

**Report of Head of Commissioning, Adults and Health**

**Report to Director of Resources and Housing**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

**Subject: Flexible Homeless Support Grant – targeted support for people who are rough sleeping and begging. Request for approval to waive Contracts Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 and 9.1 and 9.2 respectively, using the authority set out in CPR 1.3, to enter into contracts with Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community (DISC), and Change Grow Live (CGL) for the period up to end of March 2019.**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, 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. A review of housing related support has taken place over the last two years and new services have been commissioned. The new model for housing related support includes visiting support and accommodation services.
2. An opportunity has arisen to also fund some additional targeted work with people who are rough sleeping or begging, as a result of an increase in funding to the Council from DCLG for homelessness in the form of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.
3. This report recommends that funding should be allocated to DISC and CGL to strengthen the work of the Street Outreach team and Forward Leeds.

## **Recommendations**

The Director of Resources and Housing is recommended to:-

1. Waive Contracts Procedure Rule 9.1 and 9.2 using the authority set out in CPR 1.3, to enter into a short term contract of up to £72k p.a. with CGL to employ two workers from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 (maximum cost £114k).
2. Waive Contracts Procedure Rule 8.1 and 8.2 using the authority set out in CPR 1.3, to enter into a short term contract of up to £40k p.a. with Disc to employ an additional worker at Forward Leeds from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 (maximum cost £64k).
3. Agree to receive performance reports on a quarterly basis outlining activity undertaken and outcomes achieved.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 Supporting people who are rough sleeping and begging is a priority for the Council. A new model for housing related support services has been put in place following an extensive review. This includes a number of new services and the retention of key services such as St George's Crypt Overnight service and the Street Outreach Service.
- 1.2 There is an opportunity to fund additional targeted activity from the Flexible Homeless Support Grant (FHSG). The purpose of this report is to set out proposals for how some of this resource could be utilised and to seek authority from the Director of Resources and Housing to put contracts in place with DISC and CGL.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 A report to Cabinet and CLT in March 2017 provided an overview of the incidence of rough sleeping and begging in the city and the challenges associated with tackling this issue and encouraging the take up of support. Numbers of people rough sleeping has increased substantially nationally and although numbers in Leeds are lower than comparable cities, they have risen. The majority of affected people sleep rough on an irregular and infrequent basis, but there is a smaller cohort of people (approximately 10 people) who sleep rough on a regular basis.
- 2.2 9 out of the 10 entrenched rough sleepers found in the early part of this year were in their 30's and 40's, all have a history of and current dependency on drugs and alcohol and/ or mental health issues. All repeatedly refuse emergency accommodation options.
- 2.3 Like many other cities, Leeds has seen an increase in the numbers of people begging. Many people who beg are vulnerable individuals, affected by their life experiences and/ or circumstances. The reasons why they beg are often very complex, and can be compounded by a range of mental and physical ill health issues and challenging behaviours, all of which can be real barriers to engaging with services.
- 2.4 Leeds has a number of commissioned services that are specifically targeted towards supporting people who are vulnerable and have complex needs. These include Forward Leeds, Street Outreach, Engage and Beacon. There is close partnership working with statutory agencies and with other services such as WYFi.
- 2.5 A workshop to look at the needs of people who are rough sleeping and begging was held at the end of April 2017. It was attended by all relevant stakeholders in the city including Housing Options, Street Outreach, Forward Leeds, Police, Safer Leeds, Adult Social Care and the NHS. The purpose of the workshop was to reflect on the support that is currently available and what more we could do as a city. Proposals that came out of this included more targeted outreach work, coordinating case conferencing arrangements and facilitating fast access to key support services.

## **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 It is expected that the revised accommodation offer through Beacon (one of the new housing related support services) will be more attractive to people who are rough sleeping and begging. However in order to ensure that opportunities to engage people who are rough sleeping and begging are maximised it is proposed that some of the resource from the FHSG is used to fund additional targeted staffing resource.

