



## Officer Decision Report

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Jonathan South,  
Service Manager – Accommodation and Support

**Tel:** 0114 2930883

**Report to:** Janet Sharpe

**Date of Decision:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Subject:** Agree to extension of funding for the delivery of the  
Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme (AFO)

|  |     |                          |    |                                     |
|--|-----|--------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?   | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? ( <i>Insert reference number</i> )  |     |                          |    |                                     |
| Has appropriate consultation taken place?  | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?   | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-  |     |                          |    |                                     |
| <i>"The (<b>report/appendix</b>) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (<b>insert relevant paragraph number</b>) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i> |     |                          |    |                                     |

### **Purpose of Report:**

To outline the Accommodation for Ex-Offender Scheme and its planned delivery.

To seek approval to receive the extended funding from DHLUC and continue delivery until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

**Recommendations:**

- i. Approve the acceptance of the DHLUC grant offer extension of £149,000.
- ii. Approve the extensions of such staff and the delivery of the scheme as detailed in this report within City Wide Housing Services.

**Background Papers:****Appendix A** – Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**Appendix B** – Form 2a decision paper July 2021

| Lead Officer to complete:-  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1   | I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.   | Finance: <i>Sonya Oates</i>   |
|   |  | Legal: <i>Haroon Iqbal</i>  |
|   |  | Equalities & Consultation: <i>n/a</i>                                   |
|   |  | Climate: <i>n/a</i>   |
| <i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i> |  |   |
| 2   | <b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>   |   |
| 3   | <b>Relevant Policy Committee</b>   |   |
| 4   | I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1. |   |
|   | <b>Lead Officer Name:</b><br><i>Jonathan South</i>   | <b>Job Title:</b><br><i>Service Manager – Accommodation and Support</i> |
|   | <b>Date:</b> <i>6<sup>th</sup> February 2023</i>   |   |

## **1. PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 We know that 53% of those who have slept rough in the last year had been in prison. We also know there are particular challenges for some prisoner leavers accessing private rented sector tenancies. In an attempt to improve access to accommodation for ex-offenders the MHCLG requested bids to a fund to enable the introduction of new schemes specifically focused on supporting ex-offenders, increasing their access and sustainment of private rented sector tenancies.
- 1.2 The funding was developed to complement the MoJ's Community Accommodation Service (CAS). The aim is to build a pathway from prison, through the MoJ's CAS provision, before moving onto their own PRS tenancy through local schemes.
- 1.3 Sheffield submitted an original bid for funding which was successful and received notification of an award of £187,041 in July 2021 to provide up to 30 self contained private tenancies to ex-offenders along with support to manage the tenancy with the aim to reduce the risk of re-offending.
- 1.4 Delivery of the scheme commenced in January 2022. Following the effects of the pandemic on the private rental market the team were unable to secure 30 units of accommodation. We have worked with MHCLG and subsequently DHLUC on a reduced amount of funding in proportion to delivery in Sheffield. Sheffield has received £119,098.50 in funding to support this project until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The PRS team are on target to deliver 15 tenancies by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 in a 15 month period from January 2022.
- 1.5 DHLUC recently requested bids to extend funding up to March 2025. A bid was submitted to provide up to 15 units of accommodation per year. Funding was requested for one officer and incentives for landlords. Notification of a grant award of £149,000 for two years has been received.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

- 2.1 The decision to continue to deliver this scheme will provide additional accommodation and build further links between partner organisations delivering support and accommodation to ex-offenders. Rough sleeping can be an outcome for ex-offenders who struggle to secure and maintain a tenancy. There is often a cycle of repeat offending and rough sleeping within this group. By providing up to 15 homes per year and support in those tenancies the customers supported will be enabled to succeed with a reduced risk of re-offending and future homelessness.
- 2.2 One post will be extended within City Wide Housing Services to support the project within the Private Rented Solutions Team in the Accommodation and Support Service.

### **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

3.1 The Council is not required to carry out a consultation process in respect of this proposal. A formal consultation process has not been carried out.

### **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### **4.1 Equality Implications**

4.1.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out for the original report attached. The main impacts identified are that a new scheme will have a positive equality impact primarily on ex offenders successfully accessing accommodation with specific support to help them succeed in their new tenancy and new communities with a reduced risk of re-offending.

#### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

4.2.1 Total funding of £149,000 will be paid directly to Sheffield City Council by MHCLG under the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme in order to reduce the number of homeless prison leavers sleeping rough on release. The funding is to be received over two years; up to £74,500 in 2023/34 and £74,500 in 2024/25.

4.2.2 The grant agreement is in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoU). The MoU is not legally binding; however, to receive the full funding allocation there is an expectation that the conditions are to be met.

4.2.3 50% of the funding for 2023/24 will be paid upfront in April 2023, and the following 50% will be received in November 2023, subject to performance. The 2024/25 funding will be allocated in the same way.

4.2.4 Performance and spend will be reviewed by the funder in September 2023 as detailed in section 4.8 in the MoU. September funding requests will be paid in full unless £50,000 remains from the first tranche and the local authority have failed to reach 15% of their annual performance targets. Similar reviews will take place in January 2024 and September 2024 and will determine the amount of further funding to be received after the initial 50%.

4.2.5 Quarterly monitoring returns must also be completed via DELTA at the start of July, October, January and April.

4.2.6 All grant funding should be spent by the end of each respective year; there should be no carry forward of the previous year's funding.

4.2.7 This funding covers the interventions as listed below:

- Accommodation for up to 30 service users by March 2025 – 15 new tenancies by March 2024 and another 15 by March 2025.

- £74,000 fixed costs (e.g, staffing)
- £75,000 variable costs (e.g., rent deposits)
- Funding towards 1 x Housing Solutions Officer
- Funding for Landlord Incentive package.

Funding will not be paid for costs incurred beyond 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

- 4.2.8 This funding is for the purpose of delivering services in Sheffield City Council. It is Sheffield City Council responsibility to provide assurance to their MHCLG account manager that funding is accounted for and is only applied to activity agreed in the delivery plan.
- 4.2.9 All public sector procurement is governed by UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in Sheffield City Council must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as 'Contracts Standing Orders' (CSOs).
- 4.2.10 Contracts Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase/acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.
- 4.2.11 The Project Manager will need to read, understand and comply with all of the grant terms and conditions and the [Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients](#).
- 4.3 Legal Implications
- 4.3.1 The Council is receiving this grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC') under s.31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 4.3.2 The offer of Section 31 Grant carries with it certain terms and conditions which the Council has to accept before any grant will be paid. DLUHC have issued a MoU in respect of this grant. Legal has reviewed the MoU. This contains usual terms and conditions, and its terms are focussed to ensure achievement of the purpose for which grant is being given. While there is nothing onerous in the terms it is good to keep in view the grant requirements which may briefly be noted below:
- Grant is for a specific purpose which is explained in clause 3 of the MoU and must not be used for any other purpose.
  - The funding is to be received over two years; up to £74,500 in 2023/34 and £74,500 in 2024/25. DLUHC expects the Council to spend all grant funding by the end of the 31<sup>st</sup> of March of each respective financial year.

- iii. Clause 3.3 explains the project timeline and key milestones. Under the MoU the council to achieve by end of March 2024 – 15 new tenancies and by end of March 2025 – a further 15 new tenancies a total number of 30 tenancies by end of March 2025.
- iv. Under clause 4.7 before processing payments after April 23, DLUHC will review the Council performance and spend to date.
- v. There is an additional reporting requirement under clause 4.8 of the MoU. Under this clause the Council will, alongside the regular quarterly monitoring information set out in section 6 of the MoU, provide a funding request from a senior officer within the Council in September 2023 and September 2024.
- vi. The Council agrees to collaborate with DLUHC over monitoring and evaluation requirements, which will involve completing quarterly returns via DELTA (at the start of July, October, January & April), focused on collating data on including but not limited to the number of new PRS tenancies, referrals, exits and tenancy sustainment figures. This may need careful handling as DPA 2018, and UK GDPR may have strong provisions regarding that and any data sharing will have to be within the purview of those provisions.
- vii. The Council will complete their own Fraud Risk Assessment to ensure the safe administration of grants and that appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate against the risk of both fraud and payment error.

#### 4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no climate considerations within this proposal.

#### 4.5 Other Implications

- 4.5.1 There are no external implications to consider.

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 No alternative options were considered.

### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Permission is sought for final approval to progress use of this extended grant award to work to improve access to private rented accommodation for ex offenders.

Approval for the receipt and management of grant income is also requested.