

Open Report on behalf of Glen Garrod, Executive Director Adult Care and Community Wellbeing

Report to:	Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Date:	04 September 2019
Subject:	Housing Related Support Services

Summary:

This item invites the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the commissioning and procurement of housing related support services, which is due to be considered by the Executive on 1 October 2019. The views of the Scrutiny Committee will be reported to the Executive, as part of its consideration of this item.

Actions Required:

- (1) To consider the attached report and to determine whether the Committee supports the recommendation(s) to the Executive set out in the report.
- (2) To agree any additional comments to be passed to the Executive in relation to this item.

1. Background

The Executive is due to consider a report on *Housing Related Support Services* on 1 October 2019, which is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Conclusion

Following consideration of the attached report, the Committee is requested to consider whether it supports the recommendations in the report and whether it wishes to make any additional comments to the Executive. The Committee's views will be reported to the Executive.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix 1	Report to the Executive Councillor – Housing Related Support Services

5. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Housing Related Support Commissioning Plan	Public Health

This report was written by Carl Miller, who can be contacted on 01522 553673 or carl.miller@lincolnshire.gov.uk

**Open Report on behalf of Glen Garrod,
Executive Director Adult Care and Community Wellbeing**

Report to:	Executive
Date:	1 October 2019
Subject:	Housing Related Support Services
Decision Reference:	I018554
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

The Council currently commissions a number of contracts to deliver housing related support services to adults. These contracts comprise of:

- emergency accommodation based support - offering intensive support for up to three months in designated accommodation;
- non-emergency accommodation based support - offering support for up to six months in designated accommodation;
- floating support - offering support for up to six months, (not linked to designated accommodation) ; and
- rough sleeper street outreach - offering assertive outreach and targeted support for up to a maximum of 18 months.

The services work together to form a structured model of support for people who are currently homeless or at risk of losing their home. The support helps people with their immediate housing need and to regain or sustain their independence.

The Council also commissions the following services, linked to housing, which were packaged together with housing related support services when they were last commissioned in 2015:

- two domestic abuse refuges - offering a place of safety and support for up to six months for victims of domestic abuse; and
- mental health crisis houses - offering a step down from hospital admission or a preventative stay for up to ten days.

With the exception of the floating support and rough sleeper street outreach elements, which conclude on 31 March 2021, these contracts are all due to end on 30 June 2020, and as a consequence decisions need to be made about the future commissioning of the services.

This report presents the case for re-commissioning a reconfigured housing related support service for adults in Lincolnshire.

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services also currently commission housing related support through a range of supported accommodation services for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

These arrangements are due to come to an end on 30 June 2020.

The re-commissioning of Children's Services housing related support is the subject of a separate report to the Executive, which is due to be considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 6 September 2019.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive:

1. Approves the commissioning of a housing related Support service, and the undertaking of procurement to establish a contract, to be awarded to a single provider of a countywide service effective from 1 July 2020.
2. Approves the commissioning of services to provide two domestic abuse refuges, and the undertaking of procurement to establish a contract(s), to be awarded to a single provider of service at each refuge site, effective from 1 July 2020.
3. Approves the commissioning of a mental health crisis houses service funded by Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Groups to be awarded to a single provider of the service, effective from 1 July 2020.
4. Delegates to the Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services, the authority to determine the final form of the service; the procurement and the contract; the award of the contract; and entering into the contract, and any other legal documentation necessary to give effect to the above decisions.

Alternatives Considered:

1. Negotiate a revised contract with the current provider

The Council has existing contracts for delivery of housing related support services. These contracts do not have provision for any further extension.

2. To do nothing

- There is no statutory duty to provide housing related support or accommodation for adults, domestic abuse refuges or crisis houses. However, the Council does have target duties, under the NHS Act 2006 and Care Act 2014.

- Housing related support services for adults are part of the Council's prevention offer, helping the County Council to discharge its duties under the NHS Act 2006 and the terms of the public health grant. Housing and substance misuse services play a major part in the *Public Health Outcomes Framework*; and the *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* and the *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* identify housing as a priority in Lincolnshire.
- Housing related support is an early intervention that prevents people from needing statutory services such as adult care and safeguarding. As such, ceasing to commission housing related support services is likely to result in additional pressure on statutory service provision.
- To cease commissioning of housing related support services may lead to an increase in homelessness in Lincolnshire, as vulnerable people for whom the services are targeted may be unable to access or sustain accommodation without access to support when they need it.

