

Report of Head of Housing Support

Report to Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Date: 14 May 2012

Subject: Rough Sleeper ‘Hub’ at St George’s Crypt and Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator post managed by CRI

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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 government has made a commitment, set out in its ‘No Second Night Out’ strategy, to minimise the incidence of rough sleeping. Leeds City Council is committed to the same aim and wants to minimise overall rough sleeping.
2. In order to achieve this aim it is proposed that in Leeds a rough sleeping ‘hub’ is established at St George’s Crypt. The hub will be an accommodation facility at the Crypt where rough sleepers can be taken, by CRI, Council, or the police, and can be accommodated for up to 72 hours with the appropriate agencies having this time to find a housing option for the rough sleeper. The hub will be an integral part of a wider approach to minimising rough sleeping. This approach will be co-ordinated by CRI, a third sector organisation commissioned by the Council to deliver an assertive outreach service for rough sleepers, and it is proposed to fund CRI to deliver the co-ordination role.

Recommendations

3. Award St George’s Crypt a non-recurring payment of £30k to establish a Hub for rough sleepers. Award CRI £30k to co-ordinate and implement the city’s strategy in relation to minimising rough sleeping in the city.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.** To seek approval to waive Contracts' Procedure Rule 12.1 and award St George's Crypt payment of £30k to establish a Hub for rough sleepers, and to make a payment of £30k to CRI to implement Leeds' strategy in relation to rough sleeping. The value of the payments are £60k combined.

2. Background Information

- 2.1.** Rough sleeping is defined as people sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes"). Rough sleeping is the most overt and acute form of homelessness and the Leeds Homelessness Strategy 2010-12 includes a theme to minimise the incidence of rough sleeping in the city. In July 2011, the government published its national strategy for reducing the incidence of rough sleeping: 'No Second Night Out'. The central aim of the strategy is that no person should need to sleep more than one night on the streets. Local authorities, and local rough sleeping stakeholders, should be geared up so that rough sleepers can be identified and housing options put in place as swiftly as possible. Leeds City Council is committed to achieving the 'No Second Night Out' aim. As well as achieving this aim relating to 'new' rough sleepers, Leeds City Council is also committed to minimising 'long-term' rough sleepers and reducing the number of 'repeat' rough sleepers.
- 2.2.** The Leeds Supporting People programme commissions CRI to deliver an assertive street outreach service. The purpose of this service is to engage with people who are sleeping rough, or who are at risk of sleeping rough, and help them secure or maintain suitable housing options. CRI are currently contracted by the Council until 31/03/2013 to deliver the assertive outreach service.
- 2.3.** Assertive outreach centres around regular and persistent contact with rough sleepers, allied to a customer centred ethos, to ultimately find housing options to get and keep people off the street. CRI carry out, in conjunction with the police, thrice weekly street sweeps to identify people who are sleeping rough in the city. The government requires that local authorities submit a figure, based upon a formal headcount or robust estimate, on the number of people who are sleeping rough in the city.
- 2.4.** Headcounts were carried out, by staff from CRI and the Council, in the early morning of 16 October and 25 November 2011. 11 rough sleepers were identified on each count. The combination of these counts, and the thrice weekly street sweeps, means that the Council can be confident that this figure is accurate. The 11 rough sleepers can be generally, but not exclusively, categorised as being destitute foreign nationals, people with acute mental health issues and those whose dysfunctional behaviour, often alcohol or drug related, has meant that they are banned from temporary accommodation services.

2.5. The number of rough sleepers in Leeds has been reduced from 50 to 11 in the last three years and this can be primarily attributed to the Council's investment and the success of the assertive outreach model.

3. Main Issues

3.1. It is intended to establish a hub for rough sleepers in Leeds. The hub will be based at St George's Crypt, and will be an accommodation facility at the Crypt where rough sleepers can be taken, by CRI, Council, or the police, and can be accommodated for up to 72 hours with the appropriate agencies having this time to find a housing option for the rough sleeper.

