

# North Lanarkshire Council

## Report

### Housing and Regeneration Committee

approval  noting

Ref SL/LS

Date 20/05/20

### Housing Support Contracts

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#### Executive Summary

Committee is asked to note an update on the current housing support and accommodation services contracts delivered by Barnardo's Scotland, Simon Community Scotland (SCS) and Blue Triangle (Glasgow) Housing Association Ltd (BTHA).

The contracts are currently in the two year extension option and are due to come to an end on 31 March 2021. The total value of current extensions is £2,231,120.

The procurement options are currently being considered due to the implementation of North Lanarkshire's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) which was submitted to Scottish Government in December 2018. An action within the RRTP is to review and consult on the way future housing support services will be delivered to take account of requirements to deliver Homes First, Homes First Pathways and Rapid Rehousing. There is therefore a need to continue to provide housing support and accommodation services through the existing housing support contracts to enable this review and consultation to take place and for a test for change pilot to be undertaken in terms of delivering housing support through an alliance.

The below table contains the details of the current contracts:

Organisation	Contract Extension Period	Annual Value	Service Type
Barnardo's Scotland		£353,000	Floating support for young people aged 16 to 26 years
Simon Community Scotland	01/04/19 – 31/03/21	£602,560	Accommodation based support and floating housing support for adults 27 years and over
Blue Triangle (Glasgow) Housing Association (BTHA)		£160,000	Supported accommodation for young people 16 to 26 years

All of the contracts included options to extend for two years. The total value of the Non-Contract Extensions is £1,115,560.

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## Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Note the requirement to continue to provide housing support and accommodation services through the existing housing support contracts to enable review and consultation activity to take place and for a test for change pilot to be undertaken in terms of delivering housing support through an alliance.
- (ii) Note that procurement options are currently being discussed with the councils Legal and Procurement teams to determine the most suitable option to continue for one further year.

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## The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority All priorities

Ambition statement (12) Ensure our residents are able to achieve, maintain, and recover their independence through appropriate supports at home and in their communities

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Barnardo's and Simon Community Scotland were appointed to provide housing support services from April 2016 following an OJEU procurement process. Blue Triangle Housing Association (BTHA) were appointed from October 2017 following a revised procurement process to comply with the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.
- 1.2 Barnardo's provide floating housing support for young people up to the age of 26 years, including young people formerly looked after and accommodated. Simon Community Scotland provide accommodation based support to homeless people with complex needs aged 16 years and over across North Lanarkshire with bases in Wishaw, Motherwell and Airdrie, as well as floating housing support services to those aged 27 years and over. BTHA provide supported accommodation services to vulnerable young people aged 16 to 26 years including care leavers and is located in the Viewpark area. All three services assist in mitigating the impacts of welfare reform on some of our most vulnerable service users.
- 1.3 Committee approved the contract awards for Barnardo's and Simon Community in February 2016 and for BTHA in November 2017.
- 1.4 Development and implementation of North Lanarkshire's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) will require re-shaping of services across partners to deliver an alternative approach for those households with complex and multiple needs in relation to provision of settled housing solutions and support. In order to provide sufficient and meaningful consultation, planning and evaluation with our partners and stakeholders to develop the future requirements there is a need to extend existing housing support contracts for a one year period.

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## **2. Report**

- 2.1 The initial contract period for all three housing support services ended on 31st March 2019 and approval was granted in September 2018 to award the two year extension option.
- 2.2 There is just under a year remaining on all contracts, however the policy direction by the Scottish Government to improve homelessness and housing support services with an overall aim to eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping requires a review of how existing services are delivered. This is being progressed through the implementation of our RRTP and the development of Homes First approach.
- 2.3 One of the main aims of housing support services is to increase tenancy sustainment levels for vulnerable groups through delivery of good quality housing support. Housing support assists people to develop independent living skills, manage their accommodation and live safely in their home, as well as linking in to other services and agencies which are critical to improving health and well-being.
- 2.4 In recent years, the support provided has been essential in helping people to cope with pressures and challenges arising from welfare reforms and migration of claimants to Universal Credit. Furthermore, recent research within North Lanarkshire indicates that homeless households are disproportionately affected by addictions, mental health and

poor physical health with housing support services playing a vital role in assisting those with complex needs engage with wider health services and other support organisations.

