

## **North Somerset Council Decision**

### **Decision of Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing**

**With advice from Director of Adult Social Services**

**Directorate: Adult Social Services**



---

**Decision No: ASC081 (2021/22 Scheme)**

**Subject: COMMISSIONING PLAN FOR NORTH SOMERSET HANDYPERSON SERVICE**

**Key Decision: Yes**

#### **Reason:**

Whilst the turnover value is estimated to be under £500,000, historically it has been evidenced that this service has continued to evolve and grow over the course of the contract. The impact of the service is also considered to significantly affect individuals in more than one ward.

#### **Background:**

Handyperson services provide low-level, low-cost interventions that are considered extremely helpful if not vital by service users. They also contribute to several strategic objectives to keep vulnerable people safe and independent in their own home and can be used to facilitate reablement and hospital discharge. A good handyperson service can identify other issues in the client's life or home environment which may be having a detrimental impact on their quality of life, safety, or health. Early identification of such issues can reduce the likelihood of future crises. As such handyperson services contribute to the wider prevention agenda and aid independence for people in their own homes.

The commissioning of a handyperson service will support the council's Corporate Plan 2022-24 in its ambitions to:

- A commitment to protect the most vulnerable in our communities.
- An approach which enables young people and adults to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

The commissioning of a handyperson service will support the Adults Social Services Annual Directorate Statement 2022/23 in its ambitions to:

- Ensures we are a council that empowers and cares about people.
- To ensure we are an open and enabling organisation

**Decision:**

It is requested that the commissioning plan be approved to proceed.

**Reasons:****Introduction**

The current handyman contract is held by AMS Electrical Ltd. The current contract term is due to end on 30 September 2022. A decision to extend the current contract was approved for a maximum term of six months (31 March 2023) with an aim to reduce this to three months if possible (31 December 2022). The proposal is to re-commission the handyman service. The service is broken down into six areas:

***The main Handyman service:***

This service undertakes small works which are normally described as odd jobs and can include the following.

- Small building repairs / improvements – minor plumbing / carpentry / electrical work, securing loose carpets, putting up curtain rails, shelves.
- Safety measures – fitting key safes, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, grab rails, clearing and cleaning paths.
- Home security - door and window locks, door chains and door viewers.
- Energy efficiency checks - installing draught excluders, radiator heat reflectors and energy efficient lightbulbs
- Other jobs: Moving furniture, installing standalone telecare, signposting to other care and support services as required

The jobs will be subsidised by North Somerset Council and should be for a maximum of up to three hours a time and a job should be completed within two to three weeks of initial referral. The current cost per hour of the service is £38.00 per hour, the householder who is having the works completed currently pay £15.60 per hour and for the materials used, and the rest of the hourly rate is subsidised by the council.

The number of jobs completed by the provider from October 2020 to September 2021 was 1878. The council's subsidised value was £50,175, with a service user contribution of £26,091.

The provider will take referrals from the public and professionals/agencies working with people in the community, as well as receiving referrals directly from the council. The eligibility for the subsidised service will be as follows:

Homeowners, private and social housing tenants (see below) who are:

- over 60 years old and/or registered / registerable disabled
- would struggle to undertake the works themselves

It is intended that each client can have up to six subsidised hours a year. In exceptional circumstances a client may have over the number of subsidised hours, but this will have to be agreed by a contract manager by email prior to the job being started. Each job will only be subsidised up to three hours.

Service exclusions:

- This service is not available to Social Housing tenants or Private Landlords to complete repairs for which the landlord is liable.

***Home from Hospital service:***

The service works to support hospital discharges and referrals will be required to be completed by the next working day to avoid unnecessary delays in leaving hospital. The service supports 'Alliance Home from Hospital' and ward hospital teams. Works are completed via Home from Hospital which are eligible under the Care Act 2014. The types of work completed can be from arranging a room, so it is better suited to the person returning home, to putting in extra plug sockets to cope with extra equipment that has been installed and key safes.

The current cost of the service is £49.00 per hour plus materials. The current provider has completed 97 jobs at a value of £4,753k from October 2020 to September 2021.

***Quoted works:***

The service works to meet the needs of North Somerset Council OT professionals, Adults and Children's, for small adaptations that are Care Act 2014 eligible or for children, eligible under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, and where they cannot source from elsewhere. Currently OT professionals can self-authorise works that are below the value of £500. The types of works completed can range from fitting banister rails, swapping doors around, bathroom small works, grab rails, raising beds and sofas to putting in extra power points.

There may be an exception where a client may receive the full cost of a minor adaptation, these should not exceed, and have a maximum value of £1000. Works over the value of £1000 would be considered under a DFG. Referrals from the council are a result of a Care Act 2014 assessment. When the Integrated Community Equipment Service are unable to provide, or a provision is made under Housing Renewals Assistance Policy e.g. services to support hospital discharge will be fully funded.

