

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Approval to Award Contract: Extra Care Housing Care and Support Services at The Pines and Northampton Place
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Cllr Anna Wright, Lead Member for Adult Social Care
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Tessa Lindfield, Executive Director of Adult Social Care (DASS)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jane Senior, Director of Commissioning  Charles Ewujowoh, Interim Strategic Commissioner, Older People
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	For decision
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Exempt:</b>	No, with exception of Appendix 2, which is exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 – business or financial information of the council or a third party.
<b>Decision Subject To Call In:</b>	Yes
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment Appendix 2: Full Scoring Tables (Exempt)

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to award the contract for the Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service at The Pines and Northampton Place to the successful bidder following a competitive tendering exercise.

#### Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the award of the contract for the Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service at The Pines and Northampton Place to *Agincare UK Ltd* for an initial period of 3 years from 1 September 2026, with the option to extend for a further period of up to 2 years, subject to satisfactory performance and the availability of funding.

2. Approve that the annual contract value will not exceed £0.946m (exc. VAT) (excluding approved uplifts), with any additional Flex demand to be managed through existing Adult Social Care budgets in line with standard financial controls.
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director - People (Adults), in consultation with the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and the Section 151 Officer, to:
  - finalise the terms of the contract;
  - approve the exercise of any contract extension options, subject to satisfactory performance and available funding.

### **Reasons**

To ensure that a new contract for care and support across extra care housing is in place upon expiry of the existing contract.

### **Commissioner Review**

Adult Social Care requires a compliant contract for the delivery of care and support Service at The Pines and Northampton Place. The award of contract to the successful bidder is consistent with the Council's strategic objectives and Procurement Act 2023 and wider Procurement Regulations. It is recognised that future year's contract uplifts and any additional flex costs may result in an overarching variation over the contract life that must be confirmed to be compliant with procurement regulations and mitigated within directorate cash limits.

The commissioners are content with this report being considered.

## **2. Report**

### **Introductory paragraph**

- 2.1 On the 14 April 2025 and via a procurement pipeline report, Cabinet approved the procurement of the Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service. Pursuant this approval, the council conducted a competitive procurement exercise under in terms of the Procurement Act 2023. A successful provider has been selected following the evaluation of tenders in adherence to the evaluation criteria.
- 2.2 Extra Care Housing provides self-contained accommodation with onsite care and support service. The Council commissions an Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service at two schemes in Slough, (The Pines and Northampton Place) to enable tenants to live as independently as possible, reduce avoidable hospital admissions, and support timely discharge from hospital.
- 2.3 The current contract ends on 31 August 2026. The reprocurement of the Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service at The Pines and Northampton Place was included in the Council's Procurement Forward Plan for goods, works and services in excess of £214,904, which was approved by Cabinet in April 2025 <sup>1</sup>.
- 2.4 In line with procurement regulations, a Tender Notice for a new procurement opportunity was published on 12 December 2025. This was conducted via an open procurement exercise under Light Touch. 13 tenders were received by the deadline and these were evaluated against the published evaluation criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> [Cabinet Report template 2022.23](#)

- 2.5 Following evaluation and moderation, the preferred bidder, was the most advantageous tender, in terms of quality, social value and financial assessment.
- 2.6 Approval is sought to award the contract to *Agincare UK Ltd* for an initial 3 year term with 2 optional 1 year extensions.
- 2.7 The total contract value is estimated at £2.838m (exc. VAT) for the initial term, with a potential additional value of £1.892m (exc. VAT) for the extension period, reflecting the variable nature of individual care needs within the schemes. The flex element of the contract, which relates to individually assessed care packages, will be managed within the approved annual budget envelope of £0.946m, ensuring that overall expenditure remains controlled while allowing flexibility to respond to changes in demand and tenant needs.
- 2.8 The service comprises a Core (block) element and a Flex (spot) element, with the Core providing a guaranteed level of onsite support and the Flex delivered based on individual assessed needs and paid on actual usage, meaning overall contract value will fluctuate in line with demand.  
The core service paid as a block represents around one third of the total estimated contract value: £0.340m and the flex paid as spot is around £0.606m. These core (block hours) are guaranteed and do not fluctuate and the flex hours are paid on actuals at agreed hourly rates.
- 2.9 While the contract value is an estimate and excluding annual uplifts approved within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and VAT, the total annual value shall not exceed £0.946m over the contract term (including any extensions).  
Any additional flex hours commissioned will result in a contract variation and increased Extra Care Housing care costs, requiring a budget virement within the existing Adult Social Care budget envelope. Any such pressures will be managed within the directorate's resources, with mitigation identified from existing budgets, including the placement budget, reflecting the expectation that increased use of Extra Care Housing will reduce demand for more costly residential and nursing care.