- 3.2 Three workers will be appointed, two with the Street Outreach team and one worker with Forward Leeds. As the agencies concerned are already delivering directly related services and have the necessary infrastructure, they are considered uniquely placed and suitably experienced to do this work. Putting workers with Street Outreach will mean that the work can be delivered alongside the other assertive outreach and the workers will benefit from the knowledge, experience and contacts made during outreach with the client group. Placing a worker with DISC at Forward Leeds will mean they are integrated with the wider Forward Leeds service and will be best placed to navigate service users to relevant parts of Forward Leeds and to work directly with management and staff to influence service changes in response to the needs of clients.
- 3.3 One of the workers at Street Outreach will specifically work on supporting tenants housed via the virtual lettings panel or who have been rough sleeping longer term. The virtual lettings panel is a pilot initiative, based on the principles of the Housing First model. Housing management officers will identify suitable housing offers for complex clients who have been found sleeping rough at least 5 times over the last year, based on information about the person's history/ support needs. The scheme will be open to people with vulnerabilities which would impact on their capacity to secure and sustain a tenancy but who, with the right amount of support could sustain a tenancy. Long term tenancies will be a mix of Council tenancies and private rented tenancies. The tenancies will be furnished and this will include white goods. There will also be damage liability provision which will include damage and loss of rent. The contract will include funding for a new worker to be based with the Street Outreach team who will ensure that clients receive pre-tenancy support, are assisted to move in to the property and receive ongoing support until they are settled. As tenants will have had sustained periods of rough sleeping and will have complex and multiple needs it is expected that regular and intensive support will be required. Longer term support, if required, would be provided by Engage Leeds.
- 3.4 The other worker at Street Outreach will be an additional outreach worker. An outreach worker/ complex client worker will also be employed by DISC to be based with Forward Leeds. The two workers will specifically target people who have been rough sleeping longer term and people who are begging. The workers would be available to work anti-social hours and would deliver additional outreach sessions and offers of support. Their role will be to engage with complex clients and to encourage them to take up support.
- 3.5 A list of individuals who would form the caseload for these workers would be drawn up under existing information sharing protocols. The list would be updated on a regular basis and would form the basis of quarterly reports to the commissioning team. The workers would provide additional offers of support to clients and more frequent contact. It is known that success and engagement comes from having frequent contact and building up trust. Both workers would secure priority access to key services including Forward Leeds for clients so that immediate / quick access to services is secured. The workers would work closely with the Police, Leeds Housing Options, WYFi and other relevant services.
- 3.6 The contracts will add value to and work within pathways to current services. A number of other improvements will be made. A more coordinated approach to support – a list of those found on rough sleeping and begging sweeps and identification of a key worker for each facilitated by improved information sharing protocols. Discussion will take place at the monthly meetings of the Multi Agency

Review Board (MARB) which is considered to be an efficient way of coordinating partnership working.

- 3.7 Outcomes anticipated from this additional work will include individuals moving into supported or more permanent accommodation; engagement with drug and alcohol and health services and improved health and wellbeing.
- 3.8 It is suggested that contracts are for the period up to the end of March 2019. The contract with DISC will be for up to £40k p.a. The contract with CGL will be for up to £72k p.a. The amount for 2017/18 will be paid pro rata depending on the start date for the workers. It is anticipated that this will be as soon as possible after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

#### **4. Corporate considerations**

##### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 A street based workshop was held in April and a broad range of stakeholders attended. Discussion took place to determine the additional activity required to address rough sleeping and begging. Notes of the event were circulated to all attendees and actions identified as outlined in this report.
- 4.1.2 The Executive Member Communities has been consulted regarding the proposals outlined in this report.

##### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 Additional workers to support this vulnerable client group will mean that extra help and support will be provided. The workers will encourage service users to engage with the Forward Leeds drug and alcohol treatment service, housing related support services and others as relevant.
- 4.2.2 People who are rough sleeping and begging may be vulnerable and at risk of abuse or may present safeguarding risks to others in the city. Additional support will reduce risk to all concerned.
- 4.2.3 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening tool has been completed and is included as background information to this report. This indicates that a full assessment is not required as putting in place the contracts suggested will not impact negatively on service users, staff or other stakeholders.

##### **4.3 Council policies and best council plan**

- 4.3.1 The posts funded will contribute to the work outlined in the 'Responding to Begging Strategic Plan', in particular the support management element i.e. focus on direct interventions and restorative support packages for individuals. The work also contributes to the Housing Strategy particularly the outcomes related to reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 4.3.2 The work proposed supports the Council's ambition for Leeds to be a compassionate and caring city by helping to reduce rough sleeping and begging and the negative impacts of this across the City. It also supports the 'Vision for Leeds 2011-2030' and the delivery of wider outcomes relating to community safety, health and well-being, social inclusion and employment and training.