Reasons for Recommendation:

1. Since they were commissioned in 2015, housing related support services have supported over 8,000 service users to improve their health and wellbeing, and regain their independence by either sustaining or finding suitable accommodation.
2. Changes in legislation mean that some of these people will now be fully supported by the district councils instead; however, all service user needs are not covered by the changes in legislation and without a housing related support service as proposed in this report particularly vulnerable people will be left without the most directly relevant support.
3. The proposed model targets support at the most vulnerable people, supplements the statutory support provided by the district councils, and aims to achieve a more effective and integrated offering for housing related support between Lincolnshire County Council and district councils.
4. The alternatives considered have been deemed unsuitable in delivering the required outcomes of the service.

1. Background

1.1 The Services

- 1.1.1 Homelessness can take many different forms from the most visible rough sleeping, to families and single people sleeping in temporary accommodation, such as living with families and friends, 'sofa surfing', living in bed and breakfasts, hotels, hostels, night shelters or refuge environments. The law defines someone as being homeless:

'If they do not have a legal right to occupy accommodation or if their accommodation is unsuitable to live in. This can cover a wide range of circumstances, including but not restricted to the following:

- *having no accommodation at all*
- *having accommodation that is not reasonable to live in, even in the short term*
- *having legal right to accommodation that you cannot access (i.e. if evicted illegally)*
- *living in accommodation you have no legal right to occupy (for example, a squat or living with friends temporarily)'*

(Source: Shelter, 2018)

1.1.2 The current public health housing related support services started in July 2015. The service model comprises: emergency (up to three months) and non-emergency (up to six months) accommodation based support for homeless adults; a countywide 'floating' support service for those at risk of homelessness; and a rough sleeper street outreach service. Domestic abuse refuge accommodation and mental health crisis houses (funded by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)) were also tendered under this umbrella. It is important to note that the County Council only funds support; accommodation is funded by the service user through their rent or welfare benefit payments.

1.1.3 Access to all of the above services is by professional referral through *The Avenue* electronic gateway; self-referrals are not permitted. Exceptions are in place for the domestic abuse refuge accommodation and the crisis houses. Services provide housing related support to individuals in line with an agreed support plan, including but not limited to:

- assisting with income maximisation by supporting service users when dealing with welfare benefits and other benefit issues;
- making referrals to specialist advice and debt agencies, where necessary;
- providing crisis intervention support to problems that pose an immediate risk, for example eviction notices;
- assisting service users to access a range of specialist and general health services, counselling, education and employment opportunities, legal advice, leisure and cultural services etc. by sign posting and referring; and
- advising and assisting service users in relation to the safety and security of themselves and their accommodation.

1.2 Legislation, Strategic and Policy Drivers

- 1.2.1 Housing related support services for adults are discretionary. There is no statutory duty on the Council to provide housing related support or accommodation for adults, domestic abuse refuges or crisis houses, however the provision of a housing related support service helps the Council to fulfil a number of duties as described in this section.
- 1.2.2 The Council has target duties, under the NHS Act 2006 and Care Act 2014. Housing related support services for adults are part of the Council's prevention offer, helping the Council to discharge its duties under the NHS Act 2006 and the terms of the public health grant.
- 1.2.3 The Council has a duty under s2B of the NHS Act 2006 to take such steps as the authority considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area.
- 1.2.4 The Council has a duty under section 73B to have regard to any document published by the Secretary of State for the purposes of the section. This includes the *Public Health Outcomes Framework*. The *Public Health Outcomes Framework* sets out a vision for public health and the indicators help to measure progress in meeting the vision. Housing, homelessness and substance misuse services play a major role in supporting the achievement of *Public Health Outcomes Framework* indicators.
- 1.2.5 The Council has a duty under section 116B of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to have regard to the *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* and the *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* in exercising its functions. The *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* and the *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* identify health and housing as a priority in Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire's Health and Wellbeing Board has established the Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group to address needs. The Council is under an obligation to have regard to all of these issues in reaching a decision about the future shape of the service. Tackling homelessness features in the delivery plan of the Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group.
- 1.2.6 Reducing homelessness and domestic abuse are both high priorities for the Government. For example, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force in 2018, and made significant changes to the Housing Act 1996. Its main effect is to place increased duties on district councils to assess an applicant's needs and to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- 1.2.7 In addition to this, a new duty to refer was introduced, requiring many organisations (hospitals, prisons and more) to set up procedures to ensure that they refer anyone at risk of homelessness to local authorities.
- 1.2.8 The Government has committed to halve rough sleeping by 2020 and eliminate it by 2027. To support this agenda they have worked with a multitude of agencies to develop *The Rough Sleeping Strategy*. The strategy has introduced a number of different non-recurrent funding streams

for which the district councils in Lincolnshire have successfully made bids, something that would not have been possible without Lincolnshire County Council housing related support provision to pin the small projects to. This has made Lincolnshire an area of interest for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Lincolnshire County Council's housing related support has been highlighted as an area of good practice. The Government has recently announced that it will be releasing a Domestic Abuse Bill and that this bill is likely to make refuge provision and support a statutory responsibility of upper tier local authorities. The new duties will have new funding attached and quality guidelines.

