

<p>[Grants Determination (Cabinet)</p> <p>Sub-Committee</p> <p>16th January 2019</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Property and Capital Delivery</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Non UK Rough Sleepers and Complex Couples who are rough sleeping</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Sirajul Islam Cabinet Member for Housing
Originating Officer(s)	Kath Dane, Street Population Coordinator
Wards affected	All Wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	07/12/18
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Community Plan Theme	Strong, resilient and safe communities Better health and wellbeing

Executive Summary

This report is recommending the Grants Determination Committee approves two small grants both to be paid from the MH CLG Homelessness Prevention Grant.

The first grant is for £15,000 to Praxis to fund supported bed spaces for non-UK nationals with complex and unresolved immigration status who are rough sleeping in Tower Hamlets. Praxis has been supporting vulnerable migrants since 1983 and is located within Tower Hamlets. They have experience working in partnership with homeless destitute migrants, homelessness charities and the council. Praxis was successful in a bid to the GLA for an extensive 2 year project to ensure non-UK nationals being discharged from the hospitals including the Royal London do not return to rough sleeping. This grant will ensure that identified rough sleepers within our boroughs who fit this profile have a route off the street and out of destitution.

The second grant is for £30,000 to St Mungo's to provide intensive specialist support to hostel staff and rough sleeping couples in Tower Hamlets. This support is based on research and a good practice toolkit funded through the GLA's Innovation Fund this year entitled 'Working with Complex Co-dependent Couples who Rough Sleep'. This grant will include case reviews of our long term rough sleeping couples in Tower Hamlets, co-production of action plans, training, and an incorporation of St Mungo's reflective practice tool. St Mungo's currently hold the rough sleeping outreach contract in Tower Hamlets. We are keen to support his new project, alongside the City of London and LB of Barking and Dagenham to ensure we test and embed best practice within our services. This will ensure our rough sleeping

couples have the very best chance of success of exiting rough sleeping permanently.

Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub - Committee is recommended:

1. To approve a grant for £15,000 to Praxis to fund supported bed spaces for non-UK nationals with complex and unresolved immigration status who are rough sleeping in Tower Hamlets.
2. To approve a grant for £30,000 to St Mungo's to provide intensive specialist support to hostel staff and rough sleeping couples in Tower Hamlets based on best practice.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

Both grants will

- support the council's aim to end rough sleeping.
- provide rough sleepers who have very limited accommodation options with support, housing and hope for the future.
- enable the council to use and employ specialist agencies to work with identified cohorts of rough sleepers.
- help reduce anti-social behaviour that is associated with some rough sleepers. This reduces the number of complaints from the community and resources employed by community safety.
- ensure that the council continues to lead in testing and implementing evidence based innovative approaches when working with rough sleepers. This is good for clients, the community and the council's reputation.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 There are very few alternative accommodation options for non-UK nationals and complex couples. Without these grants, a number of identified rough sleepers will in all likelihood continue to rough sleep in Tower Hamlets.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 Grant: Non-UK National Rough Sleepers.

- 3.1.1 Praxis has received funding from the GLA Innovation Fund to run a 2 year project with non-EEA migrants referred through the Hospital Pathways teams who are at risk of rough sleeping/returning to rough sleeping due to problems relating to immigration status. Their work with non-EEA migrants who are street homeless (those already on the CHAIN database) clearly demonstrates

that rough sleeping could have been prevented if immigration advice and casework had been provided at an earlier point. Due to the regulated nature of immigration advice, the fast-moving legislative landscape and the intense nature of the work, the interventions needed can only be provided by specialist advisers.

- 3.1.2 With proper assessment, advice and assistance a great number of these cases can be resolved. Analysis of the cases and progress on either regularising status, changing conditions of leave, or obtaining documents will enable the advisor to identify the most appropriate forms of accommodation that may be available pending the outcome of the case and to work with the Pathways teams to enable referrals.
- 3.1.3 Tower Hamlets Housing Options team are keen to ensure that our physically ill long term non-UK national rough sleepers are able to access this support and thus, we would like to provide this grant to Praxis to ensure that when a patient is ready for discharge from the Royal London Hospital but their complex immigration status means they are not currently entitled to benefits, they are provided with appropriate accommodation rather than discharged to the street.
- 3.1.4 HOST has endorsed this Praxis proposal to the GLA innovation fund and fully support the aims of this project.

