

TITLE OF REPORT: Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) Funding 2022-25

REPORT OF: Colin Huntington, Strategic Director, Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities

Purpose of the Report

1. To note a decision taken under delegated powers, to submit the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) funding bid, for period 2022-2025, on the grounds of urgency, due to bid submission timescales.

Background

2. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) invited Councils, working closely with delivery partners, to submit proposals and bids for 2022-25 for the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP).
3. Gateshead has not applied for previous rounds of RSAP funding and was encouraged by DLUHC to submit a bid in this round. We opted to identify an external delivery partner to work with us to deliver homes for rough sleepers and those at risk of sleeping rough. A briefing was circulated to our housing partners in March outlining our requirements and inviting expressions of interest by a specified date.
4. Four partners submitted an expression of interest, and all were invited to separate meetings with council representatives, facilitated by DLUHC and Homes England (HE), to explain their proposals in more detail and answer any questions.
5. Tyne Housing Association, a registered provider of housing, met all the requirements and were selected as our delivery partner. Tyne Housing have been working with vulnerable people in the north-east region for just under 50 years and have worked with this client group in Gateshead for many years. They have also successfully bid for RSAP funding in recent years in partnership with North Tyneside and Newcastle local authorities.
6. The bid submission process involved co-production meetings with DLUHC, HE and Tyne Housing. Tyne Housing were required to submit their funding 'proposal' via the Homes England Information Management System (IMS). The Council were required to complete a 'bid' form, created by DLUHC. HE and DLUHC worked together to ensure consistent information was provided. The deadline for submission of both documents was 13 April 2022.

Proposal

7. The bid proposes that Tyne Housing purchase on the open market seven one or two bed properties in Gateshead to be refurbished and ready for clients to move into by April 2023. Tyne Housing will be the landlord of the properties and all client referrals will come from the Council's Housing Solutions service. Clients will have multiple and complex needs including rough sleeping or being at risk of sleeping rough in addition to two or more needs including the following - mental health, substance misuse, offending history and domestic abuse. Other features of the bid include:
- **Staffing** – All seven properties will be supported by one FTE support worker who will provide intensive, wrap around support. The worker will be in post eight weeks prior to the clients moving in to ensure a smooth transition and development of an early rapport. Holistic, intensive support will be provided throughout the tenancy with all aspects of daily living. Promoting confidence will be a key aspect of the support and working towards a greater level of independence in areas such as housing and employment ensuring clients are ready to transition to a more independent living arrangement after two (maximum three) years living at the property. Tyne Housing already have an RSAP team in place due to successful bids with other local authorities therefore providing additional resilience and learning opportunities for staff.
 - **Properties** – Subject to availability and price, ideally one bedroomed properties will be purchased on the open market reflecting the needs of this client group who are usually singles. Some two bedroomed properties may be considered if there are a lack of one bedroomed properties available. Homes will be dispersed but located nearby to one another to enable the staff member to move easily between them. Properties will be close to local amenities and have good transport links. Properties will be refurbished and decorated to a good standard to engender a feeling of pride in the property from the client. Tenancies will run for two, maximum three years and will be assured shorthold tenancies.
 - **Funding** – Tyne Housing are applying for both capital and revenue funding as part of their proposal:
 - Capital funding for 49% of expected purchase price of the seven properties (£288,500) the other 51% will be funded by Tyne Housing.
 - Revenue funding of £116,579 for staffing costs.
8. All costs attributable to Tyne Housing have already received sign off by their Board. Capital funding will be paid directly to Tyne Housing from Homes England. Revenue funding will be paid to the Council by DLUHC then transferred to Tyne Housing who will manage the staff member. The total amount of funding applied over the three-year period is £405,079.
9. The bid has been submitted and DLUHC and HE have confirmed that announcements regarding funding are likely to be made in June 2022.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that Cabinet notes that a bid has been submitted as described in the report and agreed by the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital and Strategic Director, Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities as an urgent delegated decision in accordance with Schedule 5, Part 2 General Delegations to Managers, Paragraph (4) (e) of the Council's Constitution.