## Options considered

The Council has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to assess needs and arrange care and support for eligible adults. Extra Care Housing provides self-contained accommodation with flexible on-site care and support and is a key element of the Council's preventative offer, supporting independence and reducing reliance on long-term residential care.

In considering the future of the Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service at The Pines and Northampton Place, the following options were assessed:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages / Risks	Recommended
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<p>Option 1 - Do Nothing / Allow the Contract to Expire</p>	<p>No immediate procurement activity required.</p>	<p>Would require alternative more costly provision to be provided to those tenants with eligible needs and leave a significant gap in care and support overnight.</p> <p>Increased risk of hospital admissions and residential placements.</p> <p>Destabilisation of existing tenancies and reputational risk to the Council.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Option 2 - Extend the Existing Contract</p>	<p>Maintains continuity in the short term. Avoids immediate mobilisation risk.</p>	<p>Further extension would not demonstrate market testing or best value.</p> <p>Risk of non-compliance with procurement legislation.</p> <p>Missed opportunity to refresh service expectations and strengthen performance requirements.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Option 3 - Reprocure the service through an Open Competitive Process (Light Touch)</p>	<p>Ensures compliance with procurement legislation. Promotes transparency and equal treatment. Tests the market and secures value for money. Enables strengthening of service specification, quality standards and outcome measures. Supports innovation and continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Requires procurement and mobilisation resource.</p> <p>Managed transition required to ensure service continuity.</p>	<p>Yes (Recommended Option)</p>

**Background**

**The Model**

The Extra Care Housing Care and Support Services at The Pines and Northampton Place enables people to live independently within their own accommodation while receiving flexible and responsive care and support. This model is an important element of the Council's prevention offer, supports the Council's wider strategic objective to promote independence, prevent hospital admissions and reduce reliance on long term residential care.

The advantages of Extra Care Housing are the balance of independent living with an enhanced sense of security where individuals receive support to manage their tenancies.

Essential to this are the following extra care characteristics:

1. Purpose-built, accessible design promoting independent living which supports people age in place.
2. Fully self-contained properties with own front doors.
3. Secure tenancies or lease arrangements where the individual has full control over who has access to their own home.
4. Office for use by care staff serving the scheme.
5. Communal spaces and facilities.
6. Access to planned and unplanned urgent care and support services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
7. Community alarms and other assistive technologies.
8. Safety and security often built into the design with fob or person-controlled entry.

The Council has a partnership agreement with the landlord, Anchor Housing, for both sites; the housing element is not within scope of this tender. The Council has a 99 year lease (entered into in 2007/8) and rents these properties on a peppercorn basis from the landlord; the buildings must be used for social housing and comprise 126 units.

Prospective tenants are assessed for suitability for the scheme by an Extra Care Housing Panel, which includes Adult Social Care, Slough Borough Council Housing, care provider, and the landlord. This process is part of the Partnership Agreement between the Council and Anchor Housing.

Following a benchmarking exercise, review and redesign of the model, supported by a comprehensive options appraisal, the service has been commissioned as a Hybrid (Core and Flex) model.

The benchmarking undertaken confirmed that most Councils have on site care and support overnight as a fixed core paid as block to respond to unplanned demand overnight in an emergency, as well as to support the delivery of any planned care which might be required include repositioning and/or medication.

Most councils tendering recently have adopted a core and flex or block and spot model, with all planned, commissioned hours relating to individual tenants' care and support plans

(assessed eligible needs) paid as actuals on a spot basis. This hybrid (block and spot) pattern balances safety and affordability, whereas full block models can create budget pressure and risk paying for capacity that is not used.

Core and Flex - separation of block and spot elements will support better Value for Money, as the spot element hourly rate is a more cost effective option compared to the weighted average hourly rates in the SBC home care market, resulting in a saving if people moving into the schemes are already in receipt of commissioned home care, and cost avoidance if a new service.

### **Listening, Learning, Shaping the Future: Stakeholder Engagement**

As part of the pre-tender work, in consultation with the current Housing Provider (Anchor Housing) and the incumbent provider, we engaged with current tenants living at both sites and their families. This revealed a clear and consistent message:

- People want to live independently, with dignity, in a place that feels like home.
- They value compassionate, well-trained staff, personalised support, and flexible routines that respect their individual lifestyles.
- There was a strong desire for a more vibrant activity programme, and for both sites to be better connected to the local community.