3.2 Grant: Complex Co-dependent Couples who are Rough Sleeping

- 3.2.1. The council's Housing Options service approached St Mungo's with the idea of conducting a piece of social action research and applying to the GLA's Innovation fund to get the project off the ground. St Mungo's were successful and the GLA agreed to fund elements 1 and 2 below. It is element 3 for which we are requesting this Grant. The £30,000 would be used solely on rough sleepers identified within Tower Hamlets. Housing Options have worked closely to bring the City of London and LB of Barking and Dagenham on board to both endorse and provide financial support to the roll out of the best practice work.
- 3.2.2 The four elements are:
 1. Conduct exploratory research and scoping with homelessness services across London to understand the specific barriers to recovery for homeless couples; map existing provision for homeless couples in London; and conduct a literature review.
 2. Create a toolkit for homelessness professionals, informed by the format of our Homeless Pregnancy Toolkit. Train homelessness professionals in London to improve services for couples sleeping on the streets.
 3. **Provide intensive support to hostel staff and couples in partner boroughs, including case review, co-production of an action plan, and training, incorporating St Mungo's reflective practice tool.**
 4. Finalise training and toolkit based on feedback and trial period.

- 3.2.3 St Mungo's are the leading homelessness agency that focuses on ending rough sleeping across the UK. The council and the Corporation of London alongside other councils have all seen that people who are sleeping rough as part of a couple are finding it extremely difficult to move on from the streets, despite the support of dedicated homelessness professionals – as a result people are being exposed to the dangers of sleeping on the streets for far too long. Our outreach services, like other homelessness services across London struggle to help couples who are rough sleeping to leave the streets, especially for couples where one or both face significant additional challenges (eg domestic abuse, mental health issues, physical health issues, learning disabilities or drug and alcohol abuse). Although we do not currently consistently record whether people are part of a couple as a possible factor in their homelessness, anecdotally we have seen the difficulty that couples have in negotiating services designed for single people. There are currently six couples sleeping rough in Tower Hamlets, and two to four couples in the City.
- 3.2.4 This project is innovative – although it is clear that the needs of homeless couples are not being met, this is a new area of research. Homeless Link is collating evidence on the needs of homeless couples nationally, but there is not yet any data on the services available in London, and there are no toolkits for professional to use to improve services.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Rough sleepers are already a marginalised cohort within the homeless population. Our commissioned outreach services record demographic information on all rough sleepers met within Tower Hamlets and this same data will be recorded under these two grants. Quarterly monitoring meetings occurred with all commissioned and grant funded organisations where demographics, support needs and disabilities are reviewed and equality issues discussed and challenged when required.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Internal consultation has been conducted within the Housing Options Service and with homelessness stakeholders including the GLA. All have agreed the importance of both these grants in supporting innovative and effective support and accommodation options for our vulnerable rough sleepers in Tower Hamlets.

Supporting rough sleeping to exit the street and take up safe offers of accommodation reduces the risk of violence and harm associated with rough sleeping. In term, these grants help to safeguard these individuals.

Moving rough sleepers into accommodation also helps reduce anti-social behaviour that often accompanies those who rough sleep.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report seeks the approval of the Grants Determination Sub-Committee to award grants to two charities – Praxis and the St Mungo’s Homeless Charity – to finance two initiatives aimed at providing support for rough sleepers within the borough.
- 6.2 Both grants will provide funding to enhance existing projects that the charities have been undertaking in conjunction with the MHCLG and GLA. The St Mungo’s initiative to provide speciality support to hostel staff and rough sleeping couples is being undertaken in partnership with, and will be part funded by, the City of London Corporation and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham as well as this council.
- 6.3 The costs of the grants (totalling £45,000) will be fully funded from the Homelessness Prevention Grant of £1.72 million that the council has received from the MHCLG for the 2018-19 financial year. Homeless Prevention Grant can be used to finance initiatives carried-out the by the local authority, or invested into projects operated by voluntary organisations.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to enter into both grants referred to in this report.
- 7.2 However, the Council must ensure that both grants achieve Best Value under the law. This means that the grants should be supported by an appropriate grant agreement which allows the Council to monitor the effectiveness of the services and ensure that the money is used for the purposes for which it has been given.
- 7.3 The Council must ensure that both grants comply with the grant conditions imposed by the MHCLG when they made the Homeless Prevention Grant to the Council.
- 7.4 The Council has undertaken appropriate levels of consultation in order to properly understand the implications on those who have a protected characteristic by making these grants as shown at paragraph 4.1 above.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- None

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

- None