

Approval of the 'Streets to Home service' budget



To:

Mike Todd-Jones, Executive Councillor for Housing, Housing Scrutiny Committee, 20/01/2022

Report by:

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Wards: All

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In a partnership arrangement with Cambridgeshire County Council, the City Council wishes to commission a single service that will assist rough sleepers to quickly move from the streets into accommodation.
- 1.2 The 'streets-to-home' service is expected to commence in April 2022 and will be commissioned by combining funds from the County Council's housing-related support budget with City Council funding formerly made to enable the annual homelessness prevention grant bid round.
- 1.3 The proposed service has been the subject of an open tender exercise which has yet to conclude in the formal appointment of a contractor, but the contract sum has already been determined, including the City Council contribution.
- 1.4 The decision sought is that the City Council may spend its determined contribution as set out in paragraph 3.6 of this report, and that the authority to endorse the award of the contract to the winning bidder is delegated to the Head of Housing.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the City Council financial contribution as set out in paragraph 3.6 of this report.
- 2.2 Delegate to the Head of Housing the authority to endorse the award of the contract to the winning bidder.

3. Background

- 3.1 For many years the Council has awarded grants to agencies and organisations providing services intended to prevent or relieve homelessness.
- 3.2 While we have been able to fund vital, valued and effective services for rough sleepers through the homelessness prevention grant process, we have questioned whether an annual award to a range of individual providers is the best way to deliver a unified, value-for-money service in this increasingly complex area of homelessness and support.
- 3.3 The streets-to-home service brings together in one multi-year contract services formerly provided by several agencies. The service will be funded by pooling those formerly separate grants and combining this with County Council housing-related support funding. The contract will run for an initial three years with the option to extend to five and then seven years. This amounts to a substantial contract sum as set out in 3.6 below.
- 3.4 This change has several advantages, including:
 - The ability of the two councils to better coordinate activity and direct and shape the service we want rather than the services agencies wish to provide.
 - Permitting better coordination of services that have formerly overlapped, avoiding duplication.
 - Being able to plan over the longer term, having particular regard for the government's commitment to eliminate rough sleeping in the life of the current parliament.
 - Giving providers greater surety of financial support, allowing more certainty when investing in staff and facilities.

- 3.5 It is important to note that there is no reduction in direct City Council funding for services for rough sleepers as a result of the streets-to-home service; indeed, there is a small overall increase. (See Financial Implications below). Moreover, the new service incorporates within the contract all the key service elements formerly funded by an annual grant, plus additional elements made possible by the advantages of scale as outlined in 3.4 above.
- 3.6 The value of the contract and the City Council element is as set out below:

	Annual value (£)	Maximum contract value (£)
Cambridge City	371,364	2,599,548
County Council	973,969	6,817,783
Total	1,345,333	9,417,331

Implications

a) Financial Implications

The financial commitment is as set out in paragraph 3.6 above.

As is detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the next report to be considered by this committee (*Homelessness Prevention Grants to Agencies 2022-23 and proposed associated reallocation of funding*), the amount available for individual grants to agencies plus the £371,364 per annum set aside for Streets-to-Home gives a total of £696,364. This contrasts with the smaller sum of £695,770 committed in 2021-22 to the totality of services for rough sleepers.

b) Staffing Implications

None

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

Please see the accompanying EqIA.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

No positive or negative impact identified as the Streets to Home Service reorganises services already in existence.

e) Procurement Implications

An open tender exercise has been conducted on behalf of the two local authorities by Cambridgeshire County Council.

f) Community Safety Implications

None.

4. Consultation and communication considerations

A number of formal and informal consultation exercises have been carried out over the past two years, including discussions with service providers and users; senior and operational officers within each local authority; officers from the department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities, and local authority partners.

Consultation with partners centered around a discussion brief which evolved in the light of discussion. The final iteration of that document is attached as Appendix 1.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Streets to Home discussion paper

6. Inspection of papers

If you have a query on the report please contact James McWilliams, Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice. Tel: 01223 457813. Email: james.mcwilliams@cambridge.gov.uk.