

Rough Sleeping Initiative (2022-25) - grant from Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Date: 10th June 2022

Report of: Head of Commissioning (Housing Related Support and Public Health)

Report to: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- Under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has invited bids for Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding. Leeds City Council has submitted a bid for £4,045,811 for three years from 1st April 2022- 31st March 2025 which is subject to approval from DLUHC (formal announcement is imminent). The grant will cover revenue expenditure for a variety of interventions which will assist the city to deliver its ambitions to reduce the numbers of people who are rough sleeping and to deliver positive outcomes. In order to ensure there is continuity of services for Q2 2022, this report sets out the intention for how the grant will be allocated and seeks authority from the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment to accept the grant once awarded and to proceed with those proposals.
- The proposals in this report directly contribute to the Best Council Plan's overarching vision of tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. It addresses the Best Council Plan's priority of keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable, minimising homelessness and reducing health inequalities.

Recommendations

- a) accept the grant allocation of £4,045,811 subject to approval from DLUHC (formal announcement expected imminently)
- b) award grant funding to a number of external organisations who are currently providing support to Leeds City Council to continue to enhance the support for people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping and/ or homeless in Leeds. The amounts shown are for the 3 year period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025 unless otherwise stated. Governance was approved for quarter 1 2022 and grant agreements issued. New grant agreements will be issued for quarter 2 onwards.

- (i) Approve a grant allocation of £701,783.38 to St George's Crypt to support the continuation of use of the 9-bed supported accommodation, to provide additional temporary supported accommodation from 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2025.
 - (ii) Approve a grant allocation of up to £764,166.00 to St George's Crypt to support the continuation of use of the use of the 24-bed emergency supported accommodation from 1st April 2022 – 30th September 2023.
 - (iii) Accept a grant allocation of £150,000 for a flexible emergency fund which has been awarded for bespoke homelessness support and accommodation for 18 months from 1st October 2023 – 31st March 2025. As this funding is for flexible use in year two of the award, a significant operational decision report will be submitted once the exact use for the funding has been determined.
 - (iv) Approve a grant allocation of £756,288.00 to St Annes for the Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub for 12 units of self-contained accommodation and 2 emergency beds for females rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025.
 - (v) Approve a grant allocation of £520,475.00 to Change, Grow, Live (CGL) for 4 Assertive Street Outreach workers from 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2025.
 - (vi) Approve a grant allocation of £658,766.40 to Barca from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025 for 5 Housing Navigators.
 - (vii) Approve a grant allocation of £140,475.42 to Barca from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025 for 1 Housing Navigator (Team Leader).
 - (viii) Approve a grant allocation of £105,584.00 to Turning Lives Around from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025 for an Outreach and Support Worker (Placement and Move on) in the Beacon service.
 - (ix) Approve a grant allocation of £40,770.00 to Turning Lives Around from 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2023 for a Dispersed Property Housing Support Worker in the Beacon service.
- c) distribute funding to the following internal services at Leeds City Council to improve the services for people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping and/ or homeless in Leeds:
- (x) Approve an allocation of £47,352.00 from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 to Community Safety Services, Leeds City Council for an ASB Link Officer.
 - (xi) Approve an allocation of £47,352.00 from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 to Community Safety Services, Leeds City Council for an ASB Patrol Officer.
 - (xii) Approve an allocation of £66,818.00 from 1st July 2022 to 30th September 2023 to Adult Social Care, Leeds City Council for a Street Based Social Worker.
 - (xiii) Approve an allocation of £45,981 from 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2023 to Community Safety Services, Leeds City Council for Street Support Cohort Coordinator.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- The government published its national Rough Sleeper Strategy in August 2018. The national strategy includes the targets to halve rough sleeper numbers (from the 2017 baseline) by 2022 and to end rough sleeping by 2027.
- RSI Funding has been provided since 2018 by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to provide support and accommodation. Rough sleeping remains a priority for the Government and Leeds City Council therefore further grant funding has been applied for from DLUHC for 2022-25 to enhance and continue accommodation and support.
- As part of the bidding process for the RSI funding, Leeds submitted a Rough Sleeping self-assessment with set objectives on how the funding will be utilised. The objectives of the self-assessment are:
 - To identify the interventions, we have in place that are working and we want to build on.
 - To identify the interventions we want to improve on to help the City achieve the vision of ending rough sleeping.
 - To help DLUHC make informed decision on the bid submitted that outlines the design of the City's future prevention, intervention and recovery pathways.
- The delivery of the proposed accommodation and specific workers identified in this report directly contributes to the Council's response to preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping. Furthermore, this funding will help to aide people's recovery, build positive lives, and prevent people from returning to rough sleeping. This is part of an Ending Rough Sleeping Strategy that has been produced with partners from the Silver Street Support Partnership.
- The services detailed below will be grant funded from the RSI grant to enable the specialist support to continue:
 - The RSI funding proposed for 2022 to 2025 will provide a continuation of service for the Street Outreach Workers funded by previous RSI grants to provide support for those people at risk of rough sleeping or begging. CGL employ Assertive Outreach Workers. The work of the Assertive Outreach Workers is a key part of the Council's response to homelessness and rough sleeping. It means that early contact can be made with some of the most vulnerable people living in Leeds. The aim is to offer outreach support to enable people to take up offers of accommodation and to aide a person's recovery, rebuild their life, and prevents returning to rough sleeping. The posts will allow the continuation of the multi-agency work with the Police, Leeds Housing Options, Forward Leeds, and other relevant services to provide support and accommodation for some of the most vulnerable people in Leeds.
 - The RSI funding proposed for 2022 to 2025 will provide a continuation of the Placement and Move on Worker for a full 3 years and Dispersed Property Housing Support Worker for 18 months until September 2023 within the Beacon Service. Beacon is the main commissioned accommodation service offering support for up to 240 clients. These roles bridge the gap between the on-street outreach work and supported accommodation. They significantly increase the assessment capacity and flexibility of the service. The post-holders have a remit to undertake assessments on the streets in an assertive manner that supports long-term and effective relationship building, and which facilitates improved engagement with the service. This engagement is often the catalyst for clients choosing to accept a Beacon tenancy and has been shown to increase sustainability of tenure. The posts mean that people who are found rough sleeping can be offered accommodation and support as part of an established housing pathway. The workers help to support someone away from rough sleeping and into accommodation. The

