

THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH OCTOBER 2024. MINUTES NOD. 51 AND 52 (1) ARE NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL-IN".

CABINET

MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON THURSDAY 3RD OCTOBER, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Moncur (in the Chair)
Councillors Dowd, Doyle, Harvey, Howard, Lappin and Roscoe

45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atkinson and Veidman.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declaration of personal interest was made and the Member concerned remained in the room during the consideration of the item:

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Councillor Doyle	Minute No. 58 - Procurement of Temporary Accommodation	She is Chair of Bosco Society Ltd; a Trustee of New Start Homes; and a member of the Sefton Supported Housing Group – stayed in the room but took no part in the consideration of the item and did not vote thereon.

47. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Decision Made:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

48. ADVOCACY SERVICES PROCUREMENT

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director) seeking approval to complete a procurement exercise for Advocacy Services.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) approval be granted to commence a procurement exercise to establish new contracts from 1 April 2025 for the provision of advocacy services;
- (2) decisions on the inclusion of both Children's Service and Health advocacy services in the procurement exercise be delegated to the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), in consultation with the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education and the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health, either as part of the original procurement exercise or throughout the duration of any new procurement framework established;
- (3) decisions on the commissioning / procurement framework model, tender evaluation criteria, contracting models, contract terms and conditions, and service specification to be applied to the procurement exercises, be delegated to the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), in consultation with the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education (if the contracts are to include Children's Services advocacy services) and the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health, throughout the duration of the procurement framework, and on the basis that they can be contained within existing and approved budget provision for such services;
- (4) contracts to be awarded for an initial contract term of three years with the option to further extend for a period of up to two years, (either as a single extension or via two separate twelve-month extensions) subject to satisfactory performance and demonstration of value for money of the successful supplier/s ,and the required budget being available, and that decisions on the awarding of the contracts, and any permitted extensions thereof, be delegated to the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), in consultation with the Executive Director of Children's Services (if the contracts are to include Children's Services advocacy services) and the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health;
- (5) should it be identified during the contractual period that the contracts need to be increased in value to reflect increases in demand for advocacy services and to ensure that Sefton continues to meet its statutory obligations, then delegated authority be given to the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), in consultation with the Executive Director of Children's Services (if the contracts are to include Children's

Services advocacy services) and the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health to approve any such increases, under the proviso that the additional expenditure can be met within existing budget provision, falls within the associated delegated authority to approve such an increase, and is in line with the applicable procurement regulations; and

- (6) the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), in consultation with Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health be authorised to implement a maximum 12-month extension to current Adult Social Care commissioned advocacy services contracts, should there be any delay to the procurement exercise and any new contractual arrangements commencing on 1 April 2025.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The rationale for the recommendations in the report had been formulated to ensure that a procurement exercise took place to secure ongoing delivery of Advocacy Services from 1 April 2025.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

49. SEFTON'S CARER SERVICES PROCUREMENT CONTRACT PROPOSAL

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director) outlining the recommended approach to the future commissioning arrangements for all age carers support and advice, currently provided by Sefton Carers Centre. The existing contract would expire in March 2025 and a new arrangement would need to be put in place. The report outlined the estimated number of carers and young carers within the Borough, together with the services offered by the Sefton Carers Centre. The report recommended a procurement exercise to award a 3-year contract award with opportunity to extend the contract subject to a formal review. This would allow support and advice for carers to be aligned to the Carers Strategy for Sefton and would enable the new service to provide longer term continuity to carers and respond to the needs of all carers of both children and adults in the Borough.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the commencement of a procurement exercise to extend and develop Sefton's Carer Service provision in Sefton that will be

established for up to, and not more than, a five-year period, commencing in April 2025 (3 years +1 year+1 year), be approved; the total Local Authority budget for the contract from April 2025 to be £990,930 and additional Integrated Care Board (ICB) funding for 25/26 is anticipated to be £132,000;

