

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Cabinet – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022**  
**Rough Sleeper Funding Initiative 2022-25 – Funding bid**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Mike Collins, Cabinet Member - Housing</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner – Housing Services</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>In November 2021 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched its Rough Sleeping Grant Funding Initiative 2022-25 (RSI 2022-25). This initiative gives local authorities the opportunity to apply for grant funding to reduce rough sleeping in their area. Previously, RSI grant funding has been made available by DLUHC on an annual basis. This time, the funding will be available for a 3 year period to March 2025, thereby enabling local authorities to undertake longer term planning to tackle rough sleeping in their area.</p> <p>Our bid will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preventing rough sleeping;</li> <li>- Supporting those currently sleeping rough to move off the streets;</li> <li>- Supporting those who have slept rough to ensure they do not return to the streets; and</li> <li>- Ensuring that systems and structures are in place to embed change and to monitor progress.</li> </ul> <p>This bid for grant funding through RSI has been developed as a county-wide bid involving each of the local housing authorities across Gloucestershire. Gloucester City are the lead partner, and will be submitting the bid on behalf of the housing partners. If successful, it is anticipated that most of the funding will be to support the ongoing, jointly commissioned county-wide services currently available to tackle rough sleeping. In addition, local authorities will have more localised initiatives to further enhance our efforts to tackle rough sleeping.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>That Cabinet:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Agrees to the inclusion of Cheltenham Borough Council in the joint bid for RSI grant funding 2022-25, to be submitted by Gloucester City Council.</b></li> <li><b>2. Accepts the grant funding offer (in the event that the grant funding bid is successful) and delegates to Lead Commissioner – Housing to enter into any relevant agreements associated with this bid.</b></li> </ol>

- 3. Delegates to Lead Commissioner – Housing, in consultation with Cabinet Member – Housing and s.151 Officer, to agree to any uplift to Cheltenham Borough Council’s financial commitment in respect of this grant funding application (should this be required prior to the funding bid deadline of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022).**
- 4. Agrees to increase our provision of housing-led accommodation from 6 to 12 dwellings, as detailed at section 2.2.5 of this report, provided that our grant funding application for the extension to our Enhanced Housing Support Service is successful.**

**Financial implications**

The overall value of the bid for RSI funding over the 3 year period is anticipated to be between £2-3m. This will be mainly to support the joint commissioning (including recommissioning) of services to tackle rough sleeping across the county, as detailed at section 2.2 of this report. Gloucester City Council will hold the funding for these jointly commissioned county-wide services, and will administer the commissioning of them on behalf of the partnership.

In addition to these county-wide initiatives, Cheltenham Borough Council intends to include a Cheltenham-specific initiative, as detailed in section 2.3 of this report. The anticipated grant required for this initiative will be £96k over a 3 year period to end of March 2025 (£26,250 Year 1; and then £35,000 for both years 2 and 3.) As part of this bid, Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Borough Homes have committed to match-fund these costs via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Provision for this initiative has therefore been included in the HRA budget, to be approved by Council in February 2022. If successful, this element of funding will be distributed to Cheltenham Borough Council to administer directly.

There are no other new resource implications arising from this bid as other funding by Cheltenham Borough Council relates to resources already committed under existing contractual arrangements (i.e. the jointly commissioned Assertive Outreach and Enhance Housing Support services). Should, however, additional resource implications be required by Cheltenham Borough Council after Cabinet has approved the recommendations of this report, then the Lead Commissioner – Housing Services will consult with the council's s.151 officer to ensure that Finance has signed-off any potential uplift before a new decision is taken.