These insights have directly informed the development of the model and service specification, ensuring that the final offer reflects what tenants truly value.

A premarket engagement notice was published in September 2025. This allowed potential providers to understand the Council's intentions and provided an opportunity for early dialogue with the market.

Key themes from premarket engagement with prospective service providers included:

- Night staffing: Most providers operate with 2 waking night staff and see this as fundamental to the extra care housing offer.
- Service models: Providers are keen on flexible models to support adaptability and efficiency and see TEC as an enabler.
- Contracts: Longer-term contracts give providers the stability to invest in staff, infrastructure, and service quality.

The engagement confirmed that there was sufficient market interest and capacity to deliver the service.

### **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

### 3.1 *Financial implications*

- 3.1.1 The proposed contract for the Extra Care Housing Care and Support Services at The Pines and Northampton Place will be awarded for an initial term of three years, with the option to extend for a further two years in increments of one year.
- 3.1.2 The Council approved annual budget for both schemes is £0.946m (exc. VAT) of which the core hours (block element) at both schemes represent £0.340m (around one third of the estimated annual contract value). Therefore, based on the 2026/27 budget the total budget over the 5-year period would be £4.730m (exc. VAT), subject to any changes as part of future budget setting processes. This is before any future inflationary uplift increases are agreed; discretionary fee uplifts would be considered but not guaranteed from Year 2 of the new contract and subject to the agreed SBC Fee Uplift processes in place in 2027/28.
- 3.1.3 Increases in commissioned flexible hours will result in an increase in Extra Care Housing care costs which will require a budget virement from within the existing Adult Social Care budget where the comparative costs were previously incurred. As these hours are linked to changes in tenants' assessed needs and mix of tenants (as new tenants move into the schemes), it is not possible to precisely forecast the future number of hours.
- 3.1.4 Extra Care Housing as a model is expected to deliver financial savings compared to alternative forms of care due to the design and nature of Extra Care Housing settings as it means that in most cases people should be able to live there throughout their life and avoid the need to go into more costly residential and nursing care homes when their care needs increase. Some admissions into more expensive residential and nursing homes will therefore be avoided. The anticipated financial impact is reflected within the Adult Social Care Savings Plans included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2028/29 approved at Council March 2026.
- 3.1.5 The contract value has been calculated to reflect current service delivery requirements, staffing costs including those subject to TUPE, pension contributions and operational management overheads. The financial envelope has been informed by market engagement and benchmarking to ensure it is sustainable and reflective of the local care market.
- 3.1.6 Any pension risk and associated liabilities will be managed through appropriate contractual protections and admission arrangements.
- 3.1.7 The procurement has been designed to secure best value through a competitive Open Procedure under the Light Touch rules. Evaluation weightings have been structured to balance quality, price and social value in order to achieve both financial sustainability and high quality service outcomes.
- 3.1.8 A period for mobilisation activities is planned, with contract commencement anticipated on 1 September 2026. The financial profile of the contract has been aligned to this implementation timetable.

3.1.9 Overall, the proposal is financially deliverable within existing approved resources, is an important element of the prevention offer, and supports the Council's strategic objectives of maintaining sustainable, high quality extra care provision for local residents.

### 3.2 ***Legal implications***

- 3.2.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to promote individual wellbeing and to ensure the provision of services that meet eligible care and support needs. The Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service at The Pines and Northampton Place, forms part of the Council's arrangements to discharge these duties. The proposed contract award will enable the Council to continue to meet its obligations to residents who require care and support within an extra care setting.
- 3.2.2 The procurement of this service has been undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 under the Light Touch rules, which applies to health and social care services. The Light Touch rules allow flexibility than the full regime but still requires the Council to ensure transparency, equal treatment of bidders and proportionality. An open procedure has been followed. A contract notice was published on Find a Tender (reference number: 2025/S 000-082623) and all procurement documentation has been made available to the market. The evaluation process has been undertaken in accordance with the published evaluation criteria and weightings.
- 3.2.3 Cabinet must be satisfied that the decision is lawful, rational and proportionate and that all relevant considerations have been taken into account. These include service continuity, value for money, quality of care, workforce implications and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment.<sup>2</sup> The report provides the necessary information to enable Cabinet to make an informed decision.
- 3.2.4 Consultation with tenants has been undertaken as part of the pre procurement process. This supports the Council's duty to involve people in decisions affecting their care and support and ensures that the procurement approach reflects their needs. There is no statutory requirement for formal public consultation on the award of this contract; however, engagement has been carried out to support good decision making and service design.
- 3.2.5 Pension arrangements have also been considered. Some staff are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The successful provider will be required to comply with the relevant pension requirements, including admission to the Local Government Pension Scheme where applicable.
- 3.2.6 The contract will include appropriate provisions relating to safeguarding, data protection, information sharing and confidentiality.
- 3.2.7 There are no other specific legal barriers identified that would prevent Cabinet from approving the award of the contract, provided that the decision is taken in accordance with the information set out in this report and the Council's constitutional requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 1: 17.11.25. ECH Recommissioning - Equality Impact Assessment