1.3 Level of Need

- 1.3.1 In 2018 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released information indicating that the numbers of people accepted as being homeless and in priority need for housing had increased by 6% nationally from 2008/09 to 2017/18.
- 1.3.2 National statistics have shown further that the number of couples with dependent children accepted as owed a main homelessness duty has risen from 7,410 households to 11,200 households between 2009/2010 and 2017/2018. This is an increase of 51%. This number was higher in 2016/2017, at 12,760 households.
- 1.3.3 Furthermore, the number of lone parents with dependent children owed a main homelessness duty has risen by 49% from 2009/2010 to 2017/18 from 19,440 households to 28,910 households. This was higher in previous year with 29,940 households in 2016/17.
- 1.3.4 Of those accepted by local authorities as 'owed a main homelessness duty', the majority were due to relatives no longer providing accommodation, relationship breakdowns (45%) or due to loss of rented or tied accommodation (shorthold tenancy) (27%). Of those accepted, the majority (66%) comprised a household with children.
- 1.3.5 Since 2010, rough sleeping has increased across England by 169% (*Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2018*), and Public Health England predicts it will continue to rise over the coming years. In England, rough sleeping in particular is set to increase from 5,000 in 2011 to 38,000 people by 2041.
- 1.3.6 According to Public Health England, the health and wellbeing of people who experience homelessness is poorer than the general population, and they experience the most significant health inequalities. The longer a person experiences homelessness, the more likely their health and wellbeing will be at risk. For the long-term homeless population it is not uncommon to experience co-morbidity (two or more diseases or disorders occurring in the same person).

- 1.3.7 From July 2015 to October 2018 adult housing related support services have supported a total of 8,018 clients (excluding the Lincoln rough sleeper project and ACTion Lincs).
- 1.3.8 The demand for adult housing related support services has increased over the life of the contracts. The number of referrals increased by 11% for emergency accommodation, 4% for non-emergency accommodation, 28% for countywide floating support and 13% for the street outreach team comparing 2016/17 to 2017/18. Providers report that they are struggling to meet demand and manage waiting lists.
- 1.3.9 This reflects the national picture of increasing visible homelessness (for example, rough sleeping) and unseen homelessness (for example, people/families living in temporary accommodation). Locally, there has been a disproportionate impact in Lincoln, but numbers have risen countywide. National studies highlight poor health and reduced life expectancy for people who are homeless. Locally there is an increase in rough sleepers with tuberculosis.
- 1.3.10 It is difficult to quantify demand for domestic abuse refuges due to national systems that are in place to assist with referrals; however, our data shows that they have high levels of utilisation.
- 1.3.11 Crisis houses have been underutilised for the majority of the contract, however, after working with the CCGs to increase referral rates there has recently been an increase in utilisation levels to an average of 74.2% across the two sites. Commissioners at South West Lincolnshire CCG are clear that crisis houses are a necessary provision in their pathway reducing pressure on hospital beds and reducing the need for out of county provision and have requested that the Council recommissions this provision on its behalf.

1.4 **Current Contracted Services**

- 1.4.1 Lincolnshire County Council spends £3.05m per annum for street outreach, floating support and accommodation-based support (note: Lincolnshire County Council funds the cost of support but not the accommodation costs); and just under £200,000 per annum providing two domestic abuse refuges. A more detailed description of current contracted provision is detailed below.

a) Emergency and non-emergency accommodation-based support for homeless adults with support needs

This service comprises of emergency (up to three months) and non-emergency (up to six months) accommodation based support designed to provide people who are homeless with stability and personalised support to address their initial crisis, and put in place mechanisms to prevent a repeat crisis with a view to enabling and sustaining independence. The nature of the support provided is as described at paragraph 1.1.3. Transfer between the two types of accommodation is expected to support an individual to move on effectively, and

subsequently utilising floating support to settle into independent accommodation. There are seven contracts for this service, corresponding to each district council area, split across three separate providers.

b) A Countywide 'Floating' Support Service for those at risk of homelessness

Floating support is a preventative service supporting people with accommodation to maintain their tenancy (or mortgage). The service supports people who are not homeless but are in danger of losing their home and those who have experienced homelessness, either as a step down provision from accommodation based housing related support or when they move from the streets straight into a tenancy. The nature of the support provided is as described at paragraph 1.1.3, and is available for up to six months.

