

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS All
REPORT TITLE Procurement Strategy for four Adult Pathway Services (SC/2025/52)	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Better Homes	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Cabinet	DATE 17 th September 2025
STRATEGIC CONTEXT We Make Camden is our joint vision for the borough, developed in partnership with our community. The services will support the ambitions of We Make Camden, the borough's strategic delivery plan for 2025-30. These include the aims that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone in Camden should have a place they call home <p>The four contracts will deliver 335 bed spaces of supported accommodation for homeless adults, most of whom will be rough sleepers or people with support needs in urgent housing need, who have approached the Council for assistance. The services will directly support our current Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (HRSS) and the draft priorities forming the basis of our new HRSS 2025-30, by providing supported accommodation for people rough sleeping.</p> <p>The services are key to delivering our priorities to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping by providing appropriate supported accommodation and to join up housing, health and social care support to improve health and wellbeing. The services support the aims of the Council's 2025-30 Rough Sleeping Strategy.</p> <p>Priority 1 - Preventing homelessness Priority 2 - Supporting People who are experiencing homelessness Priority 3 - Improving Housing Options for Homeless People</p> <p>All Pathway services work in close partnership with statutory and non-statutory services to support residents towards moving on to settled accommodation through the Council's choice-based lettings scheme, private rented sector or longer-term forms of supported housing e.g. Sheltered Housing.</p> <p>Camden actively tackles injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong and open communities where everyone can contribute.</p> <p>Homeless adults in Camden are amongst the most marginalised groups in the Borough. Poor outcome includes accessing physical and mental health support, economic exclusion and social care. They can have experiences of stigma and labelling. The services delivered under the four contracts will provide accommodation and support tailored to each persons need, with supported routes to access services they need. The overall aim is for service users being able to move on to their own sustainable and independent accommodation.</p>	

The Way We Work is the Council's response to We Make Camden

The Adult Pathway services will also contribute to the 4 Missions and Make Camden, which include:

- Food: By 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable and sustainable food
- Safety: Everyone is safe at home and safe in our communities
- Loneliness: No one in Camden is socially isolated without the means to connect to their community
- Housing: Camden has enough decent, safe, warm and family-friendly housing to support our communities

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report sets out the proposed approach to the recommissioning of four Adult Pathway services which provide accommodation-based support to single homeless people in Camden.

The Council commissions a range of housing related support services (mainly hostels and supported housing) for single homeless people with support needs, rough sleepers, people with mental health and/or substance misuse problems, ex-offenders and women escaping domestic violence and abuse. The Adult Pathway comprises 16 accommodation-based support services, and two floating support services. The Council refers to these services collectively as the Adult Pathway.

Four of the Adult Pathway contracts, providing supported accommodation to 335 homeless adults across six sites, are due to expire. Three on 31st March 2026, and one on 30th September 2026. All have no provision to extend further. The estimated total value of these contracts is £27,880,041 over a 7-year term.

The report is being submitted to the Cabinet in line with Contract Standing Orders, which state that the Cabinet must agree procurement strategies for contracts over £5,000,000 (CSO C4.1).

Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information

No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.

Contact Officer

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That, having considered the results of the equalities impact assessment (Appendix A), and having due regard to the obligations set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Cabinet approves:

1. The procurement strategy, which includes a price/quality split of 40/64 and contract terms of 84 months, for an estimated value of £27,880,041.
2. To delegate authority to award the four contracts to the Executive Director Homes and Communities following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Better Homes.
3. To delegate authority to the Executive Director Homes and Communities to request the sealing of the four contracts.