### 3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 The proposed decision to award a new contract for the Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service at The Pines and Northampton Place carries a number of strategic and operational risks. These have been considered as part of this report and procurement planning process. Appropriate mitigations are in place and risks will continue to be actively managed through mobilisation and contract delivery.

3.3.2 The key risks and proposed mitigations are set out below.

Risk	Description	Mitigation
Service Continuity	There is a risk of disruption to tenants if mobilisation is not managed effectively or if there is delay in contract award.	<p>A structured 16 week mobilisation period is built into the timetable.</p> <p>A detailed mobilisation plan will be agreed with the provider.</p> <p>Enhanced monitoring will be in place during the first 12 weeks of operation.</p>
Mobilisation Complexity	The service includes two schemes with existing staffing arrangements and pension considerations.	Clear mobilisation requirements included in the specification.
Workforce	There is a risk of uncertainty for staff under employment regulations which could affect morale and retention.	<p>Full employee liability information has been provided</p> <p>The successful provider is experienced and will have senior management oversight during mobilisation, and their Human Resources team will support the process.</p>
Recruitment and Market Fragility	Difficulty recruiting and retaining care staff could affect service quality and responsiveness.	<p>The contract includes clear staffing requirements and performance measures.</p> <p>Regular contract monitoring meetings will review staffing levels, turnover, vacancies and use of agency/bank.</p> <p>Escalation procedures are in place if concerns arise.</p>
Financial Pressure	Inflationary pressures, workforce costs may impact contract sustainability.	<p>The initial annual budget allocation has been confirmed within the Medium Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>Annual discretionary fee uplifts will be considered from Year 2 of the contract to consider increases in National Living Wage and underlying inflation in</p>

		line with the Council's procedures at that time.
Safeguarding and quality compliance	Risk to residents if standards fall below required levels.	<p>The specification sets clear quality standards.</p> <p>Safeguarding requirements are embedded within the contract.</p> <p>The Council will undertake regular quality assurance in line with the Provider Quality Assurance Framework and contractual performance monitoring.</p>
Reputational Risk	Negative impact on public confidence if transition is not managed effectively.	<p>Clear governance oversight through Commissioning and Market Management Board (CMMB) and escalation if needed to Directorate Leadership Team (DLT)</p> <p>Transparent communication with tenants and families.</p> <p>Strong contract management arrangements as part of mobilisation.</p>
Governance and roles	If mobilisation roles are unclear there is a risk of duplication or delay.	<p>A single named officer will be identified to lead contract mobilisation.</p> <p>Roles, escalation routes, and reporting will be documented and overseen through reports to the CMMB and DLT.</p>

### 3.4 *Environmental implications*

3.4.1 The recommissioning of the Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service, is not expected to result in any significant adverse environmental impact. The service will continue to be delivered from the existing Extra Care Housing schemes at The Pines and Northampton Place. There are no proposals for new buildings, major refurbishments, or increased physical infrastructure as part of this contract award.

3.4.2 The Council recognises its responsibility to promote sustainable practice across all commissioned services. As part of the procurement process, bidders were required to demonstrate how they would operate in an environmentally responsible manner. This included consideration of:

- Reducing unnecessary travel through effective rota planning and workforce deployment.

- Promoting digital communication and record keeping where appropriate to reduce paper use.
- Encouraging energy efficiency within service operations.
- Supporting recycling and responsible waste management within the schemes.
- Promoting sustainable procurement practices within their supply chains.

3.4.3 The successful bidder has committed to operating in line with these principles and to supporting the Council's wider climate and sustainability objectives.

3.4.4 The contract management arrangements will include monitoring of relevant environmental and social value commitments to ensure that sustainable practices are embedded throughout the life of the contract.