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<p><b>Legal implications</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council is party to a participation agreement dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021, along with Gloucestershire County Council and the other district Councils in the county. The agreement appoints Gloucester City Council as lead authority, responsible for procuring and managing the services necessary to “reduce rough sleeping, alleviate and prevent homelessness”. The agreement provides for a co-ordinating group that gives Cheltenham Borough Council and the other parties a say in the effective management in any commissioned services. The commissioning of any additional services using the RSI grant monies would require a variation of the agreement to describe those services and deal with any cost apportionment between the parties. When drafted it was anticipated the agreement would cover additional services in the future and it thus contains a provision permitting variation.</li> <li>2. As noted in paragraph 1 above Gloucester City Council is responsible for procuring new services, and the participation agreement requires that the City Council to adhere to its own contract procedure rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 when doing so.</li> <li>3. Any part of the initiative delivered by Cheltenham Borough Homes Limited will require variation of the existing contract between the company and Cheltenham Borough Council.</li> <li>4. Any grant funding paid directly to Cheltenham Borough Council will require the Council to enter into a grant agreement with the funding body, detailing the amount of grant, purposes for which it can be used, and any repayment provisions.</li> <li>5. Paragraph 2.1 of the report indicates that the RSI contributes towards the Council’s fulfilment of its statutory duties in preventing and alleviating homelessness.</li> </ol> <p><b>Contact officer: Linden Dunham, One Legal,</b>  <a href="mailto:Linden.dunham@onelegal.org.uk">Linden.dunham@onelegal.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b></p>	<p>No impact on CBC as a direct result of this report.</p>
<p><b>Key risks</b></p>	<p>The risks are set out in Appendix 1.</p>
<p><b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b></p>	<p>Application for this funding bid will support the council’s corporate priority: ‘Increasing the supply of housing and investing to build resilient communities’, as well as the council’s place vision: ‘Cheltenham is a place where people and communities thrive’.</p>

<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	None as a direct result of this report.
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	None as a direct result of this report.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1** The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has recently launched its latest Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022-25. This is a 3 year grant funding initiative which, if successful, will enable local authorities to fund services that will help tackle rough sleeping in their area.
- 1.2** Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) has a strong history of working collaboratively with our neighbouring authorities across the county on tackling rough sleeping. Over the years, a number of initiatives have been commissioned across the county, using DLUHC's RSI funding. RSI is now in its fifth successive year. Previously, the initiatives have provided funding on an annual basis only. However, as the latest grant funding initiative will cover the period to the end of March 2025, local authorities will have the opportunity to put in plans to tackle rough sleeping with greater funding certainty over the medium term.
- 1.3** The deadline for our RSI 2022-25 grant funding application is 25<sup>th</sup> February. It is anticipated that authorities will be notified of the outcome during April 2022, with funding being made available from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022.

## **2. Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022-25**

- 2.1** RSI 2022-25 builds on RSIs from previous years. The main focus of this funding is to enable local authorities to undertake the following:
- Identify at-risk individuals to prevent them from sleeping rough for the first time;
  - Support those currently sleeping rough to move off the streets;
  - Support those who have slept rough to ensure they do not return to the streets; and
  - Ensure that systems and structures are in place to embed change and to monitor progress.
- 2.2** Across the county, a number of initiatives will help support the above. These include:
- 2.2.1 Somewhere Safe to Stay Hubs**

These hubs comprise our immediate off the street offer for rough sleepers, including those who

would otherwise become rough sleepers. One hub is based in Cheltenham, the other Gloucester, and both hubs offer accommodation irrespective of local connection (given that rough sleepers will not necessarily choose to reside solely within the districts where they have a local connection). At present it is anticipated that 100% of the costs of these hubs will continue to come from RSI funding.

### **2.2.2 Multiple Disadvantage Team/Complex Need Navigators**

This will comprise a team of specialist officers with expertise in mental health, drug and alcohol services and Adult Social Care. They'll be tasked with supporting rough sleepers, including ex-rough sleepers residing in either the hubs, our Housing-led accommodation (see section 2.2.5 below), and indeed other forms of temporary accommodation. Their purpose will be to provide professional/clinical support services with a view to promoting tenancy sustainment and independent living, whilst also referring clients into mainstream services where appropriate. The bulk of this funding is expected to be sought through RSI, with potential for some contribution from Gloucestershire County Council commissioners.