c) A Rough Sleeper Outreach Service

The rough sleeper outreach service provides assertive outreach, finding people who are rough sleeping, and offering them either support off the street into accommodation or planned reconnection to where they have a local connection. It is available to all verified rough sleepers throughout the County. In general, this service is provided to an individual for a possible maximum duration of 18 months. This forms part of the floating support service contract.

d) Domestic Abuse Refuge with support

The domestic abuse refuges offer accommodation, housing related support, and domestic abuse support to those aged 16 and over who are unable to return to their own home due to the threat of domestic abuse. There are two purpose built refuges in Lincolnshire, one of eleven units and one of five units. There are also dispersed units of accommodation within the county which can provide accommodation for males and have the ability to house a larger family or family with older males. This support is available for up to six months.

e) Mental health crisis housing (funded by the Clinical Commissioning Groups).

Mental health crisis houses offer respite accommodation to alleviate an individual's mental health crisis. Services are commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council but wholly funded by the CCGs. This support is available for up to ten days.

f) ACTion Lincs Initiative (funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

Commissioned via a social impact bond and delivered by a variation to the floating support and rough sleeper outreach contract, the ACTion Lincs initiative has a predetermined cohort of the most entrenched rough sleepers in Lincolnshire. The service operates on 'housing first' principles; providing service users with their own long term accommodation (usually single units) first and then bringing support to them in their home. Support includes substance misuse treatment and mental health support.

g) The Complex Needs Service (funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

This is part of the Lincoln rough sleeper interventions initiative and is paid for by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and delivered by a variation to the Lincoln accommodation-based housing related support service contract. The service provides intensive accommodation-based support to people with complex needs. Support includes substance misuse treatment and mental health support.

1.4.2 The current commissioned services are generally successful in meeting their objectives and providers are performing well against their performance targets. For example, across all adults housing related support services the percentage of people successfully meeting their outcomes is 98% against a target of 90%. Planned departures from services are exceeding targets across the County and service types, with an average of 79% of service users moving on in a planned and timely way, against a target of 70%. The percentage of services with an unplanned extended length of stay is 11% against a target of 15% (with lower being better).

1.4.3 The key challenges for providers include service utilisation, for which a target was set against all services at 98%. This has proved to be unachievable for most, with utilisation running at an average of 90% across the services, which despite showing as an area of poor performance based on strict interpretation of the performance targets, is felt to be acceptable. This is because, in large part, of the time it takes to turn-over the accommodation to a new individual (cleaning, decorating, new furniture etc). Another significant challenge for providers is the complexity of needs for service users. Mental health related issues have increased and the providers are finding it increasingly difficult to access mental health support services, and the availability of illegal drugs, including new types of drugs adds to the issues presented by the service users. Lack of availability of move on accommodation in certain parts of the County is also resulting in people needing to stay longer than they need to in the services.

1.5 Drivers for change

- 1.5.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has increased the responsibility of district councils to prevent and relieve homelessness in their district, increasing funding to meet the additional duties. This has led to some duplication and inefficiencies in the current provision of housing related support. The new model will need to take account of the changes in legislation removing duplication and creating a clear service provision pathway. For example, district councils will now become the usual first port of call for everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 1.5.2 Lincolnshire County Council is facing significant financial challenges and budget constraints in the coming years. Housing related support is a discretionary service. Duties to deliver public health services give the Council an important role in commissioning services to help individuals to address behaviours which prevent them from securing or sustaining a tenancy. However, the discretionary nature of the service, coupled with the greater responsibilities of the district councils to prevent and relieve homelessness, present an opportunity to reduce County Council spending in this area, whilst maintaining a significant role in supporting the housing and homelessness agenda. This can be achieved by eliminating duplication in the model as it currently operates and targeting spending at support for those adults who are most vulnerable, enabling the impact of the funding to be maximised.

1.6 Proposed Changes to the Scope of the Service

- 1.6.1 The proposal is to procure a countywide floating support service to facilitate access to housing related support services and prevent needs escalating to reach statutory service thresholds for adult safeguarding and adult care services.
- 1.6.2 This is to be facilitated within a reduced budget (currently £3m per annum reducing to £2m per annum), and a redesigned service access pathway to ensure that all housing and homelessness needs are considered in the first instance by district councils.
- 1.6.3 The intention is that support will not be linked to designated accommodation, on the basis that district councils will be responsible for supporting individuals to identify suitable accommodation under their new duties. If the identification of suitable accommodation proves to be problematic in the limited time available then one option would for the County Council to step in to assist the district councils and procure the accommodation on their behalf on the basis that the accommodation cost would not fall on the County Council, as it would be paid for through benefit and other funding streams.

