

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	17 JULY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	OUTREACH SERVICE FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS TENDER		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR RICHARD DAVIES	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	BRYONY HALL	TEL:	0118 937 2631
JOB TITLE:	ACTING HOUSING NEEDS MANAGER	E-MAIL:	bryony.hall@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the retender of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers and seeks authorisation to enter into a new contract following the conclusion of the procurement process.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers is to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in Reading. The service provides support to rough sleepers and motivation to engage with offers of help, including drug and alcohol treatment, healthcare and accommodation.
- 1.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out, and this is attached at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Director of Education, Social Services and Housing, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing be authorised delegated authority to award the contract for the provision of an Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers in Reading for a period of three years commencing on the 1st January 2014 and expiring on the 31st December 2016 with an option to extend up to a maximum of three years from 1st January 2017, to the successful tenderer in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 In *No Second Night Out* (June 2011) the Government stressed its commitment to preventing and tackling homelessness. The report encourages Local Authorities to identify new rough sleepers and help them off the streets immediately, so they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle. The Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers is the key agency in Reading for identifying rough sleepers and helping them into accommodation.
- 3.2 Reading Borough Council has shown a strong commitment to reducing rough sleeping numbers in Reading as far as is possible. In November 2011 Cabinet approved proposals for a 'Homelessness Pathway' approach to supporting single homeless

people in Reading from homelessness all the way into independent living. The Homelessness Pathway approach has now been fully implemented and has been very successful in increasing the overall number of bed spaces and integrating services to provide improved outcomes for homeless people. The Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers supports the Homelessness Pathway by identifying and referring rough sleepers into accommodation. This Service has been pivotal in reducing the number of rough sleepers in Reading and has enabled a continued reduction in the number of people sleeping rough despite National trends, showing an overall increase.

3.3 The government announced in September 2012 the continuation of the Preventing Homelessness grant over the next two years.

3.4 In December 2012 a report to the Decision Book set out the decision to extend the current provision of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers for 12 months to December 2013 whilst the procurement exercise was completed.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The current provider, St Mungo Community Housing Association, has delivered the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers in Reading since January 2008. The option for a final contract extension was exercised in January 2013 for 12 months and the contract is due to expire on the 31st December 2013.

5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1 It is proposed that the new contract is awarded for this service in September 2013 on the completion of the tender evaluation process, subject to a decision book report. This course of action will allow the minimum anticipated lead-in period in the event that an alternative provider is appointed. Delegated authority will be required in order to award the contract within the required timeframe for the successful completion of the tender exercise. The contract will commence on the 1st January 2014 and expire on the 31st December 2016, with an option to extend up to a maximum of three years from 1st January 2017, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

5.2 The current contract arrangements are due to expire at the end of December 2013. This is a critical service during the winter months, when the provider coordinates the provision of emergency shelter during any periods of severe weather. It is proposed that a detailed implementation plan will be agreed so that there is no disruption to the service at this vital time. It is anticipated that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) are likely to apply to this contract, in the event that a new service provider is appointed.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 The Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers contributes to the Council's aims to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all. The service will enable rough sleepers into housing and drug and alcohol treatment services, ensuring that they are not socially excluded and are safely housed. Because they are often interrelated, the service will also address other issues related to street based activity, including begging and street drinking.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Service users of the current provider of this service were consulted as part of the wider consultation on the Homelessness Pathway in October 2011. This included people rough sleeping at the time and previous rough sleepers who had been helped into accommodation.

- 7.2 There has been on-going involvement of all key stakeholders in the wider work on the development of services for single homeless people. This has included the development of the Homelessness Pathway and review of accommodation and support services for homeless people.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 *Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—*
- *eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
 - *advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
 - *foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The Equality duty is relevant to this decision. The Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers is a contract retender. Any changes to the service as a result of the retender and a new Service Specification must be assessed so that the impact of the proposed changes can be fully understood.

