

**Report of Head of Housing Support**

**Report to Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods**

**Date: 14 May 2012**

**Subject: Central and Eastern European Prisons Pilot**

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 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 government has made a commitment, set out in its 'No Second Night Out' strategy, to ensure that no new rough sleeper sleeps out more than one night. Leeds City Council is committed to the same aim and wants to minimise overall rough sleeping.
2. Leeds has reduced rough sleeping from 50 to 11. It is therefore successful at helping people at the point when they are already on the street and this success can be attributed to an assertive outreach approach. 70% of rough sleepers in Leeds are *new* rough sleepers: Leeds wishes to expand the existing assertive outreach model into prisons and police cells so that likely rough sleepers can be identified and various measures explored so that they do not sleep rough upon release.
3. Many rough sleepers in Leeds are destitute central and eastern European nationals who are often involved in criminal behaviour. A significant number of such individuals are processed through police custody suites and local prisons. The Council has developed the Reconnections Service, which operates across West Yorkshire, in partnership with CRI, to help such people to return to their country of origin if that is their choice.

4. To supplement the Reconnections Service, the CLG has given Leeds £100k to develop (with local prisons and the police) a Prisons Pilot, to reduce offending amongst Central and Eastern European nationals.

### **Recommendations**

5. Award CRI a one year contract, commencing on 1 June 2012, to deliver the Central and Eastern European Prisons Pilot at a cost of £90k

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. To seek approval to waive Contracts' Procedure Rule 12.1 and award a one year contract, commencing on 1 June 2012, to CRI to deliver the Central and Eastern European Prisons Pilot. The value of the one year contract is £90k, which is sourced from the £100k given to Leeds City Council by CLG, to develop a Central and Eastern European Prisons Pilot.

## 2. Background Information

2.1. 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.

2.2. The 'No Second Night Out' strategy is not prescriptive on how local authorities should minimise rough sleeping; rather local authorities, and other local stakeholders, should apply their local knowledge and services to tailor solutions that are needed in each area.

2.3. The Leeds Supporting People programme commissions CRI to deliver an assertive street outreach service. The principal purpose of the service is to help rough sleepers, or those at risk of rough sleeping, to secure/maintain suitable housing options. The service works in close partnership with other SP commissioned accommodation services, Statutory Housing Services and Strategy and Commissioning. CRI carry out thrice weekly street sweeps, with the police, to identify rough sleepers in the city centre. The government also requires local authorities to carry out a rough sleeper headcount every winter to identify the number of rough sleepers in each authority.

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. CRI, as part of the assertive outreach service, also provides the West Yorkshire Reconnections Service. In law, the Council has no duty to accommodate EU nationals who have 'no recourse to public funds' because they are not deemed to be exercising their rights as 'workers'. Leeds has seen an increase over the last three years of destitute central/eastern European nationals who are sleeping rough in the city. Such individuals often resort to crime or use acute health services in order to address their destitute situation. CRI's contact with such individuals highlighted that many wanted to return home but did not have the documentation or

funds to do so. The Reconnections Service helps people to secure travel documentation, through the establishment of relationships with national embassies and consulates, and the Council's Homeless Prevention Fund covers the cost of transport. Since October 2009, 110 people have been reconnected to their country of origin; with only one person subsequently returning to sleep rough in Leeds. The cost of reconnection is a fraction of the cost of people remaining sleeping rough in the UK and being processed through the criminal justice system and/or using acute health services. The Reconnections Service has been highlighted by government as an example of good practice and the model is being adopted by many other authorities.

2.6. Assertive outreach is viewed as the most effective working style when tackling rough sleeping: it involves regular and persistent contact, a client-centred and personalised approach, but is under-pinned by the belief that rough sleeping is harmful, and indicative of wider issues around need or a lack of entitlement.

2.7. The number of rough sleepers in Leeds has been reduced from 50 to 11: assertive outreach combined with the Reconnections service has been a key factor in Leeds' success in tackling rough sleeping. It is envisaged that rolling out this assertive outreach approach (incorporating the Reconnections initiative) into prisons and police cells will prevent a number of people from having to sleep rough for the first time and further minimise the number of long term and repeat rough sleepers.

### **3. Main Issues**

3.1. CLG has allocated £100k to Leeds to work with Police and Probation to reduce offending amongst Central and Eastern Europeans.

3.2. It is intended to award a one year contract to CRI commencing 1 June 2012 to deliver the Prisons Pilot, a scheme whereby they will visit, advise and assist prisoners who have been identified as being at risk of rough sleeping on their release. All appropriate measures will be considered in finding ways to ensure that the prisoner does not sleep rough upon release. A key area will be to identify any Central and Eastern European prisoners who would like to return home but do not have the means to do so: to date, no Central and Eastern European national in HMP Leeds has been reconnected via the Reconnections service.

3.3. It is proposed that a waiver is given to Contracts' Procedure Rule 12.1 so that the contract award does not need to be subject to competitive tender. Having successfully applied an Assertive Outreach approach to reducing rough sleeping in Leeds by 80% as well as co-ordinating the Reconnections service to date, it is doubtful that another organisation is as immediately equipped to implement the Prisons Pilot. Furthermore, the CLG has indicated that they wish CRI to deliver the service given its track record in Leeds.

### **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 for this preliminary report on the use of funding to tackle reducing offending by Central and Eastern European nationals.

#### **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 £90k funding for the pilot is sourced from CLG funding and therefore resources are available.

#### **4.5. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1. There is no legal requirement for local authorities to eradicate rough sleeping. The 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the 2002 Homelessness Act) requires local authorities to provide housing advice to any person who requires it. Local authorities are also required to secure suitable temporary accommodation for people who meet certain criteria: homeless and have a priority need for re-housing.

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 .

### **5. Conclusions**

5.1. The funding allocation represents an opportunity for Leeds City Council, and local stakeholders, to reduce offending among Central and Eastern European nationals and minimise rough sleeping in the city.

### **6. Recommendations**

6.1. Waive Contracts' Procedure Rule 12.1 and award a payment of £90k to CRI to develop and implement a Central and Eastern European Prisons Pilot

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

7.1. CRI proposal report. .

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<sup>1</sup> 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.