Signed:



Glendine shepherd, Director of Housing

Date: 5/9/25

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the re-commissioning of four Adult Pathway contracts. The services will provide accommodation and support for single homeless people in Camden. The procurement for three contracts is required to be completed by 1st April 2026, and by 1st October 2026 for the fourth contract
- 1.2 The Council commissions a range of housing related support services (mainly hostels and supported housing) for single homeless people with support needs, rough sleepers, people with mental health and/or substance misuse problems, ex-offenders and women escaping domestic violence and abuse. These comprise 16 accommodation-based support services, and two floating support services. The Council refers to these services collectively as the Adult Pathway. In total, the Adult Pathway provides 682 bedspaces of supported homeless accommodation.
- 1.3 Three Adult Pathway services provide supported accommodation exclusively to homeless women. One service offers specialist support to women experiencing multiple disadvantage, one supports women with substance misuses needs, and the third service is a Women's Refuge. The Supreme Court ruling in April this year on biological sex may impact access to specialist worker roles and protected women only spaces for people who are transgender. Guidance is due to be issued by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. This is reflected in the EQIA.
- 1.4 Two services within this procurement strategy are Adult Pathway services that provide supported accommodation for men. This provision gives the Council resources when needed for the safe accommodation of homeless and rough sleeping men who present risks to women.
- 1.5 The remaining two services within this procurement strategy are mixed, with clustered women-only accommodation arrangements.
- 1.6 The commissioning strategy will deliver supported accommodation services which will have trauma, gender, and culturally informed practices embedded within their design and delivery. The services will work to trauma informed and Psychologically Informed Environments models of support.
- 1.7 The services will support the work led by the Executive Director Adults and Health which set out several priorities for Camden services including, continuing to develop integration of homelessness services with adult social care, mental health and substance use services.
- 1.8 The strategy will support the wider strategic aims of meeting the needs of people with mental health, physical health and substance misuse issues due to the intersectionality of residents' needs.
- 1.9 The Homelessness Reduction Act placed new duties on local authorities in 2018 in relation to supporting single homeless people, introducing a 'prevention' duty as well as a 'relief' duty to take 'reasonable steps' to help to

secure accommodation for eligible homeless applicants regardless of priority need.

- 1.10 The services play a key role in meeting these duties for single homeless people with support needs. In 2024, a total of 161 single homeless people who made a statutory homelessness application to the Council were placed in the Adult Pathway to prevent or relieve their homelessness.
- 1.11 The strategy will play a key role in providing accommodation and support to the increasing number of rough sleepers in Camden. Camden persistently experiences significantly high levels of rough sleeping. The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) reports show 903 people slept rough in Camden last year, an increase from 719 in 2022/23. Data from the Women's Rough Sleeping Census 2024 indicates CHAIN data under-represents the extent of women's rough sleeping in the borough, meaning the overall figure is likely to be higher.
- 1.12 The Pathways plays a key role in reducing the need for expensive and unsupported temporary accommodation (TA) which is often the alternative option when a statutory duty is owed.
- 1.13 Camden has invested in providing rough sleeping services and the Adult Pathway to meet the scale of local need. The specialist provision of an integrated hub and street outreach model in conjunction with Adult Pathway supported accommodation means direct comparison with other boroughs is challenging. Camden commits close to £30 million per year to reducing homelessness in the Borough – this includes £10 million on delivering our adult pathway, and now over £12 million on temporary accommodation.
- 1.14 A review of current service specifications will include an accommodation offer during the GLA led Severe Weather Emergency Protocol to protect the lives of all rough sleepers in Camden irrespective of service eligibility. The on-site provision of Naloxone (a life-saving drug used to treat opiate overdose) will be included in the new specifications with appropriate training and support from CGL, the primary Substance Misuse agency in Camden.
- 1.15 Intersecting need is an increasing feature of homeless people in Camden. Snapshot data from March 2025 showed 60% of Adult Pathway residents have a mental health need, with typically alcohol or substance use needs also.

2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

- 2.1. This report seeks approval of a commissioning strategy for four Adult Pathway contracts. Organisations bidding for the contracts will need to provide a minimum number of bedspaces (as set out in the table below) from buildings located within the borough. They will need to provide an appropriate staffing model and team to ensure the safety and support of residents within the services the services. In total, this procurement is to secure 335 bedspaces of supported accommodation for homeless adults across six sites.

