

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 4th March 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: Yes
Title of Report: Extension of the contract for the Severe & Multiple Disadvantage Service 2024/25

Executive Director: Mark Harvey
Report Author: Jess Siggins (on behalf of Krishna Ramkhelawon)
Executive Councillor: Councillor James Moyies

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following a review of the SMDS service and Intensive Housing Support service element, Public Health and Commissioning are seeking to extend the contract.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. Approve the request to grant a one-year extension to the SMDS contract to 31st March 2025.

3. Background

- 3.1. The contract for the Severe & Multiple Disadvantage Service (SMDS) commenced 1st December 2017 for an initial term of 6 years and 4 months to 31st March 2024, with an option to extend for up to three years, to 31st March 2027, in annual increments. This contract also includes the Intensive Housing Support element.
- 3.2. The contract, delivered by Peabody, provides support to individuals with multiple and complex needs accommodated in the South Essex Homes hostel at 94-98, Southchurch Avenue, and in various properties funded by the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP).
- 3.3. The individuals supported through this contract have typically experienced periods of rough sleeping, poor mental and physical health, and/or substance misuse, and have often been evicted from a variety of other settings. As such, due to complexities of the individuals, the expectations for positive move-on are not as tightly time-limited as other settings, but there is a need for this type of setting as part of the Council's supported housing and accommodation pathway.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. It is understood that not extending the SMDS service would have a negative impact on service users, residents and the Council as set out in 5.1.

- 4.2. As the draft regulations for the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act are expected later this year, there will be a need for the Council to develop a Supported Housing Strategy. The extension of the SMDS contract by one year will enable a more coherent review of supported housing need, and it will also enable time to expand the evidence-base for any future offer that includes the SMDS service.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. The current contract could be allowed to end on 31st March 2024. There would likely be a severe impact for the individuals supported if the services were ended, as well as the Council and potentially other residents of Southend.
- 5.2. This will carry risks that the current residents of the Southchurch Avenue hostel will be left without any keyworker support, increasing their risk of eviction, increasing the risk of safeguarding and welfare concerns, and increasing the risk of neighbour complaints due to anti-social behaviour. If these current residents are evicted, there is a significant risk that they will return to rough sleeping, increasing demand on the Council's Rough Sleeping Team and increasing the likelihood of a need for temporary B&B accommodation. This may lead to poorer outcomes for service users and for residents, potentially leading to increased concerns in areas of high footfall, such as the high street.
- 5.3. In addition to this, the SMDS contract forms part of the committed drug & alcohol spends by Public Health. Under the terms of the Supplemental Grant, we are required to ensure that there is no disinvestment of Public Health spending from the drug & alcohol system. As such, any savings from the SMDS contract could not be returned to the Council, but they could be repurposed elsewhere within the drug & alcohol treatment system.
- 5.4. There are also requirements placed on the properties funded by the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), that mean that a level of intensive housing support must be provided to their inhabitants. This funding is conditional based on the provision of the support provided by the Intensive Housing Support Service (IHS), so in order to meet the terms of this funding, the Council must provide a level of support to these properties.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The SMDS contract was awarded with the option to extend until 31st March 2027. The current SMDS contract value for 2023/24 is £499,620, and the contract would remain the same price for 2024/25 if the contract were extended.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Whilst there are various statutes that govern the delivery of supported living services, this report deals only with the contractual processes that relate to the extension of services by an existing provider.
- 7.2. An extension to the contract is permitted under the terms of the contract and is within budget. No further procurement process is required.
- 7.3. This extension is required to be agreed by the Cabinet as it is an executive key decision

8 **Policy Context**

8.1 N/A

9 **Carbon Impact**

9.1 No change

10 **Equalities**

10.1 No issues to consider


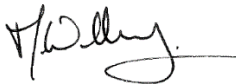
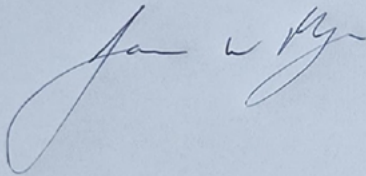
11 **Consultation**

11.1 In July 2023, while exploring options around continuing or ending the contract, the Drug & Alcohol Commissioning Officers met with a wide range of system partners that engage with the SMDS, including: Aspirations, HARP, the Intensive Housing Support (IHS), the Rough Sleeping Mental Health Team, South Essex Homes, Southend Treatment And Recovery Service (STARS), and St. Vincent de Paul (SVP). The overview from these review meetings was that the SMDS offer is seen as an important and necessary part of the accommodation pathways.

12 **Appendices**

12.1 **Appendix 1**: N/A

13 **Report Authorisation**

This report has been approved for publication by:			
	Name:	Signature	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton		22.01.24
Monitoring Officer	Kim Sawyer		22.01.24
Executive Director(s)	Mark Harvey		22.01.24
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr James Moyies		22.01.24