- (2) decisions on the model for the new Carers Service provision, including the workforce strategy, service specification (including young carers service support and provision), quality and cost threshold, initial procurement and tender evaluation process, and any contract variations throughout the life of the new Carers Service provision to deal with any specific additional service delivery requirements be delegated to the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), and the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health,
- (3) contracts be awarded for an initial contract term of three years with the option to further extend for a period of up to two years, (either as a single extension or via two separate twelve-month extensions) subject to satisfactory performance and being able to demonstrate the achievement of value for money of the successful supplier/s and the required budget being available, and that decisions on the awarding of the contracts, and any permitted extensions thereof, be delegated to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, and the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health;
- (4) should it be identified during the contractual period that the contracts need to be increased in value to reflect increases in demand for carer services and to ensure that Sefton continues to meet its statutory obligations, then delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), in consultation with the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, and the and the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health, to approve any such increases, under the proviso that the additional expenditure can be met within existing budget provision, falls within the associated delegated authority to approve such an increase, and is in line with the applicable procurement regulations;
- (5) throughout the life of the commissioned Carer Support Service provision, delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director), alongside the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education and in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care

and Health, to make decisions on any amendments to its operation, so as to ensure that such decisions can be implemented in a timely manner and so that the provider is able to operate in a flexible way which addresses any emerging issues and supports wider work such as the further integration of Health and Children Social Care services with Adult Social Care; and

- (6) decisions regarding the pooling of any other funding between Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board for Sefton, be delegated to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing who is also the ICB Place Director for Sefton, in consultation with the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education and the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families and the Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health.

Reasons for the Decisions:

To follow Sefton Council's procurement cycle to ensure that commissioning arrangements for the provision of a Carer Support and Advisory Service within Sefton were directed by Sefton, to meet its demographic requirements, were in place to meet the assessed needs of Sefton's residents, so that future decisions on commissioning and market management could be made in a timely manner and to put in place new contractual and service delivery arrangements which both sought to ensure market sustainability and reduced disruption to Service Users.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

1. Maintaining the status quo – The current provider arrangement was an extension of an Agreement, and a new contract was required that was robust and up to date in terms and conditions with defined and agreed contractual lifespan.

50. RE-PROCUREMENT OF THE KOOTH YOUNG PEOPLE'S ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICE.

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Public Health that sought approval:

1. To undertake a Direct Award under Process C of the Health Care Services Provider Selection Regime (PSR) 2023, including publication of a notice to make an award to the existing provider (as set out in schedule 3 PSR 2023) to Kooth PLC from 1 January 2025 for a core period of 3.25 years with the option to extend for a further 2 x 1-year periods, subject to satisfactory on-going performance and value for money being evidenced; and
2. To give delegated authority for the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Public Health and

Wellbeing, to authorise and execute extensions to the contract within the terms of the Direct Award.

The report indicated that Direct Award Process C was a method under the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 that allowed a relevant authority to award a new contract to an existing provider when an existing contract was due to expire, and the existing provider was satisfying the existing contract and likely to satisfy the new contract.

The following appendix was attached to the report:

- Health Equity Assessment Tool

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the Director of Public Health, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member - Public Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to make a Direct Award to Kooth PLC from 1st January 2025 for the provision of low-level online mental health support under Process C of the Provider Selection Regime. Advice has been taken from Procurement colleagues and a procurement evaluation exercise has been carried out and concluded to ensure Kooth is demonstrating satisfactory on-going performance and value for money; and
- (2) the Director of Public Health, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member - Public Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to exercise any extension options within the terms of the Direct Award.

Reasons for the Decisions:

1. The current contracts would expire on 31 December 2024.
2. The existing provider, Kooth PLC, was satisfying the original contract and was likely to satisfy the proposed new contract meeting the selection criteria for Direct Award Process C.
3. Assurance of satisfactory performance was evidenced against the five key criteria for assessing provider eligibility under Direct Award Process C:
 - Quality and innovation
 - Value
 - Integration, collaboration, and service sustainability.
 - Improving Access, reducing health inequalities, and facilitating choice.