2.2. The contracts are due to expire in 2026. Three on 31st March 2026, and one on 30th September 2026 with no provision to extend further. The estimated total value of these contracts is £27,880,041 over 84 months. The contract will have review clauses to review the provision and if need be, end the contract early. An estimated breakdown of contract values are set out below.

Contracts	Minimum number of units	Estimated 84 months funding (Including extensions)
Housing related support service for vulnerable single men with medium to high support needs.	48	£ 2,123,394
Housing related support service for vulnerable single adults with medium to high support needs.	95	£ 6,717,963
Housing related support service for vulnerable single men with medium to high support needs.	60	£ 4,140,360
Housing related support service for vulnerable single adults with medium to high support needs	132	£14,898,324

2.3. The provisional outcomes for these contracts are:

- Accommodate and support homeless people in Camden;
- Enable the Council to discharge duties under the Homeless Reduction Act;
- Promote welfare and minimise harm;
- Enable support from partner agencies e.g. Mental Health and Substance Misuse;
- Reduce rough sleeping across Camden;
- Coordinate integrated responses for people with multiple disadvantage;
- Support people to work towards and attain sustainable and settled accommodation; and
- Reduce the Council's expenditure on Temporary Accommodation.

2.4. There are existing Key Performance Indicators for Adult Pathway services. These will be refreshed as part of the development of the service specification.

2.5. Through the procurement process, providers will be asked to demonstrate how their models will ensure the service specification is delivered in line with the following core principle.

2.6. The Pathway services will work in close partnership with other services to provide holistic support and take joint action where required:

- Camden's Substance Use and Alcohol Treatment services;
- Community Safety;
- Mental Health services;
- GP Primary Care services;
- Routes off the Street service;
- Health services including hospitals;
- Camden Adult Social Care; and
- Camden's Pathways Move-On Team.

Procurement Approach Business Case

2.7. The proposed procurement approach is to undertake an Open Procedure under the Procurement Act 2023, to procure appropriate contracts. Officers will design a process that best suits the services being procured and the market.

2.8. This approach involves a competitive process where the opportunity will be publicly advertised to allow various suppliers to submit bids. The approach will involve development of detailed service specifications and evaluation criteria.

2.9. A preliminary market engagement notice was published through Find a Tender, and a market engagement session was held on 2nd June 2025 followed by a series of one-to-one meetings with suppliers.

2.10. Most of the providers that attended the market engagement session were small and medium sized enterprises and/or local charities. An Open process ensures that all potential suppliers have an equal opportunity to bid, promoting transparency and fairness. Given the nature of the providers that will be participating, officers do not want to impose any unnecessary barriers to participation. The Open procedure will also allow providers that may offer diverse and innovative solutions to participate in the process.

2.11. Potential tender award criteria, subject to further development and refinement, are set out below:

Price	40
Quality of which:	60
• Methodology, including meeting complex needs	15
• Working in partnership to deliver outcomes	10
• Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	5
• Continuous improvement to develop the model	5
• Workforce	5
• Social Value	10
• Service user involvement, e.g., presentation	5
• Building environment / suitability	5

- 2.12. A split of 40% (price) and 60% (quality) is recommended to balance the essential quality requirements of a specialist provider being able to deliver in a complex and challenging environment, whilst introducing a sufficient price incentive to achieve best value. Minimum thresholds for price and quality will be set.

3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 3.1. The following options were considered in relation to these contracts.

Options	Preferred option (X)
Option 1 - Do nothing – allow the contracts to expire	
Option 2 - Insourcing services and deliver in-house	
Option 3 - Direct award to current provider to continue delivery	
Option 4 - Re-commission services through an open tender process	X

- 3.2. Option 4 was selected as the preferred option. This presents the best opportunity for the Council to meet its strategic needs, legal requirements, and desire for high quality service provision.
- 3.3. As a key strategic consideration, insourcing is viewed as a financially unviable strategy and would place considerable strain on current in-house services, requiring substantial investment in workforce expertise and back-office functions. Considering the challenging financial environment, this is unlikely to deliver the quality of provision needed.
- 3.4. Outsourcing the provision to specialist providers also has advantages, especially organisations delivering outreach-based support are often in the voluntary and community sector, which provides alternative expertise, experience of delivering these service models and, often, a flexible, strength-based ethos.

4. WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

Risk	Impact	Mitigation strategy
Market Interest Providers may not apply for the tender opportunity	Providers may not find the new opportunities financially attractive, therefore no or fewer bidders leading to less provider choice	Commissioners have held a market engagement event, and no concerns were raised regarding contract value. The proposed contract length will also make this more attractive to providers.
Requirement to have an appropriate	Providers without access to suitable	All incumbent service providers own the

building in which to deliver the service Access to suitable buildings in Camden is challenging.	buildings will not be able to tender.	buildings where the service operates and have indicated their intention to tender.
Procurement timeframe The timeframe has little flexibility to progress all required stages of an open procurement	Any significant delays would impact the planned contract start date, which could have financial, reputational and operational delivery impacts	Commissioners are working closely with procurement colleagues. Key milestones have been scoped and capacity/workload planning undertaken to ensure targets are met.

5. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1. No formal consultation is required.
- 5.2. The commissioning options have been informed through a series of stakeholder engagement workshops with service users that is ongoing, and a well-attended market engagement exercise with follow up one to one meetings with interested providers.
- 5.3. In 2024 the Adult Social Care (ASC) Homelessness Lead Practitioner and the Strategy and Commissioning Manager visited each of the 16-accommodation based services and met with service users for conversations around safeguarding and their experiences of the service. Feedback from service users underlined how much value they placed on being provided with flexible and trauma informed support in a way that works for them. They also shared the value of feeling safe in their Adult Pathway accommodation, in comparison to their previous housing settings, or experiences of rough sleeping.
- 5.4. A full EQIA has been completed prior to the report being submitted to the Cabinet and appended to this report as Appendix A.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Legal Services have reviewed this report in light of the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) and the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23).
- 6.2. Legal Services have assessed the strategy set out in this report and believe that the recommended options are in compliance with CSOs and PA23.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The four contracts that this procurement exercise relates to are funded through the housing commissioning budget. The total projected costs of the contracts are based on the current annual costs in financial year 2025/26 of £3,982,863 multiplied by 7 to give a total contract value of £27,880,041. No inflation has been factored into the contract value.
- 7.2. There is sufficient budget available within the housing commissioning budget

to cover the current contract costs.

- 7.3. The housing commissioning budget contributed towards the previous round of Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings but there are currently no outstanding MTFS savings associated with these contracts. Any contribution towards future MTFS savings would not be achievable until the end of the initial 5-year period of the contract.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. No environmental implications have been identified, and this proposal will not lead to specific environmental implications.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Phase 1

Key milestones	Indicative Date (or range)
Procurement strategy report – Cabinet	17 th Sept 2025
Tender advert	Sept-Oct 2025
Invitations to tender issued	Late Sept 2025
Deadline for submission of tenders	End Oct 2025
Tender evaluation and clarification period	November 2025
Contract Award Report – Executive Director	December 2025
Standstill Period – 8 working days	December 2025
Contract signature / sealing	January 2026 onwards
Transition to the new arrangements	January – March 2026
Contract start date	1 st April 2026

Phase 2

Key milestones	Indicative Date (or range)
Procurement strategy report – Cabinet	17 th Sept 2025
Tender advert	April 2026
Invitations to tender issued	April 2026
Deadline for submission of tenders	May 2026
Tender evaluation and clarification period	June 2026
Contract Award Report – Executive Director	July 2026
Standstill Period – 8 working days	July 2026
Contract signature / sealing	July onwards
Transition to the new arrangements	July – September 2026
Contract start date	1 st October 2026

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

REPORT ENDS