- 8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix 1. The assessment found that some groups may be affected differently but the impact was assessed to be positive overall.
- 8.3 The Outreach Service will be available and accessible to all rough sleepers and is assessed as having a positive impact. There is one part of the service that is intended to work with a specific group and that is additional activities to support non-UK EEA nationals to assess whether they have the right to benefits and housing in the UK. The service would also liaise with and assist the UK Border Agency to take action against those people who are rough sleeping and do not have the right to reside in the UK. Support is always offered before enforcement action is considered and it is clearly arguable that returning someone to the country where they are eligible for public funds and help with their housing is a more positive outcome than leaving someone homeless in Reading with no eligibility for assistance.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 It will be necessary to enter into a contract with the winning tenderer.
- 9.2 Whilst the current EU and UK procurement regulations do not require health and social services to be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) RBC decided to publish a voluntary contract notice in OJEU (Part B Service) owing to the present threshold values and to ensure full transparency. A two-stage restricted tendering procedure has been applied which is compliant with the EU tendering regime and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 It is estimated that the total annual value of this contract is £192k. The service is to be funded from existing Preventing Homelessness Budgets.

	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000
Employee costs			
Other running costs - payments to service provider			
Capital financings costs			
Expenditure	192,000	192,000	192,000
Income from:			
Fees and charges			
Grant funding (specify)			
Other income			
Total Income			
Net Cost(+)/saving (-)	192,000	192,000	192,000

Equality Impact Assessment

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed

Retender of Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers

Directorate: DESSH

Service: Housing

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: Tom Simpson

Job Title: Acting Customer Service Improvement Manager

Date of assessment: 14th February 2013

What is the aim of your policy or new service?

To address rough sleeping within the borough as well as related issues including begging and street drinking. It is a retender rather than a new service; however there is a revised service specification. The updated specification does not propose any changes that will affect who is eligible for the service or what service users receive. It does bring the specification up to date with how the service has developed with emerging trends since the last procurement exercise and service specification which was six years ago.

In this respect the service is required to provide specialist additional activities in order to assist those rough sleepers who are non-UK EEA nationals. People from Central or Eastern Europe are recognised both nationally by central government and locally in Reading, as making up a significant percentage of current rough sleepers. A report by Broadway in 2012 found that 28% of those who sleep rough in London are from Central and Eastern Europe. 14% of those identified as rough sleeping in Reading in 2012 were recorded as White European.

The revised specification refers to this group in three sections:

- 1) The provider is required to implement good practice actions from other organisations working within the field of rough sleeping to reduce rough sleeping levels, including developing innovative solutions to successfully work with non-UK EEA Nationals.
- 2) The provider is requested to have experience of working with non-UK EEA national rough sleepers and effectively delivering a range of service offers, including: liaising with the UKBA; advising to help exercise treaty rights; supporting reconnections; accessing translation and interpretation services.
- 3) An outcome of the service is that there is a sustained reduction in the number of non-UK EEA nationals who are rough sleeping within the Reading borough.

The impact is described in more detail below and is assessed to be positive.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

Rough sleepers will benefit as the service is intended to engage them into support services, including accommodation and drug treatment.

There is also a benefit for residents and visitors to Reading, as there is a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour as rough sleepers are helped to address their issues.

What outcomes will the change to achieve and for whom?

The number of individuals rough sleeping across the Reading borough continues to reduce and move as close to zero as possible.

Rough sleepers who are not normally resident within the Reading borough are reconnected with services and support in their home area.

There is a sustained reduction in the number of non-UK EEA nationals who are rough sleeping within the Reading borough.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

Homeless people - majority want help to access accommodation as quickly as possible and support to regain their independent living skills

Criminal Justice System - wants support for homeless ex-offenders to secure housing in order to reduce their risk of re-offending

RBC statutory homelessness service - to ensure that suitable options for homeless people with support needs are available in order to prevent homelessness and reduce levels of rough sleeping

Mental health services - want support for homeless people with mental health issues in order to reduce readmissions and promote recovery

Drug and alcohol agencies - want access to stable accommodation for homeless people with drug and/or alcohol use issues so that they can promote recovery with their service users

Members of the public - want housing options and support for rough sleepers and a minimum impact from rough sleeping and associated antisocial behaviour including begging, street drinking and street based sex work.

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes No

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.

