

Report of Head of Housing Support

Report to Director of Environment and Housing

Date:

Subject: Sanctuary Scheme

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1 The Sanctuary scheme involves the provision of a tailored package of security measures to create a 'safer' living environment for people who have experienced domestic violence, harassment and other forms of 'hate crime'. The scheme helps people to continue to live in their existing homes and is therefore a key element of the Council's strategy to maximise homeless prevention opportunities. The Sanctuary scheme started in October 2006. Approximately 350 households accept a Sanctuary offer every year.

2 Leeds City Council has a contract with Safe Partnerships to supply and install the security measures with this contract expiring at the end of September 2014. In accordance with CPR 3.1.4, it is proposed that the Council's Direct Labour Organisation (DLO), managed by Housing Leeds – Property and Contracts, will take over responsibility to supply and install the Sanctuary scheme security measures from 1 October 2014.

Recommendations

1 To approve the proposal for Housing Leeds – Property and Contracts to take on responsibility to supply and install Sanctuary scheme security measures from 1 October 2014.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To approve the proposal for Housing Leeds – Property and Contracts to take on responsibility to supply and install the Sanctuary scheme security measures from 1 October 2014.

2. Background information

2.1 The Leeds Homelessness Strategy (2012-2015) contains a theme to maximise homeless prevention opportunities. The Council's approach to preventing homelessness is framed around the delivery, either directly or through the commissioning of external organisation, of a range of services and initiatives. These services/initiatives relate to the main reasons for homelessness in the city with domestic violence, neighbourhood harassment and other forms of 'hate crime' being one of the main causes of homelessness.

2.2 The Sanctuary scheme involves the provision of a range of security measures to help create a 'safer' living environment for people who have experienced violence and harassment and want to remain living in their existing home. The scheme represents an alternative to the person leaving their existing homes, moving into temporary accommodation, and waiting until they are permanently re-housed.

2.3 There is no obligation to take up a Sanctuary offer and the Council will take a homeless application/secure temporary accommodation for any person who states that they do not need feel safe in their existing home. The same offer is made for people who take up a Sanctuary offer but subsequently decide that they are not safe remaining in their current homes. Sanctuary scheme recipients are not charged with the security measure cost being fully met by the Council.

2.4 The assessment of scheme suitability is carried out by West Yorkshire Police Safeguarding Officers and Leeds City Council – Leeds Housing Options Service. The police carry out a home visit and agree with the person that a Sanctuary installation is the preferred option and the tailored package of security measures that are required. Council officers approve the application and arrange for the work to be carried out by the approved contractor.

2.5 Safe Partnership Limited was commissioned to deliver the supply and installation service since 1 October 2011: one year contract with an option to extend for a further two years on an annualised basis. The option to extend the contract was invoked in both October 2012 and 2013 with the contract term expiring on 30 September 2014.

2.6 The number of people taking up a Sanctuary installation and the value of payments made to Safe Partnership Limited was as follows:

Period	Number of Cases	Cost
1/10/11 to 30/09/12	392	£116,660.36
1/10/12 to 30/09/13	329	£82,033.78
1/10/13 to 13/08/14	310	£73,952.19

2.7 A capital budget provision of £200k was allocated for each of the last three financial years, including 2014/15, and therefore sufficient funding has been made available to cover the service cost. Unspent budget is carried forward into the capital programme for the following year.

3. Main issues

3.1 The demand for the Sanctuary scheme, with approximately 350 households accepting a Sanctuary offer per year, is evident and it is therefore proposed that the service continues to be provided on an on-going basis. There is no further provision to extend the contract with Safe Partnership beyond the end of September 2014.

3.2 In accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 3.1.4, officers have considered whether there is an Internal Service Provider (ISP) that can deliver the service: 'If there is an ISP set out in the supplier information database who can provide the service the Authorised Officer will consult with and use such provider'.

3.3 Discussions have taken place between Housing Leeds – Strategic Housing (of which Leeds Housing Options is part) and Housing Leeds – Property and Contracts as to whether the latter division can supply and install the Sanctuary security measures.

3.4 Housing Leeds – Property and Contracts has advised that it can do so and therefore the proposal is, from 1 October 2014, for the division to take on responsibility to supply and install Sanctuary packages.

3.5 The most significant positive outcome from the installation service being delivered by an internal provider is that a localised service will speed up the installation process. Housing Leeds – Property and Contracts has committed to delivering the installation targets of contacting the prospective customer within 24 hours, installing standard Sanctuary packages within a further 24 hours and bespoke installations within 7 working days. The operational arrangements of Safe Partnerships, with an installation officer covering a broader geographical area than Leeds, means that installations in Leeds are carried out on a block basis at a specific point in the week. This sometimes means that the 48 hour turnaround for standard installations is not made. The move to a localised service, that can deliver the short term target timescales, reflects and will contribute positively to the development of the multi-agency Leeds Domestic Violence Hub.

3.6 A straight line forecast for payments to Safe Partnerships for 1/10/13 to 30/9/14 is £85,150: £73,952 (spend between 1/10/13 and 13/8/14)/317 days*365 days. It is forecast that the annual cost of House Leeds delivering the service will be £98,500. The additional cost of £13,350 needs to be compared to expected improvements in service delivery timescales. There is an annual budget of £200k to deliver the Sanctuary scheme.

3.7 Metalwork installations, such as door grilles, will be sourced by Property and Contracts through Civic Enterprise Leeds which has a specialist metalwork service.

3.8 Safe Partnerships has been notified in writing that the Council does not intend to re-tender the Sanctuary installation, once the current contract expires, and that an internal service provider will deliver the service from 1 October 2014. Safe Partnerships has

confirmed that TUPE will not apply to any employee of the organisation as no installation officer solely covers the Leeds area.

4. Corporate Considerations

4.1. Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1. Discussions have taken place with Safe Partnerships to advise that the Sanctuary installation service will not be re-tendered once the current contract arrangement expires on 30 September 2014.

4.2. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1. The proposal affirms the Council's commitment to helping people who have experienced domestic violence/harassment/hate crime to remain 'safely' in their own homes. It is believed that the option of remaining in an existing home will be enhanced given the expected improvement in installation turnaround times.

4.3. Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1. The Sanctuary scheme contributes to the Leeds City Priority Plan priorities of 'helping children to live in safe and supportive families' and 'support more people to live safely in their own homes'

4.4. Resources and value for money

4.4.1. There is an on-going need to deliver the Sanctuary scheme.

4.4.2. The anticipated annual service cost of £98,500 is affordable.

4.5. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1. Leeds City Council has a legal duty to provide a housing advice service to any person who requires it. The Sanctuary scheme makes an important contribution to fulfilling this duty.

4.5.2. The report contains no exempt information.

4.5.3. The proposals set out in this report are not subject to call in.

4.6. Risk Management

4.6.1. None identified.

5. Conclusion

5.1. The Sanctuary scheme is a key element of Leeds City Council's homeless prevention programme. The maintenance of the service will mean that approximately 350 households will be helped to remain 'safely' in their existing

homes. The proposal for Housing Leeds – Property and Contracts is affordable and will generate improvements in respect of installation delivery times.

6. Recommendation

6.1 To approve the proposal for Housing Leeds – Property and Contracts to take on responsibility to supply and install the Sanctuary scheme security measures from 1 October 2014.

7. Background Information

7.1 None.