

CABINET

Wednesday, 15 February 2017

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROUGH SLEEPER FUNDING - EXEMPTION FROM CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES (REP1536)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Waveney District Council (WDC) has been awarded £266,250 Rough Sleeper funding for the 16/17, 17/18 and 18/19 financial years by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It is proposed to use the funding to cover the costs of employing two intensive outreach workers along with a mental health support worker. Any surplus funding will be to resource an 'Emergency/Whatever it takes Fund'.

2.

Support/Staff Costs	16/17	17/18	18/19
Staffing/Support Costs	£26,250.00	£105,000.00	£105,000.00
Emergency /Whatever It Takes Fund	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Total	£36,250.00	£115,000.00	£115,000.00

3. Waveney District Council applied to DCLG for Rough Sleep funding, to be used to upscale the current Rough Sleeper project which is known locally as the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM). All referrals to the project will be through the Lowestoft Interventions Group. Access Community Trust (ACT) currently host one MEAM outreach worker/coordinator who links the service user into a raft of ACT service provision that is specifically set up to respond to the complex needs of entrenched rough sleepers, as well as those new to the streets. The Bridgeview drop-in centre, funded through the Big Lottery, and run by ACT is a key delivery site for this activity, hence ACT employ the worker on behalf of the partnership.
4. Councils are very likely to have a duty to prevent the homelessness for all households which will include those at the edge of homelessness and in non priority need. Rough Sleeping has increased year on year across the country, with WDC's Rough Sleeping estimate nearly tripling over the last year. An addendum is attached regarding trends across the country.
5. This is a three year contract for services to be provided by ACT and due to the value of the contract, this would normally be subject under 8.1.1 of the Contract Procurement Rules (CPR) to a full tender process. Cabinet are being asked to authorise exemption using their authority under 3.1 of the CPR because it is an extension to an existing service and the services need to be in place in a short timescale to comply with the terms of the grant. The application for the grant was submitted on the basis that it would be an expansion of the existing services provided by ACT and delivered from their existing building. CPR 3.1 state 'The Council and its Cabinet have the power to waive requirements within the Contract Procedure Rules for specific projects and any such decision may be a Key Decision.'

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	Lowestoft
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sue Allen Cabinet Member for Housing
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Supporting Officer:	Justin Hunt Head of Service 01502 523144 Justin.hunt@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lowestoft Rising, working closely with WDC, other public and voluntary sector partners, has created “Interventions”, which is a place-based multi-agency case conference system. The programme was designed to tackle Lowestoft’s entrenched problems surrounding street drinking, which is invariably linked to homelessness and rough sleeping, and which was putting significant pressure on all service areas. Partners include police, health, social care, mental health, housing providers, the voluntary sector and others, who have all come together to address these issues holistically.
- 1.2 Learning from the pilot has identified a much wider client group of people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Lowestoft. The enhanced programme will allow us to build in extra resource capacity to engage and intervene before their circumstances escalate into rough sleeping. The MEAM workers are a key component to the process and if we are to effectively address the homelessness need, we need to build in extra capacity. The enhanced programme would consist of 2 MEAM workers. We have also identified that mental health concerns are evident in the vast majority of cases seen through the pilot and it is essential that the programme includes a mental health support worker to work closely with the MEAM posts, helping people faster and to avert crisis intervention.
- 1.3 Whilst this bid was submitted by WDC as lead partner, Lowestoft Rising, which comprises of a group of 5 statutory public sector partners – Suffolk Police, Suffolk Police & Crime Commissioners Office, Waveney District Council, Suffolk County Council and NHS Great Yarmouth & Waveney, supported by a vast number of voluntary sector organisations, facilitates a robust multi-agency approach across Lowestoft called Lowestoft Interventions Partnership. This partnership has driven forward the initial pilot phase of the interventions programme and is critical in taking it forward to address the current and emerging need identified in Criteria A of the DCLG Rough Sleeping Programme (people new to the streets).
- 1.4 Access Community Trust (ACT), who operate a number of frontline services including supported and hostel accommodation, has secured funding to operate a drop-in centre (Bridgeview) for people with drug/alcohol or other social problems. ACT has agreed to continue to host the MEAM worker and will house the additional MEAM and mental health workers through the enhanced programme. ACT has also recently launched a ‘Soup Kitchen’, which will run for 2 nights a week over the winter months. This project will allow our programme to directly engage with those who use it, quickly and effectively, to offer wider support through the programme. 42 soups were issued on the opening and the subsequent night, illustrating the need on the ground for this type of provision.

2 REASONS FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES (CPR)

- 2.1 Under the Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) a full tender process should have been conducted for services of this value. However, under 3.1 of the CPR, Cabinet have the power to agree exemptions for special projects where the services are below the EU threshold and the circumstances are exceptional. The value of these services are £266,250 and was awarded by the DCLG in the full knowledge that the purpose of the funding is to expand the current service to meet the needs of service users who are new to the street, as well as to employ a specialist mental health worker.