- Social Value

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

1. Direct Award Process A – while the service required highly specialist trained staff and digital infrastructure which limited the number of providers able to provide the required services, it was not considered that the existing provider was the only capable provider and the Council was not concluding a framework agreement. Therefore, Direct Award Process A was not appropriate.
2. Direct Award Process B – it was not a contracting arrangement where people had a choice of providers, nor where the number of providers were restricted by the authority. Therefore, Direct Award Process B was not appropriate.
3. Most suitable provider process – where the relevant authority was able to identify the most suitable provider, this option might be considered without running a complete process. This process was not required as the existing provider met the criteria for Direct award process C. Therefore, most suitable provider process was not appropriate.
4. Competitive Process – The local authority was satisfied with the service that Kooth PLC provided and did not wish to undertake a competitive tender commissioning exercise when this would likely result in very little interest and potentially result in service instability.
5. To not re-commission the Kooth service – this option was rejected as it opened the Council to reputational risk and would create a gap in the continuity of care that was currently offered to children and young people.

51. PROCUREMENT OF A TEMPORARY PACKAGE OF CARE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education seeking approval to re-procure an existing care and support package for a child for up to a period of 6 months, to allow time to conduct a procurement to identify longer term care and support. The procurement exercise would call off the Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (PDPS) which had been approved for the Liverpool City Region. The report indicated that the current contract would expire on 12 October 2024 and also sought permission to procure longer term care and support for the child.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and

Families, be delegated the authority to conduct a procurement exercise for an individual package of care and enter a contract with the selected provider for a maximum period of 6 months (until the end of the 2024/25 financial year) with an annual value of up to £811,200 whilst longer term arrangements are procured; this care and support arrangement is jointly funded between Sefton Council and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB Sefton Place who will be party to the procurement exercise;

- (2) any inflation or additional costs relating to the lifetime of the 6-month contract and the longer term 3-year contract which will follow be delegated to the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Children Schools and Families, within financial standing orders and within the current scheme of delegation;
- (3) the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Children Schools and Families, be granted delegated authority to award the contract resulting from the procurement exercise outlined above and the procurement of the long-term care, with Cheshire and Merseyside ICB party to the decision-making relating to this procurement;
- (4) the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Children Schools and Families, be delegated authority to enter longer term contracting arrangements of up to 3 years with Cheshire and Merseyside ICB for the care and support for the child; the Executive Director - Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing (Place Director) and the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care and Health and Deputy Leader to be consulted in respect of the longer-term arrangements leading to the transition to adult services;
- (5) the Executive Director - Children's Social Care and Education be delegated authority to identify another provider should the care break down over the life of the contract; and

Rule 46

- (6) it be noted that the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) had given their consent under Rule 46 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules for this decision to be treated as urgent and not subject to "call in" on the basis that it would result in the breach of Public Contracts Regulations 2015, as the call-in period would delay the commencement of the re-procurement.

Reasons for the Decisions:

The recommended proposal would ensure that:

- (1) The Council carried out its duty in relation to cared for children under the Children Act 1989, to ensure they were safeguarded and welfare promoted.
- (2) It would allow adequate care support to be in place while an appropriate, longer-term placement was sought, in consultation with Adult Social Care.
- (3) The Council's spend was compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations following the expiration of the current waiver on 12 October 2024.
- (4) The re-procurement activity provided the opportunity to achieve better quality and value through increased competition.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Option 1 – To extend the current waiver. Extending the current waiver by any more than 2 days would take the contract amount over the threshold and would be in breach of the Contract Procurement Regulations.

52. MARITIME CORRIDOR SCHEME PHASE 1 - RECEIPT OF CAPITAL FUNDING

The Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director of Highways and Public Protection indicating that schemes over £1m in value required Council approval and the necessary funding needed to be included within the Council's Capital Programme. The first Phase of the Maritime Corridor Scheme was expected to cost approximately £12.3m. Subject to approval from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, a Grant Funding Agreement would be received for this amount.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) **the Council be recommended to approve** a supplementary capital estimate for £12.303m externally funded using the Levelling Up Fund and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) for the delivery of Maritime Corridor Phase 1 scheme pending the receipt and sealing of a grant funding agreement from the LCRCA; and
- (2) the delivery of the first Phase of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1 scheme be approved.