Service exclusions:

- This service will not complete works that are completed by Integrated Community Equipment Service following a Care Act/Health assessment.

The current cost of the service is £38.00 per hour plus materials. The current provider has completed 63 jobs at a value of £10,720 from October 2021 to September 2021.

**Emergency works:**

The service supports smaller additional help that is required for works already completed under the Disabled Facilities Grant, that are outside of warranty and now require small repairs which the individual is unable to fund themselves.

**Warm Home Advice and Money scheme (WHAM):**

WHAM was set up via the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), it is not emergency work. Referrals come via case holders who work for the CSE, these usually come to the CSE via the Citizen Advice Bureau. The service is means-tested via the CSE. The types of works completed range from the supply of heaters to use when boilers break down, leaks and dangerous electrical works, draft proofing, and the re-silicone of windows.

The current cost of the service is £38.00 per hour and WHAM currently pay £15.60 per hour plus the materials and the rest is subsidised from the Handyperson service budget. The current provider has completed 55 jobs at a value of £8,800 from October 2020 to September 2021.

**Children's works:**

The service supports with the supply and installation of child safety gates, fireguards, cupboard and draw locks and window restrictors. They will receive, check, and store safety equipment prior to its fitting. Referrals will be received from Sirona Health Visiting Staff or other appropriate partners, for example family support works from children's centres.

The cost of the service is currently charged at £38.00 per hour plus materials. The service will aim to visit 12 homes a month to assess for suitability of home safety equipment.

The provider will charge a fixed hourly rate for works plus materials, and the provider will invoice the council monthly in arrears for works completed. The value of the contract has an estimated value of £100,000 per annum from North Somerset Council and £15,000 per annum from Public Health to Support the Children's works as described above.

The provider will need to provide the following performance information at the end of each month prior to the payment of the subsidy:

- Job type
- Total job cost
- Cost to service user
- Cost to the council
- Time to complete a job from the point of referral
- Service user information/demographic
- Referrer

The council will work with the successful bidder to develop added value services; this will include use of "Check & Connect" in conjunction with partners. We will also ensure that the successful bidder can refer on clients who need work that will take longer than three hours. The successful bidder will need to be registered with 'Trustmark' a government endorsed quality scheme for tradespersons.

There will potentially be TUPE transfers from the current provider.

### **Contract Structure**

- The estimated contract value for the life of the contract is £460k. The term of the proposed contract is two years with an option to extend for a further two years in one-year increments.
- The initial term of the contract will be for 24 months.
- There will be two extension periods for a period of one year and one year to 24 months.
- There is a six-month termination period without cause in the contract.
- The estimated contract value per year is £115k although purchasing against these contracts is not guaranteed or committed at this level subject to the annual review, this will be demand led and consideration be given to the council's medium term financial plan and overall affordability gap.

### **Outline timeline**

- The preparation of the specification and ITT documents will be completed by the end of April 2022
- The procurement process commences through advertising the opportunity in May 2022
- The successful supplier will be notified by the end of July 2022.
- The service will start on the 31 December 2022

### **Options Considered:**

North Somerset Council could decommission the current contract and if this was to happen the council would have to provide an alternative solution to fulfil its responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the delivery of minor adaptations. The council, if this happened would lose out on the benefit of having a handyperson to support its early, intervention and prevention offer. Areas of early intervention and prevention include:

- Small repairs and minor adaptations that reduce the risk of falls, and other risks, and enable independent living.
- Home security measures that prevent burglaries and maintain independent living.
- Hospital discharge schemes (where they include hazard management and equipment installation) that reduce the risk of falls, maintain independent living and reduce length of hospital stays.
- Fire safety checks and installation of alarms and smoke detectors that reduce death and injury caused by fires.
- Energy efficiency checks that reduce excess winter deaths and expenditure on fuel, where a check leads to an intervention to improve heating or warmth in a home.
- Installation of standalone telecare to support independent living.
- Wider signposting for additional needs via check and connect.

## **Financial Implications:**

### **Costs**

The Handyperson contract is worth £115,000 per annum with the total value being £460,000 for the life of the contract, it will subsidise services to the most vulnerable residents in the county. The current service charge with AMS Electrical is £38.00 per hour plus materials. For the Handyperson service this is split between the service user who pays £15.60 per hour plus materials and the rest of the hourly rate is subsidised by the council.

The works for the Home from Hospital, as this is emergency type work, is charged at £49.00 per hour plus materials. All works are subject to VAT.

If the service volume is greater than predicted, the council will manage and restrict the service during the term of the contract, also re-directing other funds (if available).