3.2. It is intended to award CRI additional funding of £30k to co-ordinate the city's strategy for minimising rough sleeping. This will include co-ordination relating to use of the new hub at St George's Crypt and management of the assertive outreach model. The Council is hopeful that a share of CLG West Yorkshire funding can be used to increase the number of street sweeps from 3 to 6 per week. However, this will be covered in a future proposal.

3.3. It is proposed that a waiver is given to Contracts' Procedure Rule 12.1 so that the funding award does not need to be subject to competitive tender. In relation to the hub, St George's Crypt is an organization that has been working with rough sleepers in the city of Leeds for more than 70 years. It is doubtful that another organization is capable of delivering a hub for rough sleepers in the city.

3.4. The co-ordination of the city's strategy for minimising rough sleeping is intrinsically linked to the assertive outreach service. CRI are already commissioned to deliver the assertive street outreach service in Leeds. The contract to deliver the assertive street outreach service was secured by CRI following a competitive tender exercise. Given the partnering relationships developed by CRI, then it is doubtful that another organisation could immediately maintain the service offer if the service was transferred from CRI. Additionally, the Reconnections Service in Leeds is interlinked with the assertive street outreach service that CRI are commissioned to deliver. The assertive outreach service find and initially engage with rough sleepers and, if they are foreign nationals, the Reconnections service offer is activated.

3.5. It is intended that the contract for co-ordinating the approach to rough sleeping by CRI will be contract managed by the Leeds Supporting Team alongside the contract management of the assertive street outreach service.

4. Corporate Considerations

4.1. Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1. Consultation has been carried out with the police and the fire service, key partners in tackling rough sleeping, and both are supportive of the proposals.

4.2. Equality and Diversity/Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1. An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening exercise has been carried out. This has affirmed that equality, diversity, cohesion and integration issues have been effectively considered. The service caters for rough sleepers, many of which have a range of support needs, who would otherwise be left destitute on the streets of West Yorkshire.

4.3. Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1. The Leeds Homelessness Strategy includes a theme to minimise the incidence of rough sleeping in the city. Reducing the incidence of rough sleeping reflects two of the aims of the Vision for Leeds: 'Leeds will be fair, open and welcoming' and 'All Leeds communities will be successful'. Reducing the incidence of rough sleeping will contribute to the 'Safer and Stronger Communities' Plan priority around 'reducing crime and anti-social behaviour' as rough sleepers are often involved in such activity.

4.4. Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1. The £60k cost of the proposals is sourced through the Homelessness Grant and therefore resources are available to fund the service.

4.4.2. It is intended that organisations allocated funding will be contract managed through the Supporting People Team sitting within the Strategy and Commissioning Division of the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate. The Council will use standard practice used in the Supporting People contract management process to ensure that value for money is being achieved with allocated funding.

4.5. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1. There is no legal requirement to eradicate rough sleeping and the authority has no housing duty to re-house rough sleepers, unless they fulfil criteria laid out in the Housing Act 1996. The government has published its national strategy, 'No Second Night Out', setting out a commitment to minimising the incidence of rough sleeping. The Leeds Homelessness Strategy includes a theme to minimise the incidence of rough sleeping in the city.

4.5.2. This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

4.6. Risk Management

4.6.1. Officers from E&N Finance Services have been briefed on the proposals set out in this report.

4.6.2. Any funding allocated to external organisations will be contract managed through the Supporting People programme.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Leeds City Council is committed to minimising rough sleeping. The hub at St George's Crypt and extension of the assertive outreach service are vital to these plans. There is strong argument to waive the requirement to commence a competitive tender exercise because of the established position of St George's Crypt in relation to working with rough sleepers and the link with the assertive outreach service provided by CRI.

6. Recommendations

6.1. Waive Contracts' Procedure Rule 12.1 and award a payment of £30k to St George's Crypt to establish a Hub for rough sleepers in the city of Leeds and give CRI £30k to deliver the co-ordinating role for the city's strategy to minimise rough sleeping.

7. Background documents¹

7.1. None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.