### **2.2.3 Continued extension to our jointly commissioned Assertive Outreach Service**

District Authorities across the county currently jointly commission an Assertive Outreach Service to help rough sleepers take up offers of accommodation and to access relevant support services. In previous years districts have been successful in securing additional funding from RSI to bolster the provision of this service. We will therefore look to include a request within the current RSI funding bid to ensure that this additional provision can continue.

### **2.2.4 An Offending Housing interventions Officer**

This will be a new partnership initiative to ensure early interventions are undertaken to reduce the risk of ex-offenders, once released from prison, from becoming rough sleepers. We are also exploring whether this role could be part-funded by the Ministry of Justice.

### **2.2.5 Expansion of our Enhanced Housing Support Service to support our Housing-led Initiative**

Cheltenham has already made available 6 properties from our council-owned stock to be used to support our Housing-led initiative. Essentially, this initiative is about providing self-contained accommodation to rough sleepers with very complex needs, with enhanced housing support attached to help ensure that tenancies are sustained. Enhanced Housing Support services are currently jointly commissioned by the partnership, and we plan to expand this service further with additional funding from RSI. If successful, the partnership will be looking to secure an additional 20 properties from across the county for rough sleepers with very complex needs; 6 of these will be from our council-owned stock, taking Cheltenham's total provision to 12.

### **2.3 ACE-led trauma-informed post and an Intensive Tenancy Management post**

**2.3.1** Alongside these county-wide initiatives, Cheltenham is also proposing to include an ACE-led, trauma-informed post (i.e. based upon Adverse Childhood Experience principals), plus an Intensive Tenancy Management post, to complement the above Enhanced Housing Support Service. These posts will be specific to Cheltenham and will be managed by Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH). They will focus on working with the 6 ex-rough sleepers who have been accommodated within our housing-led properties, and they will then expand their work to include the next 6 rough sleepers as and when suitable properties become available to accommodate them.

**2.3.2** The ACE trauma-informed post will be a part-time post, focussing on helping tenants to better understand past traumas. Research has shown that traumas experienced at childhood can impact on behaviours in adulthood. The more traumas experienced, the greater the risk that this will impact on future behaviours. Traumas can range from physical and emotional abuse and neglect, through to types of household dysfunction, such as substance abuse within the family home, etc. This ACE-led, trauma-informed post will be centred upon building trust, and seeking to understand what has happened to the individual, rather than judging current behaviour; and, whilst acknowledging these challenges, focussing on the strengths, assets, dreams and ambitions of the individual. This will be with a view to increasing their resilience, so that they are better able to cope when challenging situations arise. The intention is to guide them into making more



positive life choices; giving them a sense of purpose and meaning that will equip them to lead more fulfilling lives. This could include, for example, helping them into education, training and/or employment.

**2.3.3** The Intensive Tenancy Management post will provide additional resource to focus on managing any anti-social behaviour issues, and any other breaches of tenancy conditions that may arise as a result of housing rough sleepers with highly complex needs in our council homes. This will include identifying any potential safeguarding issues and ensuring that harm is prevented both to any individuals concerned and the community more generally. Our learning from implementing our first pilot of 6 housing-led properties is that this dedicated resource is required to ensure that issues are dealt with as swiftly as possible, and that neighbouring communities are supported where needed. Ultimately, our aim is to ensure that rough sleepers with complex needs, and who are accommodated within our housing-led properties, are given every opportunity for their tenancies to succeed.

**2.3.4** As detailed in the Financial Implications section of this report, it is proposed that CBH will match-fund the costs of these posts. This will demonstrate buy-in on the part of CBH in respect of the proposal, and will increase the likelihood of this element of our RSI bid being successful.