- 1.6.4 Rather than support being provided to all adults, support will be targeted at the most vulnerable groups based on the eligibility criteria. Groups who will no longer be eligible are described at paragraph 3.1.2:

Adults (aged 18+) who require support to enable them to secure and maintain their accommodation and avoid eviction

AND

Have an identified or suspected mental health need which impacts on their ability to secure or maintain a tenancy

AND/OR

Have an identified or suspected substance misuse issue which impacts on their ability to secure and maintain a tenancy

- 1.6.5 In order to safeguard the new housing related support service from inappropriate and excess referrals, a nationally recognised non-clinical screening tool will be incorporated within the eligibility test. Prior to finalisation, this tool will be thoroughly tested with key stakeholders, including the current providers to ensure effectiveness.
- 1.6.6 The service access pathway is redesigned to ensure that district councils' housing and homelessness reduction duties are considered first, with Lincolnshire County Council-commissioned housing related support being utilised only by those who meet the revised eligibility.
- 1.6.7 The referral process is illustrated in Appendix A. Referrals for adults to housing related support will only be accepted from:
- a) district councils as the primary referral gateway; and
 - b) vulnerable adults panels as the secondary referral gateway, for those with the highest complexity / levels of need.
- 1.6.8 Vulnerable adults panels are district council-led meetings that bring together professionals from a number of different agencies to discuss how they can support people with multiple and/or complex needs. These meetings currently struggle with membership and commitment and there is a lack of consistency across the county. Adult Care and Community Wellbeing are currently initiating a separate project to work with stakeholders to develop and improve vulnerable adults panels. Although beyond just housing related support, this work will enhance the new housing related support model.
- 1.6.9 Street outreach, targeting support at people who are rough sleeping, will not be provided by the County Council after 31 March 2021 as part of the housing related support service but assistance to homeless people will be covered by the new legal and funding arrangements under the Homelessness Reduction Act.

1.6.10 The Council commissions support for those accessing domestic abuse refuges. This costs £200K per annum based on two block contracts for provision of support to their clients, including help with finances, benefits, housing, 1:1 support programmes, courses, signposting and counselling. The services are provided at two purpose built locations in the County, and accommodation is funded via housing benefits. The services perform well and it is proposed to retain the current service model.

2. Engagement Activity

2.1 A process of market and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken and remains ongoing, to test whether the service model proposed and described in section 1.6 is viable, affordable, deliverable and attractive potential providers; whether it is viable and sustainable as part of an integrated housing and homelessness support solution between the Council, district councils and other key partners; and whether it meets the needs of users.

2.2 Market Engagement

2.2.1 A PIN notice was published and a market engagement event held for interested providers that described the principles of the proposed service, covering scope, structure, demand, and budget. This was followed up with a questionnaire to elicit more detailed feedback.

2.2.2 In both cases, feedback was sought on the market's likely interest and capacity to undertake such a service, and their preferred approach to a number of important issues impacting on the commercial model, including contract duration, coverage, mobilisation, performance management and the payment mechanism. This information was used to support and inform the development of the commercial approach described.

2.2.3 It should be noted that the market did highlight risks in the proposal associated with the removal of designated accommodation from the Council's proposed new model. This risk and proposed mitigation are set out further at section 3.4.

2.3 District Councils

2.3.1 One of the fundamental elements of the new model is that people will be directed through to district councils as their first point of call. To enable this to happen, co-production work with district councils has taken place in the form of workshop sessions, held initially in April, July and August, and continuing beyond. This was reinforced through early engagement between leaders and chief executives, helping to set the right conditions to facilitate the necessary change.

2.3.2 All stakeholders are aware of the drivers for the change, the details of the proposed new model, and the timeframe the Council is working to. There has been in-principle agreement to support the development and implementation of the model proposed and there is a desire to work together with the Council to re-design services and influence the wider system.

2.4 Service Users

2.4.1 Whilst no formal consultation is required for the proposed change, for a variety of reasons detailed in the engagement plan, the Council is committed to co-producing the service and engaging as widely as possible, including service users, and face to face interviews have been undertaken with individuals in existing accommodation based services, and with people who sleep rough.

