

Commissioner Decision Report	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Luke Addams, Interim Director Adult Social Care	Classification: Unrestricted
Future Funding of New Belvedere House (NBH) Ex Servicemen's Hostel	

Originating Officer(s)	Stephanie Graden, Interim Vulnerable Adults Commissioning Manager
Wards affected	St Dunstan's
Key Decision?	No
Community Plan Theme	A Safe and Cohesive Community

Executive Summary

In resolving, in April 2015, to provide grant aid to Veteran's Aid in respect of the New Belvedere House (NBH) service, the Commissioners requested that a further report be presented in September 2015 to provide an update on the following matters:

- the outcome of discussions with Veteran's Aid, as to the alternative funding options available to the organisation that would enable them to operate the NBH service on a sustainable basis from 2016/17 were no further grant award to be agreed by the council.
- the result of the analysis by Council officers, of NBH's operating budget for 2015/16 and any other sources of income available, and therefore the amount of grant required for 2015/16 up to the ceiling agreed by the Commissioners.

This report fulfils the above requirements and confirms that no further award of grant will be required for 2016/17 or subsequent years as Veteran's Aid have formally indicated they will replace the Council funding with funding from other sources. Commissioners are also asked to note that the award of funding to NBH for 2015/16 has been confirmed at the same level as 2014/5 (£150, 275), following an assessment by Council officers of the operating budgets for NBH submitted by Veteran's Aid.

Recommendations:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Note that Veteran's Aid have formally indicated to the Council that they will not require grant funding beyond 2015/16; and
2. Note that following analysis of the 2015/16 operating budget for New

Belvedere House officers have confirmed that the amount of grant to be paid to Veteran's Aid in respect of this service will be £150,275, and that this amount is within the limits authorised by the Commissioners in April 2015.

DETAILS OF REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the outcome of discussions with Veterans Aid as to the future funding options for New Belvedere House taking into consideration the budgetary requirements for the delivery of the service. These actions were taken in accordance with the Commissioners Decision in April 2015, the original report is attached for information at appendix 1.
- 1.2 The decisions made in April were:
- i. To provide a targeted grant towards the running costs of the New Belvedere House (NBH) ex-veterans hostel in recognition of the unique circumstances of this service and the historical funding issues, for a one year period commencing 1st April 2015.
 - ii. That the grant has a maximum ceiling at the current level of £150, 275, with final award being based on a robust assessment and demonstration of the continued need for the grant the context of any wider funding opportunities.
 - iii. That Veterans Aid are asked to actively explore other funding opportunities to reduce their reliance on the Council and precipitate tapering of the funding in future years.
 - iv. That a report be presented to the Commissioners, and any other relevant decision makers, in six months' time setting out proposals for how the New Belvedere Hostel will be supported in the future, with a particular focus on reducing their use of Council grants.

Each of these areas is explored in turn below.

2. OFFICERS ACTIONS

- 2.1 Veterans Aid were notified of the decisions in writing and a process agreed with officers to review the budget and explore the future funding options for the service.
- 2.2 The budget for the operation of New Belvedere House was analysed and found to provide value for money in line with benchmark costs of similar hostels funded by the borough. The borough funds the support service, the grant equating to approximately 28% of the cost of the current service and 17% of the service when redeveloped.
- 2.3 Veterans Aid advised that they are not in receipt of any other alternative funding sources that contribute to the hostel support service. They have committed to funding the hostel service through charitable donations and have recruited specialist fundraisers to take this work forward.

2.4 It is likely that there are a number of organisations and individuals, who will fund New Belvedere House and there is minimal risk to the viability of the hostel for the following reasons:

- Veterans Aid have a proven track record in raising charitable funds
- They are active members of FEANTSA – The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless, which may also be an opportunity which could lead to financial assistance, through European grants.
- The hostel could be safely run, even if replacement funds for the current LBTH grant, were not secured, by putting in place alternative staffing arrangements, including reduced staffing levels, increased use of volunteers, increased use of CCTV, or a combination of these and other approaches.

2.5 Officers are satisfied that the Veterans Aid assurance's that they will identify alternative funding from April 2016 are achievable. They have confirmed that receipt of the grant for 2015/16 at current levels will allow sufficient time to secure funding, as well as providing assurance that no further LBTH funding will be needed now or in the future.

3. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

3.1 The grant of £150,275 per annum provided by the local authority is built into the Council's 2015/16 base budget. If the grant were to discontinue in future years this may represent a savings opportunity for the directorate.

3. LEGAL COMMENTS

3.1 A decision by the Commissioners on 22 April 2015 requested that officers present an additional report analysing New Belvedere House's operating budget for 2015/16 and exploring Veteran's Aid's alternative future funding options in light of the grant awarded to it in the sum of £150,275.00. It would appear from the exploratory actions by Council officers, that Veteran's Aid does not seek additional grant funding from the Council beyond 2015/16 and further, that Veteran's Aid will not be reliant on the Council in order maintain New Belvedere House in the future.

3.2 In carrying out its functions, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty). In the discharge of this duty, regard may be had to the information in the report to the effect that Veteran's Aid has alternative funding available and that the service will continue to operate without further grant funding from the Council.

5. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Veterans Aid has committed to fund the service from April 2016 building on the nationally successful fundraising campaign undertaken earlier in the year to redevelop the building. There service will remain in borough and as such there are no One Tower Hamlets considerations.

7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 The service is to be extended and redeveloped and will comply fully with all obligations under Tower Hamlets development policies linked to sustainability and a greener environment in accordance with planning regulations.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Veterans Aid has confirmed that they have been given sufficient notice to fund identify alternative streams for the service and have satisfied officers of this fact as noted in section 2.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The current NBH service (and future service if it is funded), tangibly contribute to reducing crime and disorder locally, by:
- Specifically including outcome targets to reduce offending and substance misuse
 - Additionally have outcome targets to increase the proportion in Education, Training or Employment, so reducing the likelihood of local Anti-Social Behaviour.

10. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

- 7.1 The service will be funded until March 2016 from which point there will recurrent savings to the borough pf £150,275 per annum.

11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The service being funded fully complies with all obligations under Tower Hamlets policies linked to the Safeguarding of both adults and vulnerable children and these are specifically included in their written formal funding agreement.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

Future funding of New Belvedere House (NBH) Ex-Servicemen's Hostel

Appendices

Future funding of New Belvedere House (NBH) Ex-Servicemen's Hostel

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

NONE

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