response. However, despite our work, demand in Hackney has grown. Combining the expertise of Thames Reach and council officers has improved outcomes and established a clear pathway into housing, with options that increase a service user's likelihood of a positive outcome.

7.34. RISK ASSESSMENT/MANAGEMENT

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
	L – Low; M – Medium; H - High			
Tendering process does not procure competitive responses	L	M	M	Negotiate an extension of the current provision with Thamesreach as a single tender option

7.35. MARKET TESTING (LESSONS LEARNT / BENCHMARKING)

- 7.36. The Greenhouse service is the primary portal for single people; launched in 2007 as a partnership between Hackney Council, NHS England and Thames Reach, it provides a holistic housing and health walk-in service for the most hard to reach vulnerable adults in the community that ensures advice to everybody who calls into the centre.
- 7.37. Over this time, changes have been made to the structure and operational parameters of the service to meet changing needs, changes in legislation and new partnership opportunities with other external agencies such as the NHS and Public Health, and other third sector agencies.
- 7.38. A mystery shopping conducted exercise by people with experience of homelessness found it to be an excellent service.
- 7.39. The quantitative and qualitative data gathered will be used to inform the service specification and subsequent contract with the new commissioned service.
- 7.40. A number of other London Boroughs have commissioned external providers to support single people, but the approach taken by Hackney through the Greenhouse remains an exemplar of service provision. The Greenhouse has helped to enhance the reputation of the borough and its partners as a prime example of effective collaborative working. It has been visited by London Councils, MHCLG and a number of other LA's and even the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

7.41. SAVINGS

- 7.42. There are saving opportunities that can be accrued in terms of cost prevention through early intervention and a targeted response to the needs of single clients, that would otherwise fall on other parts of the Benefits Housing Needs service such as the provision of temporary accommodation, as well as health services, community safety and Adult Social Care. However it is difficult to quantify the level of savings that will be achieved.

8. SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 8.1. **Procuring Green** - No specific impacts identified.
- 8.2. **Procuring for a better society** - Commissioning an Outreach service will aid in reducing the numbers of people sleeping rough in an area, by providing meaningful support to access pathways into sustainable accommodation and advocating for their access into the systems and structures they need to uphold their recovery and tenancies. The provider may be able to offer employment and training opportunities for

local residents (including apprenticeships), and we will ask for commitments as part of the tender process.

- 8.3. Rough sleeping is harmful, dangerous, and limits an individual's life chances. The London Borough of Hackney therefore believes that nobody should have to sleep on our streets, and that Rough Sleeping is not acceptable in our borough. Where individuals are rough sleeping it is essential they are rapidly helped off the streets and into accommodation.
- 8.4. **Procuring Fair Delivery** - A Street Outreach Service (SORT) will respond to reports of rough sleeping rapidly and effectively. Linked to this, navigators will support former rough sleepers once they are moved into accommodation. Initially the SORT team will assess their needs and source emergency provision where appropriate. They will also refer the client into the Council's single homeless pathway with a view to moving into settled accommodation. They will assess their full range of needs, ensuring that street activities are responded to in an effective and proportionate way.
- 8.5. The provider will be required to provide a culturally and linguistically sensitive service to individuals from a range of backgrounds, faiths and nationalities – reflecting the diversity of the rough sleeping population.
- 8.6. The provider will also deliver innovative, effective and trauma informed approaches to assist rough sleepers with complex needs into accommodation and remain housed and provide support to clients who do not fit into current patterns of service delivery.

9. PROPOSED PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 9.1. **Procurement Route and EU Implications:**
This contract is valued above the relevant UK public procurement threshold (Social and Other Specific Services), and an open tender procedure is proposed. The opportunity will be advertised in Find a Tender and managed through the ProContract London Tenders portal.
- 9.2. **Resources, Project Management and Key Milestones:**

Key Milestones	
HPB Business Case Approval	12th April 2022
Tender Process launched (Contract Notice/ITT Issued)	3rd May 2022
ITT Deadline	3rd June 2022
Tender Evaluation	June 2022
Final Moderation meeting/recommendations	21st June 2022
Contract Award report to Central Procurement	28th June 2022
HPB Contract Award Approval	12th July 2022

Intention to Award/Standstill period	13th-25th July 2022
Contact Award	1st August 2022
Mobilisation	1st September 2022

9.3. Contract Documents: Anticipated Contract Type

This will be a contract for services, using the Council's Terms and Conditions to be agreed with Legal and Governance services.