- 2.2 The current service was co-commissioned by a number of statutory services (Suffolk Police/ Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG/ Waveney District Council Housing Needs and Suffolk County Adult Community Services). Health East agreed to administer the pots of funding which was then granted to ACT.
- 2.3 ACT deliver a number of wrap around services for homeless service users that are invariably not engaging with other statutory and voluntary services. The momentum and further service development of the project will be thwarted if CPRs are applied in this case. No other service providers in Lowestoft are able to offer crash pad / or hostel bed spaces / or move on accommodation for this client group. The project relies on being able to offer specific housing pathways for service users that have a history of not being able sustain a tenancy, or live in general needs housing, without a high level of support and supervision.
- 2.4 It is imperative that the project is able to get on with recruiting to the posts as soon as practicably possible to allow the expanded service to become established and integrated with the current service delivery arrangements.
- 2.5 The financial threshold for the Public Contract Regulations 2014 (PCR) to apply for these services as set out in the Social and Other Specific Services of Schedule 3 to the PCR and applies where the estimated cost of the provision of services to the community is above 700,000 Euros. The current £/Euro rate is £1= Euro 86p, which equates to £602,000. In this instance, the services required have a cost of £266,250 which falls well below the EU Financial threshold. However, this value is over the key decision threshold of £100,000, so it is appropriate that, in accordance with CPR 3.1, Cabinet be asked to agree an exemption from 8.1.1 of the CPRs with require a full tender exercise issued to at least three candidates.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 3.1 The Business Plan in its reference to critical success factors has affirmed the following:
 “Improved access to appropriate housing and building resilient and supportive communities.”

The DCLG also wants to look at improving resilience for people that are at risk of homelessness. Some people are able to withstand a shock to the personal circumstances and get through a crisis relatively unscathed. Some marginalised and vulnerable people cannot, however, weather these challenges because of their history and circumstances. The project will seek to identify vulnerable adults far earlier to avoid the potential of crisis and the negative impact of homelessness. The DCLG will be keen to ascertain what works and whether some of the lessons learned can be built into an ‘offer’ to people already leading an unsettled way of life that could potentially lead to rough sleeping.

The project will seek to support people that are on the edge of homelessness by finding solutions than can take them forward into the future in terms of their housing need.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The reporting arrangements will be through the Rough Sleepers Funding Advisory Group which will feed into Lowestoft Rising and the Systems Leadership Partnership of Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG. The Partnership is made up of CEO’s and Directors of a wide range of health and care organisations. A contract is being renewed to reflect the new funding arrangements.
- 4.2 The case allocation will be through the Lowestoft Interventions Group.

- 4.3 The release of the funding will be linked to quarterly performance and evaluation reports the evaluation of the projects will be in conjunction with the DCLG funding requirements.
- 4.4 The external funding is through the DCLG.

5 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 The funding has been made available as part of the government's drive to end Rough Sleeping and forms part of its 10 challenges relating to reducing homelessness. Rough Sleeping had increased across the country by 30% between 2014 and 2015. WDC has also experienced a steady rise in rough sleeping over the last year which the funding will specifically focus on.
- 5.2 Permission is also sought to not follow the Council's CPRs as there is no other organisation that specialises in the needs of single homeless and entrenched rough sleepers in Waveney. The purpose of the funding is to expand and consolidate the MEAM Service to meet the challenges that are likely come with the Homeless Reduction Bill becoming law in 12 months time. The project needs to 'try and test' to establish effective ways of working by the time the above legislation comes into force. The legislation will place a duty on all Councils to prevent people from becoming homeless including single people without a priority need. This is precisely the target group the project is aimed at. This project is seen as preparation relating to the Council's increased responsibilities/burdens. Homelessness is at the sharp end of acute housing need and the Council needs to get to work as quickly as possible. The decision will also enable Access Community Trust to host an additional MEAM worker. It is intended that the specialist mental health worker will be seconded by the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust into the MEAM Project. Discussions are at a preliminary stage.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the last quarter of 16/17 will be used to recruit 1 additional MEAM worker and the costs of secondment of the specialist mental health worker into the MEAM Project.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The ideas within the bid proposal were developed in consultation with the Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG, Housing Needs and Lowestoft Rising and build on previous consultation exercises to establish the service in the first instance.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 No other organisations can offer a suite of interconnected interventions specifically geared up to meeting the needs of Rough Sleepers / Sofa Surfers therefore the alternative to agreeing this proposal would be to not accept the grant and not commission the additional services.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 To obtain Cabinet's approval that this contract be exempt from CPR 8.1.1, which requires a full tender process to at least three candidates, for the reasons set out in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the sum of £266,250 for the “Rough Sleeper” initiative be paid to the Access Community Trust on a quarterly basis in order to meet the funding and delivery timetable, under the terms of a service level agreement, and that an exemption from Contract Procedure Rule 8.1.1 be approved by Cabinet, to remove the requirement to conduct a full tender process issued to at least three candidates. Cabinet have authority to issue an exemption under CPR 3.1.
2. That Cabinet gives delegated authority to the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to agree a contract with the Access Community Trust on terms that best protect the Council’s interests.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Funding application
Appendix B	Homelessness trends across the Country

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council’s website but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
January 16	Homeless Link Report on Rough Sleeping	Angela Hays