

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	4 APRIL 2022		
TITLE:	CONTRACTS FOR GRANT FUNDED SERVICES FOR THOSE ROUGH SLEEPING / AT RISK OF ROUGH SLEEPING		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR ELLIE EMBERSON	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022-25 and Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) 2021-2024 grant funding RBC has applied for from the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUHC) to relieve and prevent rough sleeping in Reading. With confirmed RSAP grant funding and RSI 2022-25 grant funding being subject to DLUHC approval and award, this report seeks delegated authority to procure and award contracts utilising RSI 2022-25 and RSAP grant funds and seeks authorisation to enter into new contract arrangements from 1 October 2022.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That Policy Committee notes:

- (a) the application to the DLUHC for Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022-25 funding in the maximum sum of £1.8m to commission (a) Housing First<sup>1</sup> and (b) tailored support from the streets into settled accommodation including navigators, outreach/in-reach & out of hours tenancy sustainment; and
- (b) the DLUHC award of funding in the sum of £220k from the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) 2021-24 to deliver “Move-on Homes”

2.2 That, subject to the successful outcome of the application outlined in 2.1(a) above, the Assistant Director of Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to:

- (i) enter into a grant agreement with DLUHC for it to provide Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022-25 funding of a maximum sum of £1.8m; and
- (ii) procure the necessary contracts to implement the RSI 2022-25 funding conditions and enter into contracts with the successful tenderers in respect of the services referred to 2.1(a) above.

<sup>1</sup> Housing First is a housing and support approach which: gives people who have experienced homelessness and chronic health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives; provides intensive, person-centred, holistic support that is open-ended and places no conditions on individuals; however, they should desire to have a tenancy.

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| <p><b>2.3</b> That the Assistant Director of Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, be authorised to procure the necessary contracts to implement RSAP 2021-24 funding conditions and enter into contracts with the successful tenderers in respect of services to deliver “Move-on Homes” referred to in 2.1(b) above.</p> |
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### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1** In 2018, the Government published their national Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan aiming to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027. In 2019, Reading’s Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024 was published to support this aim with key priorities being (1) Early intervention and prevention; (2) Recovery and community intervention; (3) Rapid intervention; (4) United support and enforcement action in Reading and (5) Provision of information and alternative ways to give.
- 3.2** At Spending Review in autumn 2021, the Government committed over £2bn to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years, with multi-year funding intended to enable local partners to better plan services and maximise efficiencies. Committed funds include the opportunity for local authorities to apply for three years grant funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022-25, allowing for a more strategic approach to commissioning services for those sleeping rough in contrast to the year-on-year funding of previous rounds. Local authorities are being asked to apply to fund interventions across four key objectives in responding to rough sleeping: prevention, intervention, recovery and systems support.

### **4. THE PROPOSAL**

#### **4.1 Current Position:**

- 4.1.1** The Council has applied for DLUHC grant funding of a maximum sum of £1.8m to fund Housing First and tailored off the streets support under RSI 2022-25. Allocation announcements are due from DLUHC in April 2022. This three-year funding award from RSI 2022-25 provides the opportunity for longer contracts than has been possible through previous iterations of RSI.
- 4.1.2** Grant funds have been applied for and awarded to the value of £220k under DLUHC’s Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) 2021-24 to deliver “Move-on Homes”. Funds will support couples with multiple needs to move on from supported housing into settled accommodation with intensive tenancy sustainment support.
- 4.1.3** The full application to DLUHC for RSI 2022-25 grant also includes funds of circa £1m for (a) extending existing interventions until new contract start dates in October 2022 to ensure smooth implementation and that no vulnerable people are disadvantaged; (b) increasing FTE internal operational and strategic capacity and (c) seasonal demand/surge funding for emergency accommodation.

#### **4.2 Options Proposed**

- 4.2.1** It is proposed that, subject to grant funds being allocated and awarded by DLUHC to Reading under RSI 2022-25, RBC undertake an open tender exercise and award 30-month contracts of a maximum sum of £1.8m to the successful tenderer(s) for Housing First and tailored off the street support functions with contract start dates of 1 October 2022.

- 4.2.3 It is proposed that, RBC undertake an open tender exercise and award a 24-month contract, with an overall contract value of £220k, to the successful tenderer for support to couples in “Move-on Homes” with a contract start date of 1 October 2022.
- 4.2.2 Specific lots are to be determined, however the procurement exercise will likely include the following lots: (i) Housing First accommodation and support; (ii) tailored support from the streets into settled accommodation including navigators, outreach/in-reach & out of hours tenancy sustainment and (iii) a move-on offer for couples that creates a pathway out of supported housing into settled accommodation.