Yes No

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts?		
Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Rough sleepers	Easy read consultation documents and questionnaire completed with the current provider of the Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers as part of the wider consultation on the Homelessness Pathway	27 - 28 October 2011
Statutory and voluntary agencies working with homeless people	Key stakeholders have been involved over a long period of time in our wider work on services for homeless people including the development of the Homelessness Pathway and review of provision of accommodation and support services for homeless people. Final proposals for the whole of the Homelessness Pathway were then consulted on with key stakeholders and other agencies during October and November 2011.	2009 - Present 20 October - 9 November 2011

Data collection and assessment

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups

The current provider collects information on the ethnicity of each person that they assess. Not all of these people will be confirmed rough sleepers and not all will be offered or will accept a support service, but they will have some reason to believe that they are a homeless person.

During the whole of the calendar year 2012, 300 people were assessed. Of these 63% were White British. This is slightly less than but very close to the figure of 66.9% for Reading in the 2011 Census.

Of the 33% who identify themselves as black, Asian and minority ethnic people there are no major outliers compared to the 2011 census except for those that are White European - 14% of those assessed by the Outreach Service compared with a total of 7.9% who

identified themselves as Other White in Reading in the 2011 Census. This is not unusual in this context however and throughout the country there is a recognised issue of non-UK EEA nationals over-represented in rough sleeping numbers.

The Outreach Service will be available and accessible to all rough sleepers and is assessed as having a positive impact. There is one part of the service that is intended to target a specific group and that is additional activities to support non-UK EEA nationals so that they gain the right to reside in the UK but also liaising with and assisting the UK Border Agency to take action against those people who are rough sleeping and do not have the right to reside in the UK. Whilst this is viewed by some as a less positive impact on this group, support is always offered before enforcement and it is clearly arguable that returning someone to the country where they are eligible for public funds and help with their housing is a more positive outcome than leaving someone rough sleeping in Reading with no eligibility for assistance.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)

Males make up the huge majority of the users of this service - 86% of those in 2012. The service is available equally to males and females however and the impact of the service is positive for both. There are no available figures however it is very rare to find pregnant women sleeping rough as there are statutory duties to provide accommodation in that circumstance. Therefore this service - if anyone is assessed as pregnant - is able to positively impact someone by offering a clear housing and support option.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability

Only data on those with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is recorded and 4% of those using the service were identified as such. Research nationally suggests that people with mental health issues are over represented in rough sleeping numbers and that those who do have mental health issues are more likely to become homeless than those who do not.

This service will identify anyone who is rough sleeping and has a disability and anyone who has a health problem or disability is prioritised into accommodation and support services so that there is a positive impact on this group.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)

Data has only recently begun being collected on sexual orientation and at this time there is not enough to enable meaningful analysis.

Any impact on sexual orientation or civil partnership will be positive as the service is available equally and aims to offer all rough sleepers - regardless of sexual orientation - services that are positive for their well-being.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Age

The age groupings collected against for clients that used this service during 2012 are different than those used in the 2011 Census; however a broad analysis is possible of the ages of rough sleepers in Reading compared to the general population of Reading.

10% of those using this service were over 55, whilst 16% of the population in Reading was over 60. The majority of those assessed by the Outreach Service were aged 25-54 at 78%. 60% of the population of Reading in 2011 was aged 20-59.

It is very rare (0% in 2012) for anyone under 16 to be found rough sleeping and relatively unusual for anyone under 18 - there are statutory duties to provide accommodation in these circumstances.

The Outreach Service is available and accessible to all rough sleepers and is assessed as having a positive impact on all age groups.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?

Data has only recently begun being collected on religious belief and at this time there is not enough to enable meaningful analysis.

Any impact on religious belief will be positive as the service is available equally and aims to offer all rough sleepers - regardless of religious belief -services that are positive for their well-being.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Decision

1. **No negative impact identified** Go to sign off

2. **Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**
You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

3. **Negative impact identified or uncertain**
What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

The service specification requires the provider to ensure equality of access to all. Equalities monitoring is also required and this data will be submitted and analysed quarterly. During this new contract period, sexual orientation and religious belief will be collected throughout.

Signed (completing officer) **Tom Simpson** Date **25/02/13**

Signed (Lead Officer) **Bryony Hall** Date **26/02/13**