posts help to identify suitable accommodation in Beacon and to ensure that the person housed has the wrap around support they need to sustain their accommodation. The Dispersed Worker will be allocated to deliver intensive support to clients placed in extra Beacon accommodation added to the main provision specifically for individuals living a street-based lifestyle or those who have recently left the streets and are living in emergency accommodation.

- The RSI funding proposed for 2022 to 2025 will provide a continuation of the Navigators employed by Barca. They work intensively with a small caseload of clients who are often reluctant to engage with services. They help to support someone away from rough sleeping and into accommodation. The Navigator is involved at all stages in the move away from the street including if the person is placed in emergency accommodation or returns to an existing tenancy. The aim is to offer whatever support someone needs to take up offers of accommodation and to aide a person's recovery, rebuild their life, and prevent a return to rough sleeping.
- The RSI funding proposed for 2022 to 2025 will provide a continuation of the Somewhere Safe to Stay accommodation specifically provided for females. The accommodation can be used flexibly to deliver emergency or longer term stays from 72 hours up to 3 months. The longer-term stay is for residents that require longer term engagement to progress their support and independence.
- The RSI funding proposed for 2022 to 2025 will provide a continuation of a 24 bed self-contained unit of emergency supported accommodation for 18 months up to September 2023, which provides for people who are homeless and at risk of rough sleeping. It will also support continuation of 9 units of supported accommodation for people who have previously been or are at risk of rough sleeping for three years until March 2025. Both units provide additional capacity within the system enabling people to be rehoused in an emergency.
- Clients accommodated in the above services are supported by a multi-agency approach with established agencies providing day support and wrap around support such as St George's Crypt and St Annes. Forward Leeds provides drug and alcohol support, support is also available from the mental health homeless team and health care from Bevan Healthcare.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- The Government published its national rough sleeper strategy in August 2018. The national strategy includes the targets to halve rough sleeper numbers (from the 2017 baseline) by 2022 and to end rough sleeping by 2027.
- Through the Silver partnership Leeds produces an annual Rough Sleeping Action Plan that outlines the strategies we have in place to contribute to preventing single homelessness and ending rough sleeping. This document is signed off by Gold governance and used by DLUHC to track Leeds progress against the agreed objectives.
- The funding will enable the continuation of partnership work to sustain the outreach, safeguarding and accommodation offer and to reduce the number of people rough sleeping in Leeds.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- The proposals have been produced with statutory and third sector partners (both funded and non-funded) who attend Silver Street Support Partnership including the Providers stated. They are supported by the Gold Street Support Board.
- The initiatives suggested for grant support were developed in response to the feedback from people using services during the Covid outbreak and based on an analysis of action required to achieve the city's ambition to reduce the number of people rough sleeping completed as part of the bidding process.
- The Executive Member for Environment and Housing has been consulted and is supportive of the proposals.

What are the resource implications?

- The grant funding is subject to approval from DLUHC and formal announcement is expected imminently. The grant will be paid to Leeds City Council via a ringfenced section 31 grant.
- The activities listed in this report will be fully funded by the grant.
- There are no longer-term resource implications – all providers are aware of the short-term nature of the funding and the proposals in this report can be scaled up or scaled down depending on future funding allocations.