2.4.2 This underlined the value the users of the service feel it brings to them, and identified several key opportunities for improvement, such as development of mechanisms to enable timely access to specialist mental health and substance misuse support. These opportunities were also highlighted in the market engagement, and in developing the new model, are being addressed. For example, the new service access pathway includes Vulnerable Adults Panels which will bring multi-agency input to support identification of needs and access to appropriate and timely support, including mental health and substance misuse support interventions.

3. Commercial Approach

3.1 Service Demand

3.1.1 Estimated Service Users volumes for the new service are 1167 per annum. This is based on evidence that of the 1874 people who had a needs assessment in 2017/18 (for all existing housing related support services); 1167 people would have met the proposed new eligibility criteria.

3.1.2 The new eligibility criteria restrict the numbers of people who will be eligible for housing related support services in future by approximately 37%, aiming to focus resources on those that are most vulnerable. There are two main groups that will no longer be eligible:

- People with a low level of need who have accommodation but are at risk of homelessness - The new Homelessness Reduction Act, now requires district councils to support this group of people to prevent their homelessness.
- People who have no 'local area connection' to a district in Lincolnshire – District councils will have obligations to such individuals under the 2017 Act although they may choose to refer such individuals to another authority to which the individual has a local area connection. Support for such reconnection will be offered by both street outreach (Lincolnshire County Council commissioned until March 2021) and district councils.

3.2 Pricing and affordability

- 3.2.1 This proposal reduces the budget by approximately one third to £2m per annum. Calculations suggest the revised budget envelope of £2m will create appropriate capacity to meet demand as summarised below.
- 3.2.2 Estimated service user volumes are 1,167 per annum, see paragraph 3.1.1 above.
- 3.2.3 The estimated average duration of support in the new model is three months/twelve weeks/84 days, with a proposed maximum of six months. The current average length of stay is 123 days; however, the development of vulnerable adults panels is expected to have a significant impact in reducing this in the future. Additionally, a twelve weeks' review point will ensure that support only continues where necessary beyond twelve weeks.
- 3.2.4 Estimated frequency of support is an average of 7.6 hours a week per user.

3.3 Service Outcomes

- 3.3.1 The overarching outcome of the service will be to improve the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable people by ensuring access to early support to prevent their needs escalating to statutory service thresholds such as adult safeguarding and adult care services.
- 3.3.2 More specifically, the service will be outcome focused, with the commissioned support and provider performance to be measured on outcomes for eligible individuals.
- 3.3.3 An exhaustive list of tasks/activities will not be prescribed in the specification. Service delivery outcomes will link to individuals being supported to improve their health and wellbeing in order to sustain independent tenancies and service support will need to be designed to address the barriers preventing people from achieving this.
- 3.3.4 The proposed service would prioritise those referred by vulnerable adult panels and others deemed to be the most vulnerable.
- 3.3.5 The proposed service will aim to complement but not duplicate services provided by district councils or other bodies.

3.4 Risks and Dependencies

- 3.4.1 The primary risk to the new service is a lack of interest from potential providers in the model in the event that accommodation is removed. The market has given a clear steer that they have concerns about the model and that the model would be far more attractive if accommodation was included. Some reasons stated are: reduced risk to staff; and the ability to generate economies of scale from managing the building and running support.

- 3.4.2 Mitigation for the risk identified in paragraph 3.4.1 is that Lincolnshire County Council could commission (but not fund) some element of accommodation as part of the housing related support service. This should not impact on overall costs because the housing element is paid by housing benefit, and it may even have the effect of improving cost effectiveness of Lincolnshire County Council-commissioned support in cases where lone working risks would otherwise be too great. This possibility should be borne in mind if it is necessary to ensure a robust procurement of the service by ensuring market interest. A decision whether to include accommodation either under this paragraph or on behalf of the district councils under paragraph 1.6.3 would be taken under the delegation at recommendation 4.
- 3.4.3 Finally, a need to strengthen mental health support, in particular timeliness of intervention, has been fed back through market engagement. The Team Around the Adult (TAA) programme is in development, and through the enhancement and utilisation of the vulnerable adults panels to ensure timely and effective multi-agency interventions, will be critical in enabling this to be addressed. There needs to be a mechanism in place to ensure that County Council-commissioned housing related support is available for individuals receiving support coordinated in the TAA/vulnerable adults panel approach. A suitable mechanism might be that a proportion of the overall housing related support budget will be ring-fenced for support to this cohort of eligible individuals.