#### **4.3 Other Options Considered**

- 4.3.1 Withdraw Reading’s application to the DLUHC or not utilise any DLUHC funds awarded under RSI 2022-25 and RSAP 2021-24, which would likely result in an increase in rough sleeping numbers over the next three years, with vulnerable individuals living on the streets without support or accommodation.
- 4.3.2 Delivery of services in-house; however, RBC do not have the capacity or expertise to deliver these specialist services and recognises that external agencies do, with RBC adopting a partnership approach to homelessness for some time.

### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 The report’s recommendations contribute to the Council’s Corporate Plan theme of Thriving Communities by:
- Tackling inequality in our society, to ensure everyone has an equal chance to thrive whatever their economic, social, cultural, ethnic or religious background
  - Building relationships and strengthening the capacity and resilience of the voluntary and community sector
  - Prioritising the needs of the most marginalised groups and the most vulnerable adults in our communities
  - Tackling the effects of the pandemic, such as increased unemployment, long term health problems, mental health issues and social isolation where rough sleeping/risk of rough sleeping is the ultimate symptom of these effects
- 5.2 These recommendations also contribute to TEAM Reading values by supporting the Council’s ambition to considerably reduce rough sleeping to as close to zero as possible by 2027 and making a positive difference to the lives of people with complex multiple needs including drug/alcohol misuse, offending histories and mental ill-health.

### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from the report’s recommended decision and therefore no mitigations are required e.g. service user resilience to future climate change will not be impacted and there are no identified implications for the environment and biodiversity.

### **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 7.1 Funding applications to both RSI 2022-25 and RSAP 2021-24 have been co-produced with DLUHC, as informed by significant on the street intelligence and ongoing needs analysis of those sleeping rough/at risk of sleeping rough. Reading has several existing interventions to support and accommodate this cohort, having learnt from best practice and knowledge of ‘what works’ in Reading and other boroughs.

- 7.2 As part of RSI 2022-25 application, RBC were required to undertake and submit a self-assessment to assess strengths and gaps, specific cohort needs and how Reading plans to shape services and outcomes for rough sleeping groups over the next three years.
- 7.3 To inform this self-assessment and support compilation of priorities for proposed interventions for RSI 2022-25, Homeless Link provided an independently facilitated workshop with commissioned, statutory, VCS and faith sector partners. All of Reading's Homelessness Partnership (HoP) partners were invited to give their views. This was followed up by an on-line survey which asked sector partners to prioritise the themes they had identified in the workshop.

## **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.
- 8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision and it has been determined that the decision will not/could not have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council will need to enter into the DLUHC's grant agreement and comply with the conditions for the grant.
- 9.2 Service providers delivering the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI)/Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) will need to be procured in accordance with the Council's tendering processes and Standing Orders and contracts entered into with the successful tenderers.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 For RSI 2022-25 the maximum total contract value is £1.8m with up to £350k in 2022/23, up to £760k in 2023/24 and up to £690k in 2024/25.
- 10.2 For RSAP, the total contract value is £220k, with £55k in 2022/23, £110k in 2023/24 and £55k in 2024/25.
- 10.3 Grant funding to cover the contracts above would be awarded under s.31 of the Local Government Act 2003 meaning that spend will be restricted to the activities laid out in the bid application. There are no other direct financial implications, the grant received would be ringfenced to meet the contract costs. Should there be delays in contract implementation or underspend that requires grant carry-over into the next financial year, written permission would be requested by RBC from DLUHC. If this permission was not granted, and their decision was not to allow the repurposing or carry-over of funds that resulted in a surplus, clawback provisions may be enacted by DLUHC.

10.4 **Value for Money (VFM):** Efficiencies will be maximised by procuring RSI 2022-25 and RSAP contracts concurrently with a start date of 1 October 2022. The alternative would be to deliver RSAP on a separate procurement timeline, thus requiring additional line management costs/risk of there being no interested parties. Staff costings for both grant applications have been benchmarked against existing provision and known market salaries, provider on-costs, overheads and inflationary projections over the next three years to ensure VFM as well as competitive tender interest.

10.4 **Risk Assessment:** No key financial risks have been identified with this proposal.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.