- 2.5 Housing support services are outcome focussed and closely monitored on a regular basis. Reports confirm that there are high levels of satisfaction and good quality outcomes for those engaged in housing support despite the client group having challenging behaviours and complex needs. There is evidence to illustrate that housing support interventions help people to tackle and resolve crisis situations that could otherwise result in repeat homelessness. Discussions with stakeholders highlight that housing support services are viewed positively and are providing a critical service to support vulnerable people.
- 2.6 The council has a legal obligation to assess and provide housing support services to homeless households as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Additional support duties to homeless households were placed on local authorities from 1 June 2013 with the introduction of the Housing Support Duty. The council also has wider obligations under Adult and Child Protection legislation with housing support services assisting the council to meet its duties to protect vulnerable people.
- 2.7 There is a commitment to review, reconfigure and evaluate how we deliver housing support within our RRTP. This involves piloting a new approach to delivery of housing support through procuring an alliance of housing support from third sector providers to meet the needs of those households who would be deemed to be eligible for Homes First e.g. those with complex and multiple needs. North Lanarkshire received £389,000 for year 1 and £465,000 for year 2 of our RRTP with year 3 to 5 funding still to be announced. The majority of this allocation will be used to test and procure a third sector housing support alliance to support Homes First households as part of the RRTP.
- 2.8 It is expected the third sector housing support alliance will provide twenty-four hour on-site support to a small number of households (maximum of 4) and floating out-reach support to a further 8 Homes First households with secure tenancies.
- 2.9 Given the requirement to consult and develop a proposal in relation to the third sector alliance pilot and then evaluate the outcomes there is a requirement to continue with current service delivery to current housing support contractors to enable a full review of service provision. It is intended that a wider housing support alliance contract will be re-tendered, which will potentially replace existing contracts or require new contracts for existing services, once the outcome of the pilot has been evaluated.
- 2.10 To allow the current service delivery to continue, a review of contract options is underway with colleagues in Legal and Procurement and an update on the outcomes will be reported to a future committee.

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### **3. Equality and Diversity**

#### **3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty**

The continued provision of these contracts for a further year (beyond 31 March 2021) enables vulnerable homeless people and those with complex needs to be supported to improve their socio-economic opportunities and reduce inequalities.

### 3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

Full consideration has been given within the RRTP to reducing inequalities across protected characteristic groups and strengthening the impact of future opportunities. An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken for the RRTP.

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## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Financial Impact

The budget for existing services is £1,115,560 per annum and is contained within the Non-HRA budget. The service costs are set at the beginning of the contract and no additional increase to reflect inflation has been provided since the services began, any impact on continuing these contracts for a further year will be fully considered. However, Scottish Government have made provisions to the council to fund the shortfall in Simon Community costs to reflect the Scottish Living Wage at a cost of £25,655 for 2019/20 and will meet this requirement for the remainder of contract and continuation over the additional one year.

It should be noted that savings have already been made in the Non-HRA Homelessness related budgets as part of the previous procurement processes and contributed towards the council's savings target.

### 4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

There are no personnel, policy or legislative implications.

### 4.3 Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact arising from this report.

### 4.4 Risk Impact

There is the potential risk of challenge to not re-tendering services, however, a Risk Assessment has been undertaken and the likelihood of action is low. During the previous procurement exercise undertaken (for a contract with a potential length of 3.5 years, including extension), only 1 organisation bid for the contract, demonstrating the lack of competition and therefore low level of risk. A considerable consultation and engagement exercise has been undertaken to engage wider housing support providers in the development of the RRTP with limited success. Our proposed approach has been clear and transparent for all potential housing support providers to become involved and engaged. Given there has been no engagement from other housing support providers and we are limiting the continuation of these services to one year, the risks are mitigated.

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## 5. Measures of success

5.1 Continuation of improved outcomes for homeless people across housing, health and wellbeing and economic activity, education and training.

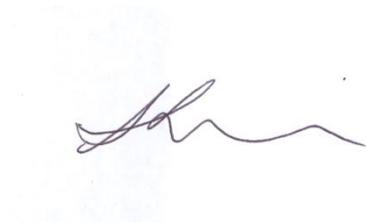
5.2 Best Value is achieved.

- 5.5 The one year continuation of these services will enable an evaluation of the third sector alliance approach outlined within the RRTP prior to commissioning of future housing support services.

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**6. Supporting documents**

- 6.1 None.

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**Head of Housing Solutions**