3.5 Payment and performance management

- 3.5.1 Under the new model, there will be a single lead provider for countywide service, enabling us to rationalise and focus contract and performance management capacity.
- 3.5.2 Core service funding will be constrained by the maximum available budget, with expectations placed on the service provider to deliver flexible person-centred support and to manage throughput and capacity within the annual service cost, supported by appropriate triage and eligibility controls. These controls will enable a tightening of the eligibility test should it become apparent that service throughput is too high to maintain affordability, and vice versa.
- 3.5.3 As district councils will operate as the prime referrer to the service it will be necessary to work in partnership with them in the effective management and oversight of the service, both in the context of throughput and eligibility, and the provision of a sufficient quantity of suitable accommodation.
- 3.5.4 A link between service funding and contract performance will be further explored prior to finalising the payment and performance mechanism, although payment by results is unlikely to be a sustainable payment mechanism. It is more likely that financial consequences for underperformance will be created through the utilisation of service credits linked to key performance indicators, with safeguards against excess provider profits built in through open book accounting.

3.6 Contract Commencement and Duration

- 3.6.1 The seven emergency and non-emergency accommodation based support contracts, the two domestic abuse refuge contracts and the mental health crisis housing contract all conclude on 30 June 2020, with no further extension options available. It is therefore necessary to undertake and conclude the procurement phase in time for new services to mobilise and commence on 1 July 2020.
- 3.6.2 The existing countywide floating support and rough sleeper outreach service contract concludes on 31 March 2021. This nine month overlap will enable impact of the transition to the new housing related support service model to be more effectively managed, helping to minimise impact on vulnerable service users during the transition as district councils build their capacity to support people with lower level housing related support needs, and for street outreach, targeting support at rough sleepers.
- 3.6.3 The proposed contract term is three years with options to extend by up to a further two years (3+1+1). Evidence from market engagement feedback suggests that this is an acceptable term for the arrangement and would provide sufficient financial assurance for the provider.

3.7 Tender Process

- 3.7.1 The procurement will be undertaken in accordance with regulations 74 to 76 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 under "light touch regime" utilising a restricted procedure method. The ultimate decision as to which provider is awarded the single provider status will be based on their evaluation performance.
- 3.7.2 The *Invitation to Tender* evaluation will focus on service quality and the capability of the provider and any organisations they may wish to form sub-contracting arrangements with to deliver the required work and quality outcomes across the county set against clearly defined financial budgetary controls.
- 3.7.3 The provisional tender timeline is as follows: -

Issue the Invitation to Tender	15 October 2019
Evaluation Period	5 January to 14 February 2020
Standstill Period	2 March to 12 March 2020
Contact Award	13 March 2020
Mobilisation period	14 weeks
Go Live	1 July 2020

4. Legal Issues

Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- * Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- * Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- * Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- * Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- * Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- * Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

4.1 The key purpose of the service is to improve the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable people by ensuring access to support; to prevent their needs escalating to more costly statutory service thresholds; and to help them access and maintain stable, settled and appropriate accommodation.

- 4.2 The services are targeted at delivering interventions necessary to effectively support substance misuse, physical and mental health issues.
- 4.3 An impact assessment has been completed and copy of is appended to this report at Appendix B.
- 4.4 It is emphasised that the removal of street outreach and the emergency and non-emergency accommodation may have an impact on those people who district councils have no statutory duty to house. Currently this mainly affects the protected characteristics of age (single men (without dependents)) disability (due to the disproportionate representation among homeless people of people with mental health difficulties) and sex (single men (without dependents))
- 4.5 Therefore any reduction in these services may have an adverse impact on younger men specifically.
- 4.6 Primary mitigation for this potential adverse impact is with the fact that the district councils have statutory responsibilities and new funding to prevent homelessness. This includes a responsibility to help individuals to secure that accommodation becomes available for their occupation.
- 4.7 Further mitigation, should it be required as a result of a lack of other supply of suitable accommodation, could be to include a requirement to offer an element of designated accommodation as part of the new housing related support contract. This would be at no additional cost to the contract due to the provider claiming the intensive housing management payments via the district councils, which would cover the cost of providing this designated accommodation, for up to an estimated 200 units. This would also allow for economies of scale to be made within the model, and, based on market feedback, may be more appealing to potential providers.

5. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Council must have regard to the *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* and the *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* in coming to a decision.

5.1 The [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) for Lincolnshire, agreed by the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2018, has a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention, with a clear aim to deliver transformational change which shifts the focus from treating ill health and disability to prevention and self-care.

5.2 Housing related support services for adults are part of the Council's prevention offer, helping Lincolnshire County Council to discharge its duties under the NHS Act 2006 and the terms of the public health grant. Housing and substance misuse services play a major part in the *Public Health Outcomes Framework*; and the *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* and the *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* identify housing as a priority in Lincolnshire. The Health and Wellbeing Board has established the Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group (HHCDG) to address needs. The HHCDG includes all seven district councils, along with representatives from the Registered Providers Forum, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and the Department of Work and Pensions.