- 4.3.3 The extra support provided is in line with the Best Council plan ‘tackling poverty and reducing inequalities’.
- 4.3.4 The services will also make a contribution to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016-2021) in terms of helping to ensure that ‘people will live in healthy, safe and sustainable communities’.
- 4.3.5 These services also contribute to priorities within the Leeds Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2016-2018 by delivering health promotion and helping to increase the number of successful completions from drug and alcohol treatment programmes to support recovery.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The costs of the two contracts will be met by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant. This grant has been injected into the Resources and Housing revenue budget.
- 4.4.2 The funding is for posts including management costs and on costs. Salaries for posts funded are in line with other similar posts. Payment will be based on actual costs based on submission of financial returns and will not exceed the contract value.
- 4.4.3 Performance monitoring processes will be put in place by the Adults and Health Commissioning Team to ensure value for money and quality of delivery for the duration of the contracts.

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 4.5.1 These are Significant Operational Decisions and are not subject to Call In. There are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential under the Council’s Access to Information Rules.
- 4.5.2 The contracts are being awarded to CGL and DISC as the agencies are uniquely placed to deliver the services. The grant which is providing the funding is available immediately and there is a target to spend funds within each financial year. As the agencies concerned are already delivering directly related services and have the necessary infrastructure, they are considered uniquely placed and suitably experienced to do this work. Putting workers with Street Outreach will mean that the work can be delivered alongside the other assertive outreach and the workers will benefit from the knowledge, experience and contacts made during outreach with the client group. Placing a worker with DISC at Forward Leeds will mean they are integrated with the wider Forward Leeds service and will be best placed to navigate service users to relevant parts of Forward Leeds and to work directly with Forward Leeds management and staff to influence service changes in response to the needs of clients.
- 4.5.3 Awarding the new contracts direct to CGL and DISC in this way could leave the Council open to a potential claim from other providers, to whom this contract could be of interest, that it has not been wholly transparent. In terms of transparency it should be noted that case law suggests that the Council should always consider whether contracts of this value could be of interest to contractors on other EU member states and, if it could, the opportunity should be subject to a degree of European wide advertising. It is up to the Council to decide what degree of advertising would be appropriate. In particular, consideration should be given to the

subject-matter of the contract, its estimated value, the specifics of the sector concerned (size and structure of the market, commercial practices, etc.) and the geographical location of the place of performance.

- 4.5.4 The Director of Resources and Housing has considered this and, due to the nature of the services being delivered, the relatively low contract value and the requirement to be physically located in Leeds, is of the view that the scope and nature of the services is such that it would not be of interest to providers in other EU member states.
- 4.5.5 There is a risk of an ombudsman investigation arising from a complaint that the Council has not followed reasonable procedures, resulting in a loss of opportunity. Obviously, the complainant would have to establish maladministration. It is not considered that such an investigation would necessarily result in a finding of maladministration however such investigations are by their nature more subjective than legal proceedings.
- 4.5.6 Although there is no over-riding legal obstacle to preventing the waiver of CPR 8.1 and 8.2 and 9.1 and 9.2 by putting in place these contracts, the contents of this report should be noted. In making the final decision, the Director of Resources and Housing should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents best value for money.

## **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 A risk plan will be produced for the two contracts. This will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- 4.6.2 Risk management will be built into the contract and both CGL and DISC have experience and skills to manage risks of working with this vulnerable client group including managing lone working and aggressive and volatile behaviour.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 There is an increasing number of people rough sleeping and begging nationally and in Leeds. Some people have entrenched and complex issues and do not engage with offers of assistance. Additional resource will mean that additional outreach can take place and a specialist complex worker team made up of two workers at Street Outreach and one at Forward Leeds will work specifically with this client group.
- 5.2 One of the workers at Street Outreach will also support people rehoused as part of the new Choice Based Lettings scheme.
- 5.3 The workers will secure 'priority access' to core services, identify key contacts, coordinate a list of individuals and lead discussion regarding individuals at the Multi Agency Review Board (MARB).
- 5.4 Contracts will run to the end of March 2019.

## **6. Recommendations**

The Director of Resources and Housing is recommended to:-

1. Waive Contracts Procedure Rule 9.1 and 9.2 using the authority set out in CPR 1.3, to enter into a short term contract of up to £72k p.a. with CGL to employ two workers from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 (maximum cost £114k).
2. Waive Contracts Procedure Rule 8.1 and 8.2 using the authority set out in CPR 1.3, to enter into a short term contract of up to £40k p.a. with Disc to employ an additional worker at Forward Leeds from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 (maximum cost £64k).
3. Agree to receive performance reports on a quarterly basis outlining activity undertaken and outcomes achieved.

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening tool (please see attached).

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.