What are the legal implications?

- The value of the grants in total exceeds £500k, for this reason it has been determined that approval is a Key Decision and subject to Call In. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.
- As the Council would be entering into grant arrangements with the organisations stated, the Council will have no contractual control over enforcement of the terms. The only sanction available with grant payments is for the Council to claw-back grant monies unspent or spent on matters for which the grant wasn't provided.
- There is a risk of challenge that a grant payment is not a grant. Legally there is some confusion about when a grant can and cannot be used as there is a fine line between a grant (which is not caught by the procurement rules) and a contract for services (which is caught by the procurement rules). Although no longer directly applicable due to the UK's departure from the European Union the preamble to EU Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU (from which the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 were transposed into English law) is still persuasive and the directive makes it clear at paragraph (4) that "the mere financing, in particular through grants, of an activity, which is frequently linked to the obligation to reimburse the amounts received where they are not used for the purposes intended, does not usually fall within the scope of the public procurement rules".
- As such, unconditional grants are unlikely to meet the definition of a contract as set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015). However, where grants are used with strict qualification criteria and an obligation to pay back money if certain targets are not reached, the position is less straightforward and it is possible that an arrangement referred to as a grant could meet the definition of a contract set out in the PCR 2015 and, if it does, the PCR 2015 may apply. It is therefore extremely important to ensure that, if providing grants, the process followed does not fall within the definition of a "public contract" as set out in PCR 2015 which states –"contracts for pecuniary interest concluded in writing between one or more economic operators and one or more contracting authorities and having as their object the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services."
- Grants may be in breach of subsidy control, but it is unlikely that the grant payments proposed will fall foul of the subsidy control rules.

- Funding from which any grant payment is made must be designated as “grant” money. If the Council wish to make a grant, the money must be in the Communities, Housing and Environment “grant” block. If it is not, it can normally be moved from other blocks in the Council budget into the grant block.
- Awarding the grants to the named organisations in this way could leave the Council open to a potential claim from other providers, to whom this grant could be of interest, that it has not been wholly transparent. However, the risk of this would appear to be low.
- As these agreements are considered grants, they are not subject to the Council’s Contracts Procedure Rules or the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, but good practice and transparency will be observed throughout.
- There is no overriding legal obstacle preventing the award of the grants and the contents of this report should be noted. In making their final decision, the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents best value for the Council.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- All Providers are commissioned services with specialist knowledge in their field. They have received RSI funding for similar purposes for several years.
- The funding proposals listed in this report are being allocated to organisations to deliver additional support to people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. Should the organisations fail to deliver this support then there is a risk that Leeds City Council could have to repay the grant to DLUHC. This will be mitigated by payment in instalments, through robust monitoring by Adults and Health Commissioning Team and through ongoing updates and communication with DLUHC.

Does this proposal support the council’s 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- Supporting individuals to stop rough sleeping and if possible, sustain a tenancy has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing and the community as a whole.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

Consultation took place prior to the bid being submitted with colleagues from Safer Leeds, Silver Group Partnership, Leeds Housing Options and Adults and Health to agree the funding required to continue to provide support and accommodation for the next three years. Ideas for funding have been co-produced with partners.

How will success be measured?

- Leeds City Council is committed to ending rough sleeping and it is key strategic priority for the city. This vision is underpinned by three key approaches: Prevention; Intervention; Recovery with the desired collective outcome being: People ‘move in’ to appropriate and suitable accommodation; People ‘move-on’ by accessing the right support at the right time, to aide their personal recovery and as a result fewer people return / end up on the street and more feel socially connected to their neighbourhood. To achieve this, a rough sleeping action plan is in place that has a suite of indicators to measure success, including:
 - Reduce the number of people ‘at risk’ of rough sleeping
 - Reduce evictions and restrictions from emergency and supported accommodation

- Support people with tenancies back to accommodation if found rough sleeping
- Increase tenancy sustainment beyond 6 months for people with a history of rough sleeping
- Ensure all who need it have a safe place to stay develop and extend choice of accommodation options
- Develop new and improved options for emergency accommodation (self-contained with 24 / 7 support)

There is a governance structure in place to oversee the actions and successes of the multi-agency partnership working together to deliver the action plan. The governance structure is overseen by senior strategic leaders of Leeds City Council.

b) What is the timetable for implementation?

DLUHC approved an allocation of funding for quarter 1 of 22/23 in advance of a funding decision. All activity is in place and the funding will enable activity to be extended once the funding outcome is known and approval is in place from the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment.

c) Appendices

None.

d) Background papers

None

Appendices

Background papers

- 1 Equality Diversity Cohesion Integration Impact Screening