### **Funding**

Funding for this service is from the Adult Social Care budget of £100k per year, and £15k a year from Public Health budget. The council in partnership with Public Health will be monitoring the spend.

### **Legal Powers and Implications:**

Government legislation has highlighted the need for local authorities to provide services for homeowners including handypersons services:

- The Care Act 2014 highlights the need for home improvement agencies, handyman or maintenance services as information and advice providers to help in preventing reducing or delaying care needs.
- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 states a local authority may provide assistance to adapt or repair accommodation.
- The Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014 advise that minor adaptations, for the purpose of assisting with nursing at home or aiding daily living, are to be provided by social services authorities without charge if the cost of the adaptation is £1000 or less.

### **Climate Change and Environmental Implications:**

We will work with the provider commissioned to deliver the Handyperson Service to ensure efficiency in travel time between jobs and that journeys are planned in the most appropriate way to reduce their carbon footprint. The contract sets out under social value our expectations of providers around Economic, Social and Environmental benefits to be achieved. As part of the council's reliance to extreme weather and climate change in North Somerset, this service reduces the impact extreme weather could have on vulnerable people, so they are able to maintain their properties if damage is obtained.

### **Consultation:**

- Meeting held with current contractor AMS Electrical to discuss the recommissioning;
- Consulted with North Somerset Council services leads about future of service;

- Informed North Somerset staff about proposed changes;
- A PIN raised 14 expressions of interest in February 2022.

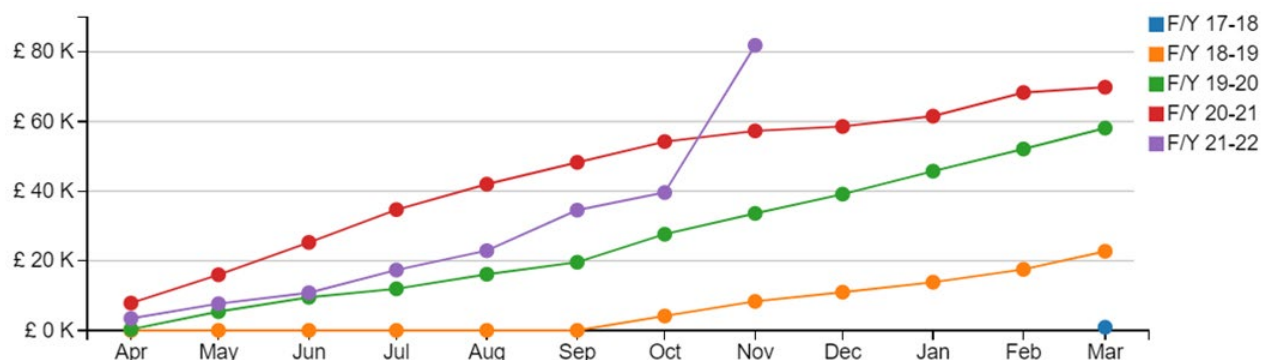
Consulting with service leaders gave a better understanding of the vision for the Adult Social Services Directorate and allowed proposals to be tailored to meet future need. This consultation identified a need to keep the Handyperson Service to support the early intervention and prevention pathway, enable private sector housing renewal and support hospital discharges.

Engagement with the market revealed that there are several local providers that could tender for the service and that the council, through procurement, can secure a competitive rate for services.

### **Risk Management:**

The population of North Somerset is growing, and in 2020 was estimated to be 215,600 people. This is predicated to grow and age over the next two decades. The current demand on the handypersons service is 1700 jobs a year but this is suspected to increase year on year.

The below graph shows the increase in usage of the Handyperson Service since 2017. It is also noted that in this time the pandemic could have restricted activity with the current provider and therefore demand could increase further.



If this contract is not awarded in December 2022 the council will be without a Handyperson service. This could mean delays in hospital discharges and an increase in preventable injury or illness due to properties being in poor repair. The council would also be at risk of not fulfilling their legal duty under the Care Act 2014 and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and there will be operational delays as staff may struggle to find people to undertake small adaptations needed for people to remain independent.

If a contract was delayed, the council would need to spot purchase urgent work with a trusted local provider in the community, registered with a trusted government scheme. However, this approach will have significant cost and resource implications and will be able to support the early intervention and prevention agenda.

**Equality Implications:**

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes

**Corporate Implications:**

None identified

**Appendices:**

None

**Background Papers:**

The current contract and specification are available on request.

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed:



Title: Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing

Date: 4 May 2022

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:



Title: Director of Adult Social Services

Date: 4 May 2022

**Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable:**

This Decision is an Executive Member decision, with advice from the Director of Adult Social Services. The author was advised that the Decision does not need to be signed by the Head of Strategic Procurement or the S151 Officer. The title of this Decision and the signatories have been amended to reflect this.