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|  | Decision of Cabinet Member for Housing |
| | Report from the Corporate Director of Residents and Housing Services |
| AUTHORITY TO VARY THE CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SINGLE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SERVICES | |

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| Wards Affected: | All |
| Key or Non-Key Decision: | Key Decision |
| List of Appendices: | |
| Background Papers¹: | N/A |
| Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details) | Name: Laurence Coaker Job Title: Director, Housing Needs Service Email: Laurence.coaker@brent.gov.uk |

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report requests individual Cabinet Member approval to vary contract for the Single Homeless Prevention Service with Pan London Single Homeless Prevention Service in accordance with paragraph 13 of Part 3 of the Constitution. The report summarises the reasons for the request to vary.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet Member for Housing, having consulted with the Leader:

2.1 Approves the variation of the contract for Single Homeless Prevention Service with Pan London Single Homeless Prevention Service as set out in paragraph 3.2.2.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

The proposal in this report will contribute to 3 of the Strategic Priorities of the borough plan through social value, namely:

Strategic Priority 1 (Prosperity and Stability in Brent) by providing accommodation support for vulnerable households, to achieve Desired Outcome 2 of Safe, Secure and Decent Housing

Strategic Priority 5 (A Healthier Brent) as it will reduce the impact to health inequalities for people living in nightly let accommodation, i.e achieving desired outcome 1 (Tackling Health Inequalities)

Strategic Priority 3 (Thriving Communities) as it involves working with vulnerable client to build independence by using an approach that builds independence and reduces repeat homelessness

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The Council entered into a contract for the Single Homeless Prevention Service with Pan London Single Homeless Prevention Service on 1 November 2023 (the “Contract”).

3.2.2 Officers consider that the contract should be varied and have entered into discussions with Pan London Single Homeless Prevention Service (the “Contractor”) to vary the Contract to support the Council with the ongoing homelessness demand, by adding additional support to meet the needs of single newly granted refugees, granted immigration status in the UK through the Streamlined Asylum Process (SAP). It is anticipated that the service will assist 430 asylum seekers.

3.2.3 The Refugee Single Homelessness Prevention Service was established in Brent in 2023 to address the acute housing challenges faced by newly recognised refugees leaving Home Office accommodation. Refugees are given just 28 days to leave asylum accommodation once granted leave to remain, leaving many at imminent risk of homelessness or rough sleeping.

3.2.4 This group faces some of the highest levels of housing need but also significant barriers including lack of guarantors or references, entitlement only to the Shared Accommodation Rate (under-35s), limited knowledge of the housing market, and language barriers.

3.2.5 The service builds on the Single Homelessness Prevention Service (SHPS) and the Home Office-funded Refugee Transition Outcome Fund, adapting proven approaches to focus specifically on the refugee cohort. In Brent and West London, the programme has worked in partnership with specialist Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (‘VCSE’) organisations such as Crisis and Hestia to deliver tailored housing and integration support.

Service Model and Delivery Approach

3.2.6 The service provides a holistic package of early intervention, housing, and integration support, including:

- Upstream engagement & expectation management in asylum hotels to reduce refusals of suitable offers;
- Early intervention at the point of a positive decision, engaging refugees as soon as they receive notice to leave asylum accommodation;
- Housing support via PRS landlord networks and supported accommodation pathways;
- Integration support over at least 8 months, including health registration, benefits, bank accounts, tenancy coaching, and community access;
- Coaching-based approach that builds independence and reduces repeat homelessness.

The case for recommissioning is supported by:

- Demonstrated need: Rising numbers of refugee homelessness presentations;
- Proven effectiveness: Data shows outcomes achieved above targets.
- Cost avoidance: Prevents reliance on temporary accommodation, saving up to £18,000 per case annually;
- Strategic alignment: Supports Homelessness Reduction Act duties and GLA priorities;
- Positive system impact: Diverts complex cases from Housing Options teams.

Below is profiled success rates achieved vs targets of refugee service:

| | Target Conversion | Brent |
|--|-------------------|-------|
| Housing and Integration Plan (% of referrals) | 85% | 98% |
| Housing outcomes (% of Housing and Integration Plans) | 65% | 81% |
| Sustainment outcomes (% of Housing outcomes) | 85% | 77% |
| H&I Plan Goals Achieved (% of plans Housing and Integration Plans) | 75% | 68% |

Below is profiled the actual vs KPI targets for the refugee service:

| | Brent SHRS Cumulative | |
|--|-----------------------|------------|
| | Actuals | KPI Target |
| Referrals | 449 | 475 |
| Housing and Integration Plan Complete | 440 | 375 |
| Housing Secured | 332 | 237 |

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|--------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Housing Sustained | 160 | 137 |
| Resettlement Activities | 206 | 216 |

Each prevented case avoids average temporary accommodation costs of approximately £18k per household per year. In Brent, the service has already delivered net savings by diverting cases away from temporary accommodation and reducing repeat homelessness.