Reasons for the Decisions:

By approving the recommendations the Council would be able to include the funding in the Capital Programme and let the contract for the delivery of the Maritime Corridor Phase 1 Works.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options have been considered.

53. MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSING LANDLORD COMPLAINTS

The Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Housing that explained the requirement for the Council to appoint a Member Responsible for Complaints for its council housing landlord services in order to comply with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) statutory Complaint Handling Code (the Code). The report also sought to identify the role of the Member Responsible for Complaints within the Council and provide an update to the Council's Housing Advisory Board, as previously reported to the Cabinet.

The following appendix was attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 – Member Responsible for Complaints Role Expectations.

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) the appointment of the Cabinet Member - Housing and Highways to the role of Member Responsible for Complaints as required by the Housing Ombudsman Service in compliance with the statutory Complaint Handling Code, be approved; and
- (2) the Membership for the Housing Advisory Board and the proposal to create the Shadow board in October/November 2024 subject to diary availability, be noted.

Reasons for the Decisions:

- 1 Officers were continuing to work up the operational requirements for the Council Housing Programme and this would progress with the appointed housing management agent in place.
- 2 In accordance with the HOS the Member Responsible for Complaints was recommended to be the Cabinet Member - Housing and Highways.
- 3 Creation of the Shadow and later full Housing Advisory Board would provide added governance and oversight to the management of the Council's homes which would further develop as the Council Housing Programme grew. Training opportunities would be explored and identified where relevant for Housing Advisory Board Members as well as any Members and/or officers with specific identified roles such as those identified within the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

If the Council did not identify a Member Responsible for Complaints, it would be non-compliant with the statutory Complaint Handling Code published by the Housing Ombudsman. Alternatively, the Council could identify a Member who was not the Cabinet Member for Housing and Highways. However this would not align with guidance from the HOS which advised that the role for Local Authorities should be a lead member or a Councillor who had oversight in the Cabinet for housing.

54. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2024/25 TO 2027/28 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2024/25 – OCTOBER UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial informing the Cabinet of:

- 1) The current position relating to the 2024/25 revenue budget.
- 2) The progress made on transformation within Sefton New Directions.
- 3) The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2024/25.
- 4) The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of August 2024:
 - The forecast expenditure to year end.
 - Variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members.
 - Updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects.

Appendix A to the report set out the Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27

Decisions Made:

That

Revenue Outturn

- (1) the current position relating to the 2024/25 revenue budget be noted;
- (2) the actions being taken to refine forecasts and identify mitigating efficiencies to ensure each service achieves a balanced position, be noted;
- (3) the financial risks associated with the delivery of the 2024/25 revenue budget be recognised and it be acknowledged that the forecast outturn position will continue to be reviewed, and remedial actions put in place, to ensure a balanced forecast outturn position and financial sustainability can be achieved;

Sefton New Directions

- (4) the progress made on transformation within Sefton New Directions be noted, together with the fact that a detailed report will be provided to it as shareholder at the November meeting outlining how a sustainable budget will be set for 2025/26 and how this will enable financial sustainability in the long term;

Capital Programme

- (5) the spending profiles across financial years for the approved capital programme, as set out at paragraph 8.1 of the report, be noted;
- (6) the latest capital expenditure position as at 31 August 2024 of £19.011m, as set out at paragraph 8.08 of the report; and the latest full year forecast is £88.566m, as set out at paragraph 8.7 of the report, be noted;
- (7) it be noted that capital resources will be managed by the Executive Director Corporate Service and Commercial to ensure the capital programme remains fully funded and that capital funding arrangements secure the maximum financial benefit to the Council, as set out at paragraphs 8.10 - 8.12 of the report.

Reasons for the Decisions:

To ensure that the Cabinet was informed of the current position in relation to the 2024/25 revenue budget.