## **2.4 Project Management**

Finally, as RSI will expect systems and structures to be in place to embed change and to monitor progress, we have included within our bid a request for funding to support a project management resource to help ensure these initiatives are delivered. This resource is currently managed by Gloucester City Council on behalf of the wider housing partnership.

## **3. Reasons for the decision**

**3.1** This is the fifth year of RSI funding, and districts within Gloucestershire have been successful in receiving significant funding during each of the previous grant funding rounds, with values of around £1m/year in recent years. RSI 2022-25 is therefore an important funding opportunity, which if successful will help to ensure the continued delivery of services to tackle rough sleeping

across the Borough and the county as a whole, as well as providing opportunities for creating new initiatives to tackle rough sleeping further.

- 3.2** The deadline for submitting our bid is 25<sup>th</sup> February. We are currently at the very early stages of finalising our bid, and it is important to note that this bid must be co-created with representatives from DLUHC. It is therefore possible that CBC may be asked to increase its financial contribution further. In the event that this happens, it is critical that CBC is sufficiently agile to make amendments to the bid, whilst also ensuring that the necessary checks and balances are in place for us to be confident that any additional funding requirements are financially sound. Delegating authority to the Lead Commissioner – Housing, in consultation with s.151 officer and Cabinet Member – Housing will ensure there is sufficient agility to make any swift amendments to the bid ahead of the submission deadline.

#### **4. Alternative options considered**

- 4.1** Not to apply for funding. This option is rejected for the reasons already highlighted in this report, and the risks highlighted in the risk assessment at appendix 1.

#### **5. How this initiative contributes to the corporate plan**

- 5.1** This funding bid will support CBC's corporate priority: 'Increasing the supply of housing and investing to build resilient communities', as well as the council's place vision: 'Cheltenham is a place where people and communities thrive' for the reasons specified in section 2 above.

#### **6. Consultation and feedback**

- 6.1** Consultation has been undertaken with partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors to help inform the bid. There is overwhelming agreement that services continue to be required, and enhanced, in order to tackle rough sleeping within Cheltenham and across the county.

#### **7. Performance Management – Monitoring and Review**

- 7.1** If successful, services to support rough sleepers will be commissioned and monitored via a county-wide Programme Management Group, chaired by CBC.

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<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment
<b>Background information</b>	N/A

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If we do not support a bid for grant funding for rough sleeping services, then opportunities to reduce rough sleeping in our borough will be significantly reduced.	Martin Stacy	25.1.21	4	5	20	Reduce	Approval is given to submit the bid for grant funding.	15.2.22	Martin Stacy	
	If the Cheltenham-specific element of the bid (at 2.3 of the report) is not successful, then this may reduce our effectiveness in tackling any emerging risks to tenancies within our housing-led dwellings.	Martin Stacy	25.1.21	3	5	15	Reduce	<p>The Enhanced Housing-led Support Service is currently commissioned to provide support services within our existing housing-led properties. This service will continue regardless of RSI funding. The bid will include a request for funding to expand the Enhanced Housing-led Support Service further.</p> <p>The newly proposed multi-disciplinary Navigator team's remit will include ex-rough sleepers living in our housing-led properties, again providing a degree of assurance that specialist support needs could be met without the additional CBH</p>	April 2022	Martin Stacy	

								resources.  CBC and CBH will explore whether additional funding could be made available from existing resources.  In the event that tenancy management issues cannot be addressed effectively, then tenancy enforcement measures will need to be implemented.			
	If DLUHC recommends that CBC increase its funding contributions in respect of the bid after Cabinet has approved the recommendations of this report, then CBC may be unable to carry out the necessary approvals by the submission deadline.		25.1.22	2	4	8	Reduce	Seek approval from Cabinet to delegate authority to Lead Commissioner – Housing to approve any changes to CBC funding contributions in support of the bid, in consultation with Cabinet Member – Housing and s.151 Officer.	15.2.22		