Home Office Pilot

3.2.7 The Brent service worked closely with the Home Office in a unique collaboration involving a London Borough, a not-for-profit social enterprise, a charity, and central government. This one-team approach addressed challenges such as short notice periods, delays in BRP cards, and unrealistic housing expectations.

Key outcomes of the pilot include:

- Notice periods of 1 week or less reduced from 74% of cases to 22% after Home Office collaboration;
- Referrals presenting as rough sleeping steadily declined after the collaboration went live;
- Housing success rates increased beyond the 65% target, with greater acceptance of PRS homes;
- Geographic spread of homes widened, with more moves outside the home borough and outside London.

To address the issue of notice periods of a week or less, the Home Office agreed to provide the Refugee Service with referrals at the point of a positive decision being made – giving at least 28 days for them to work with service users and find them a home.

3.2.8 The Council will continue deliver better outcomes for refugees, meet statutory duties, and achieve long-term financial savings through the Refugee Single Homelessness Prevention Service by :

- continuation of the integrated housing and support model;
- flexibility to scale capacity in line with asylum decision volumes;
- alignment with SHPS systems for consistent data reporting;
- continued offer of added social value; and
- a strong emphasis on upstream prevention to reduce pressures on statutory homelessness services.

3.2.9 Under section 3(b) of the table at paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution, Corporate Directors may only vary contracts and agreements provided that:

- (a) The extension, variation, renegotiation, novation or assignment would not be in breach of the Procurement Legislation.

- (b) The extension, variation, renegotiation, novation or assignment does not substantially alter the terms and conditions of the contract.
- (c) there is sufficient existing budgetary provision.
- (d) provided that in the case of any variation (other than an extension):
 - (i) the total value of the variation is less than £1m; and
 - (ii) if the total value of the variation (and any previous variations agreed under this provision) is more than £50k it is not more than 50% of the original contract value (calculated over the life of the contract including any extensions or possible extensions and adjusted in accordance with any price review mechanism provided for in the contract).
- (e) The relevant cabinet member shall be consulted prior to a decision within (d) (i) or (ii) above and may request that the decision instead be referred to them.

3.2.10 Addressing the points detailed in paragraph 3.2.5 above, there will be no changes to the contract terms and conditions except for the adding additional support to meet the needs of single newly granted refugees, granted immigration status in the UK through the Streamlined Asylum Process (SAP). The cost of the additional to the contract value is £764,992 (excluding VAT), which is more than 50% of the original value. As mentioned in paragraph 5, there is grant funding to cover the cost of the additional service.

3.2.11 For the reasons detailed in paragraphs 3.2.10 the Corporate Director does not have delegated powers to agree the variation as the cost of the additional service is more than 50% of the original contract value. However, pursuant to paragraph 13 of Part 3 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Residents & Housing Services having consulted with the Leader has delegated powers to:

- 3.2.11.1 Agree contract extension, variation or termination where the decision is excluded from officer delegated powers because:
 - (a) in the case of any variation (other than an extension):
 - (i) the total value of the variation is £1 million or more; and
 - (ii) the total value of the variation is more than £50k and is more than 50% of the original contract value (calculated over the life of the contract including any extensions or possible extensions and adjusted in accordance with any price review mechanism provided for in the contract)

3.2.11.2 Agree of other contract extensions, variations or terminations where the Cabinet Member requests that a decision be referred to them pursuant to Part 3 paragraph 9.5.

3.2.12 Subject to consultation with the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Residents & Housing Services, has delegated powers to agree the proposed variation.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 The Cabinet Member for Housing has consulted with the Leader in respect of this contract.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 The projected cost of the additional service will be capped at £764,992 for a 34 month service, with 24 months of referrals, and 10 months of sustainment.

5.2 The cost of this variation will be funded from the Asylum Dispersal grant, which has a current reserve balance of £328k, along with an additional £1.2m received in 2025/26.

5.3 This cost is in line with the conditions set out in the grant agreement.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 Officers recommend the variation of the Contract as set out in paragraphs 3.2.2 above.

6.2 The Contract falls within the definition of Schedule 3 Service contract under the Public Contract Regulation 2015 (Procurement Legislation) and it was procured in accordance with the provisions of the Procurement Legislation.

6.3 The contract contains express provision allowing for the variation as recommended and is permitted in accordance with the PCR 2015.

6.4 As set out in paragraph 3.2.12, pursuant to paragraph 13 of Part 3 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Housing & Residents Services subject to consultation with the Leader, has delegated powers to agree the proposed variation.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010 (the “Public Sector Equality Duty”), the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act

- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

7.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.3 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

7.4 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.

7.5 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 The Cabinet Member for Housing has consulted with the Leader in respect of this contract.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

9.1 This service is currently provided by an external contractor and there are no implications for Council staff arising from varying the contract.

10.0 Communication Considerations

N/A

Report sign off:

Tom Cattermole

Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services