To provide an updated forecast of the outturn position with regard to the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

To keep Members informed of the progress of the Capital Programme against the profiled budget for 2024/25 and agreed allocations for future years.

To progress any changes that were required in order to maintain a relevant and accurate budget profile necessary for effective monitoring of the Capital Programme.

To approve any updates to funding resources so that they can be applied to capital schemes in the delivery of the Council's overall capital strategy.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

55. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To comply with Regulation 5(2) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England)

Regulations 2012, notice had been published regarding the intention to consider the following matter in private for the reason set out below.

Decision Made:

That, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the Press and Public.

56. PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - EXEMPT APPENDIX

The Cabinet considered exempt information provided by the Assistant Director - Communities in relation to the Procurement of Temporary Accommodation (Minute No. 58 below refers).

Decision Made:

That the exempt information be considered as part of the report in relation to the Procurement of Temporary Accommodation (Minute No. 58 below refers).

Reasons for the Decision:

The exempt information was required to be considered with the information in the public domain in order that an informed decision might be made.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

57. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

Decision Made:

That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

58. PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Cabinet considered the report of the Assistant Director -Communities indicating that as part of the Council's statutory function in discharging its duties under the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council must provide interim accommodation while it made enquiries if it had reason to believe that an applicant might be:

- Homeless
- Eligible for assistance, and
- In priority need.

These functions were delivered through the Council's Housing Options service and accommodation requirements sourced from a mix of Council stock, Commissioned Providers and accommodation providers from the private sector. Since August 2023 there had been a 67% increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation. Consequently, the Council had needed to source an increasing amount of accommodation from the private sector. This report outlined a strategy for procuring good quality, furnished, and maintained accommodation for eligible homeless households through a mix of dispersed temporary accommodation.

The following Appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A – Financial and Commercially Sensitive Information
- Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Decisions Made:

That

- (1) authorisation be granted for the Assistant Director - Communities to conduct a procurement exercise evaluated on the basis of the most advantageous tender, to commission accommodation providers to deliver temporary accommodation to eligible homeless households entering into a contract for a minimum of 2 years plus 1 optional year (2+1); and
- (2) delegated authority be granted for the Assistant Director of - Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Communities and Partnership Engagement, to award the Contract(s) resulting from the procurement exercise and to award any extension or amendment thereof following a review of the original award.

Reasons for the Decisions:

- (i) To ensure that there was access to sufficient provision of temporary accommodation to meet a growing need.
- (ii) Costs associated with the provision of temporary accommodation were reduced.
- (iii) That accommodation provided was of a consistently good standard as set out in the terms of the contract.
- (iv) To ensure that the Council was compliant with Public Procurement Regulations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

1. Lease self-contained dispersed properties from registered providers for use as temporary accommodation.

There was high demand for affordable accommodation across the housing market and from social housing provided by registered providers.

Risk: Reduction in social housing accommodation available.

If social housing properties were used for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation it would reduce the availability of affordable accommodation for Sefton residents. The impact of this could lead to further rises in homelessness as some households could find themselves in unaffordable private sector tenancies.

2. Lease empty properties directly from landlords in the private sector and manage the accommodation internally.

This option was high cost and resource intensive for the Council to deliver at present. The accommodation provided would need to be maintained, furnished, and managed by the Council. The Council did not currently have the resources to deliver this.

Risk: Financial risk associated with the time it would take to recruit and develop a new service to manage this function.

The initial costs for setting up the service from recruitment and training plus other costs for establishing the properties as homes, for example, providing furniture and utensils.

3. Do nothing.

The Council could continue to spot purchase from the open market at nightly rates agreed at the time of booking.

Risk: Lack of availability and fluctuating costs.

During holiday seasons and when there were large events in the city region, the price of booking accommodation during those periods increased. There were also fewer options available during those periods.

Although the lowest rate was negotiated at the time of booking accommodation there was some uncertainty regarding the long-term costs of providing the accommodation due to how quickly the market could change depending upon demand at the time.