9.4. Key Performance Indicators:

- 9.5. The service provider will be required to submit accurate performance data both monthly and quarterly; this frequency may be reviewed with the agreement of both the provider and the Council.
- 9.6. General targets for the service are detailed below, specific targets for the service will be agreed with the provider by the Council within 8 weeks of contract start date with the Council's contract coordinator and will be subject to annual review through which they may be amended by agreement or through decision by the Council.

Outcome		Target
Welcome Team	All clients coming into the Greenhouse setting will be seen by a member of the welcome team.	100%
	All clients identified by the welcome team as needing housing advice and support will have their basic details recorded onto the Jigsaw software application	100%
	All telephone calls received by the Greenhouse answered within ????	
	All emails and correspondence received by the Greenhouse service will be acknowledged within 24 hours and a response sent with 72 hours	100% acknowledged 80% responded
	All clients identified by the welcome team as a potential emergency/with a high risk of rough sleeping will be referred and appointed to the Casework and Verification service to be seen on the day of approach	100%
	All non urgent clients seeking housing advice will be referred and appointed to the Casework and Verification service to be seen within 3 working days.	80%

Triage and Assessment	All appointments to the Triage and Verification service to be interviewed at the agreed time, or reappointed within 36 hours where the arranged appointment cannot be undertaken due to unforeseen circumstances	80% seen at the agreed time 100% reappointed with 36 hours
	All client interactions with the Triage and Assessment service will be recorded on the London Borough of Hackney's Jigsaw software within 24 hours, including notes on advice provided and/or further actions to be taken by the client and/or triage and assessment team.	100%
	All clients requiring mental health support will be referred to the appropriate agency/support team where the Triage and Assessment service have identified a need.	100%
	All clients requiring immigration advice and support will be referred to the appropriate agency/support team where the Triage and Assessment service have identified a need.	100%
	All clients meeting the requirements and criteria for additional support through the SHPS/Riverside delivered service are referred timeously	100%
	All clients that have been identified as requiring additional casework under the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act will be referred to the service manager and LBH duty Manager or allocation to a caseworker with all the supporting information evidence as appropriate	Less than 10% of referrals to the Casework service are rejected/ returned as incomplete/ inappropriate
	Clients identified as in need of emergency interim accommodation will be referred to the LBH duty manager for further action with all the supporting evidence available and recommendations for further action	100%
	All clients referred to the casework service will be offered an appointment with a caseworker within 10 working days	100%

Casework	A comprehensive Personal Housing Plan will be completed and agreed with the client and caseworker and a copy given to the client	100%
	Where prevention of homelessness is an appropriate and realistic goal, the caseworker will work with the client to prevent their becoming homeless within 56 days	80% of cases are successful in preventing eviction
	Where the client is homeless, or remaining within their current accommodation is not a sustainable option, the caseworker will work with the client to source alternative housing provision within 56 days	80% of cases are successful in sourcing alternative suitable accommodation
	For all clients, the caseworker will ensure that all interactions are recorded on the London Borough of Hackney's Jigsaw system within 24 hours of the engagement with the client.	100%
	Where casework has not been able to prevent homelessness or source suitable accommodation the client will be referred to the London Borough of Hackney duty manager for a decision under the Housing Act 1996. The caseworker will ensure that all relevant information is included with the referral with a recommendation where appropriate.	Less than 10% of referrals to the for a decision are rejected/ returned as incomplete/ inappropriate

9.7. In order to assess operational efficiency of service performance the provider will be expected to submit reports on the following information:

Information	Frequency
Report of serious incidents	Within 12 hours of incident
Report of safeguarding alerts	Within 24 hours of incident
Log and provide a report on complaints the provider receives related to service delivery at the Greenhouse	Monthly/Quarterly (as agreed or determined by the London Borough of Hackney)
PI Performance Indicator, Outcome and Target Reports and Returns	Monthly/Quarterly (as agreed or determined by the London Borough of Hackney)

- 9.8. The Council will utilise a risk-based approach to monitoring this service. The focus will be to assess the achievement of outcomes and performance to targets. This will be achieved through a range of methods including submission of quantitative and qualitative outcome data.

APPENDICES

EXEMPT

Not applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report Author	Ian Jones, Legislation, Strategy and Projects Officer Carol Gayle, Operations Manager, Benefits & Housing Needs carol.gayle@hackney.gov.uk
Comments of the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources	Rachel Dunbar rachel.dunbar@hackney.gov.uk
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Comments of Procurement Category Lead	Dawn Cafferty dawn.cafferty@hackney.gov.uk
Head of Service / Director Endorsement	If not required, please leave blank