For the following reason:

To maximise the funding opportunities to support the delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. The proposals support the overall vision for Gateshead as set out in Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives and directly relate to the following pledges:
 - Put people and families at the heart of everything we do
 - Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance
 - Support our communities to help themselves and each other
 - Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead
2. The Housing Strategy 2019-2030 identifies a vision for housing in Gateshead, centred on three strategic themes - supply, standards, and support. The Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme directly links to the support theme and its main objectives to tackle homelessness and its root causes and promote tenancy sustainment and wellbeing.
3. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy sets out a clear vision to prevent and end homelessness in all forms in Gateshead over the next five years. The interventions which will be supported by the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme bid are key to the strategic aims set out in the strategy, in particular the aim for no-one to be sleeping rough or in unsuitable accommodation.
4. Further, improving access to accommodation and support for Rough Sleepers underpins many of the aims set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, most notably:
 - Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
 - Ensure a healthy standard of living for all, in accordance with international law on economic and social rights
 - Create and develop sustainable communities
 - Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.

Background

5. The RSAP programme was first announced in 2020 and aims to support up to 6,000 rough sleepers into longer term accommodation over the course of this parliament. RSAP's objective is to provide move-on homes which will be available as long-term assets with accompanying support services for rough sleepers. A total of £435 million has been allocated nationally to realise this vision.
6. RSAP bids must also have clear synergy with applications for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding and demonstrate how the two funding sources will compliment each other. Gateshead submitted a bid for RSI funding to DLUHC in February 2022. The outcome of that bid is unknown at the time of writing this report.

7. In preparation for the RSI bid in February 2022, an extensive self-assessment was undertaken to understand our strengths and gaps in service provision for the rough sleeper client group. The self-assessment involved consultation with partner agencies and those with lived experience and a full analysis of the data we report both internally and to government on rough sleepers in Gateshead. This enabled development of a clear understanding of the gaps in accommodation and support in the borough and evidence of need and demand but also for this RSAP bid including:
- a. A high percentage of rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping are being placed in emergency and hostel accommodation
 - b. Of those placed in emergency accommodation, a large percentage of rough sleepers have multiple and complex needs
 - c. We work with a target group of 23 rough sleepers on a regular and on-going basis
 - d. We have a gap in provision of longer-term, move-on accommodation in existing council stock for this client group
8. The bid addresses current gaps in rough sleeper accommodation and if successful will provide:
- Seven long term, dedicated properties for the rough sleeper client group which can be re-let every 2-3 years when individuals are ready to move into more permanent accommodation
 - Wrap-around, intensive support for clients with multiple and complex needs via a dedicated RSAP support worker
 - Referrals to the properties directly from the Council's Housing Solutions team
9. The RSAP bid will also support the objectives of several inter-dependent reviews which the Council is currently undertaking including the Homelessness and Allocations, Anti-Social Behaviour and Multi-Storey reviews. If successful, it is hoped that the RSAP bid will create long term, sustainable accommodation and support and reduce the potential for negative impacts in communities from this client group.

Consultation

10. The Cabinet Members for Housing have been consulted and indicated their support for the bid. Key internal and external stakeholders were consulted in the development of the bid.

Alternative Options

11. An alternative option would have been to not submit a bid, but this would not maximise the funding opportunities available to the Council.

Implications of Recommended Option

12. Resources:

- a) Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that the financial implications are as detailed in the report.
- b) Human Resources Implications** – None
- c) Property Implications** - None

13. Risk Management Implication

Risk to service delivery if bid unsuccessful/partially funded.

14. Equality and Diversity Implications

Bid would create additional accommodation for rough sleepers which are an underserved group.

15. Crime and Disorder Implications – None

16. Health Implications

Supporting this client group will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing by enabling access to suitable accommodation and support services.

17. Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications - None

18. Human Rights Implications - None

19. Ward Implications - None