5.3 The *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* describes the following key objectives within the housing section, which the housing related support service contributes to:

- concerted action across partners to tackling homelessness; and
- ensure people have the knowledge and capability to access and maintain appropriate housing.

5.4 The [Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017 – 2021](#) has been produced by the Lincolnshire housing authorities. The strategy sets out the key challenges, priorities and objectives for preventing and tackling homelessness across Lincolnshire.

6. Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

6.1 The safer communities service scans crime and disorder trends on a regular basis. In January 2019 safer communities produced a report highlighting a strong association between the levels of deprivation and the levels of crime and disorder in neighbourhoods. Areas of higher deprivation were found to have higher levels of crime and disorder. The report states that data shows an increase in crimes against the homeless and that this correlates with an increase in homelessness. The report also highlights how this growth is disproportionate to crimes against more affluent groups. Lincolnshire County Council data shows that the majority of people who access housing related support are successfully meeting their outcomes and therefore the services are

preventing homelessness. It could therefore be argued that providing a housing related support service is preventing the trends highlighted by safer communities being more pronounced than reported.

6.2 Lincolnshire County Council commissioned support enables people who would not otherwise receive any provision around their housing need to begin to address their other support needs such as physical health, mental health, substance misuse. It is vital that their housing need is met first in order to address other support needs such as substance misuse, and physical and mental health issues. The clinical guidelines for substance misuse that were issued in 2017 (*The Orange Book*) refer to the importance of stable accommodation in delivering interventions. To illustrate the significance of housing related support in this regard, 71% of service users accessing emergency accommodation and 65% accessing non-emergency accommodation required support with the management of substance misuse.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Evidence shows that homelessness and rough sleeping continue to increase locally and nationally, and that cases are becoming increasingly complex.
- 7.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 confirmed and extended the district councils' lead role in preventing and relieving homelessness, increasing funding to meet the additional duties. It also established a duty to refer for key partners, which has been expanded in Lincolnshire to enable any agency to refer.
- 7.3 Lincolnshire County Council has statutory duties for care leavers up to the age of 21 and for adult safeguarding. The Council also has responsibilities for delivering Public Health services and under the Care Act 2014 to ensure that services prevent an escalation of need. It therefore has a role in commissioning services which help individuals to address behaviours which prevent them from securing or sustaining a tenancy and increasing the risk of needing support from Council services, for example adult safeguarding and adult care.
- 7.4 The current housing related support commissioned services are performing well and are well received by service users but the model needs modifying to remove duplication arising from changes in the legislation and in the delivery of related services. These include proposed changes to adult safeguarding arrangements.
- 7.5 The new service pathway has been developed to ensure that all agencies fulfil their individual and shared obligations to the most vulnerable people. Locating housing related support services within these arrangements increases the likelihood of these achieving positive outcomes for service users, reduces the risk of them needing other Lincolnshire County Council services and maximises the effectiveness and efficiency of the investment in housing related support.

8. Legal Comments

The Council has the power to enter into the contract proposed. The legal considerations to be taken into account in reaching a decision are dealt with in the report.

The decision is consistent with the Council's Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive.

9. Resource Comments

This report seeks to present the case for commissioning housing related support based on a revised model that aims to remove duplication arising from changes in legislation and in the delivery of related services, focussing on support to groups that are deemed to be the most vulnerable.

The Council has a budget in 2020/21 of £2,321,767 to fund the service from existing funds available via the public health core budget.

In 2019/20 the Better Care Fund contributed an additional £250,000. At this point we are not aware of the funding arrangements from 2020/21 onwards as the Better Care Fund agreements cease on 31 March 2020.

In relation to domestic abuse refuges, the delivery model for which is proposed to be in line with the current model, the Council has a budget of £205,650 to fund the service from existing funds through the public health core budget.

Current commissioning intentions and delegated approvals recommended within this report meet the criteria set out in the Council's published financial procedures.

10. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted? - N/A

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted? - Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

This proposed decision will be considered by the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 4 September 2019 and the comments of the Committee will be reported to the Executive prior to their decision making.

d) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out? - Yes

e) Risks and Impact Analysis - See the main body of the report and Appendix B

11. Appendices

These are listed below and attached to the report.

Appendix A	Service Model and Pathway Diagram
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessment

12. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Housing Related Support Commissioning Plan	Public Health

This report was written by Carl Miller, who can be contacted on 01522 553673 or at carl.miller@lincolnshire.gov.uk