3.4.5 Overall, the recommissioning supports continuity of a localised, community based model of care, which reduces reliance on higher carbon residential placements and supports residents to remain independent within their own accommodation.

### 3.5 *Equality implications*

3.5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and signed off as part of the recommissioning process.

3.5.2 The Council has a legal duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In this case, that duty has been actively considered in the design of the service specification, the procurement process and the contract award recommendation.

3.5.3 The Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service primarily supports older people and disabled adults, including individuals with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, long term health conditions and mental health needs. Many residents may also have protected characteristics relating to age, disability, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation. The service plays a critical role in enabling residents to remain independent within their own accommodation, reducing isolation and preventing deterioration in health and wellbeing.

3.5.4 The recommissioning does not reduce the level of service available to tenants. The specification maintains the core requirement to provide flexible, person-centred care and support that promotes independence, dignity and choice. Bidders were required to demonstrate how they will:

- Deliver accessible and inclusive services.
- Make reasonable adjustments for residents with disabilities.
- Provide culturally appropriate care.
- Ensure information is available in suitable formats.

- Support residents who may experience barriers linked to language, literacy or digital access.

3.5.5 The procurement evaluation included assessment of quality, safeguarding and workforce competence, which directly support equitable service delivery. The successful bidder demonstrated the ability to meet diverse needs and to work collaboratively with health and social care partners to support residents with complex requirements.

3.5.6 No negative equality impacts have been identified as a result of awarding the contract. The recommissioned service is expected to have a positive impact by strengthening quality standards, maintaining continuity of care and supporting residents to remain safe and independent in their own homes.

3.5.7 Ongoing contract management will include monitoring of access, safeguarding, complaints and resident feedback to ensure equality considerations continue to be met throughout the life of the contract.

### 3.6 *Procurement implications*

3.6.1 The Council undertook a full open procurement process in accordance with the Procurement Act (2023), Procurement Regulations (2024) and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The service falls within the Light Touch rules due to the nature of care and support services.

3.6.2 Prior to commencing procurement, the following options were considered:

- Extending the existing contract. This option was not considered appropriate due to the need to test the market, ensure value for money and refresh the service model in line with current strategic priorities.
- Direct award. This option was discounted as it would not provide transparency, competition or assurance of best value.
- Open competitive procurement. This option was selected as it promotes fairness, transparency, competition and demonstrable value for money.

3.6.3 A Preliminary Market Engagement Notice was published, to inform the market and gather feedback. Resident consultation was also completed to inform the service specification.

3.6.4 The tender was published through the Find a Tender Service (reference: 2025/S 000-082623) and the Council's electronic procurement portal, InTend. 13 tenders were received.

3.6.5 The evaluation methodology was clearly set out in the tender documentation. The weighting applied was:

- Quality 60%
- Price 35%
- Social value 5%

- 3.6.6 The evaluation panel included a range of council stakeholders with relevant technical knowledge and experience in the service area across Adult Social Care, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives when assessing the quality of the bids submitted. The successful bidder had the most advantageous tender and achieved the highest overall combined score for quality, price and social value within the approved annual budget envelope of £946,000 (exc. VAT).
- 3.6.7 The procurement process has therefore delivered a competitive outcome and demonstrates best value for the Council.
- 3.6.8 The procurement timetable provides for Cabinet approval to award in April 2026, followed by a voluntary standstill period and formal award. The contract commencement date is 1 September 2026
- 3.6.9 Further detailed evaluation information, including individual bidder scores, is contained within Appendix 2 which is exempt to protect commercial confidentiality.

### 3.7 *Workforce implications*

- 3.7.1 The service is subject to the TUPE Regulations. An anonymised employee liability dataset has been provided by the current provider.
- 3.7.2 There are no direct workforce implications for Council employees as the service is externally commissioned.
- 3.7.3 A structured mobilisation plan will be implemented.

### 3.8 *Property implications*

- 3.8.1 The Extra Care Housing Care and Support Service, operates within two existing Extra Care Housing schemes. The buildings themselves are not being reprocured as part of this process.
- 3.8.2 The successful provider will operate from The Pines and Northampton Place in accordance with agreed access arrangements and any existing leases or occupancy agreements.
- 3.8.3 There are no proposed changes to the ownership of the properties as part of this procurement. Any property related responsibilities, including health and safety, security and maintenance interfaces, will be managed through the contract and partnership arrangements with Anchor Housing (the current housing provider).

## 4. **Background Papers**

- None