



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 7 DECEMBER 2020
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 13
Subject	GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY WIDE P3 LEASING AGREEMENT
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr. Lisa Spivey- Cabinet Member for Housing Email: lisa.spivey@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing - Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01993 861221 Email: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk Caroline Clissold - Housing Manager Tel: 01594 812309 Email: caroline.clissold@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek approval for Cotswold District Council to contribute funds to the countywide p3 leasing scheme
Annexes	Annex A - Everyone Settled Paper to S151 officers and Strategic Housing Partnership Annex B - Partnership Leasing Agreement Annex C - Allocations Process Annex D – Equalities Impact Statement
Recommendation/s	<i>It is recommended that:</i> <i>a) the partnership agreement is approved and that the interim Chief Executive is delegated authority to sign it on behalf of the authority;</i> <i>b) the allocations process is approved;</i> <i>c) the contract cost of £17,000 is funded from the latest £100,000 Covid-19 grant allocation from Government.</i>
Corporate priorities	Delivering our services to the highest standards Providing good quality social rented homes Helping residents and communities access the support they need for good health and wellbeing
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Council Leader Portfolio Holder S151 Officer Interim Head of Paid Service Strategic Housing Partnership

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. In March 2020 a few days prior to the first national Covid-19 lockdown the Government issued a directive to Local Authorities to bring in all known rough sleepers, and those that were at risk of rough sleeping, off the streets to mitigate against the increased risk of serious harm or death from Covid-19 to this cohort. This became known as the 'Everyone In' directive.
- 1.2. Gloucestershire County Council commissioned 4 hotels / facilities on behalf of the County and the 6 Gloucestershire District Councils to accommodate this cohort of rough sleepers. At the height of lockdown, around 140 individuals were accommodated at any one time.
- 1.3. The Covid-19 Rough Sleepers Cell & the Accommodation Cell were created in response to this directive. Through these cells, the district councils have worked in partnership with the County Council and other agencies to successfully move around 160 clients into longer term, more secure accommodation. As a result the hotel accommodation has recently been reduced to 1 facility with 65 beds.
- 1.4. There are around 30 clients from across the County who were accommodated under the 'Everyone In' directive still using the remaining hotel, with around a further 10 clients in the wider homelessness pathways.
- 1.5. 29 individuals remain 'street homeless' across the county however the County Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator and the Outreach Team are currently working in conjunction with the district councils to find bespoke solutions for each client. The numbers given fluctuate on a daily basis therefore an approximation is being used for the current cohort for the purposes of this report.
- 1.6. This Council currently has no clients in the remaining county booked hotel but has 9 clients included in the wider homelessness pathway.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. On 3rd July 2020 a paper was presented to the Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership requesting approval to proceed with a leasing scheme arrangement with a partner agency, P3.
- 2.2. The aim of the scheme is to address the long term accommodation needs of the 'Everyone In' clients with low support needs who currently remain in short term accommodation.
- 2.3. This would be at a cost of £17,000 per authority for P3 to lease 50 properties across the county. This proposal was approved for consideration by the Gloucestershire Chief Finance Officer group on the 9th July 2020.
- 2.4. The Lead Authority, Stroud District Council asked that this be treated as a Countywide scheme to meet the needs of all of the clients remaining in accommodation sourced under 'Everyone In' with no specific guarantees of the number of properties sourced in each area, or that district councils would be given an even split of the allocations.
- 2.5. The Chief Finance Officers considered this proposal and were supportive of the spending on condition that a fair allocation policy was agreed. The paper considered by the Chief Finance Officers is attached Annex A.
- 2.6. This Countywide approach could also benefit Cotswold clients who have gravitated to the urban areas of the County.

- 2.7. The final draft of the Partnership agreement is attached at Annex B.
- 2.8. Concerns raised by this Council around the continuing lack of a fair and transparent allocations process have also now been resolved.
- 2.9. The Allocation Process is attached at Annex C and contains a specific reference to clients accommodated outside of the Countywide accommodation, but who are part of the 'Everyone In' cohort. This has been included to reflect that this Council has no clients currently in the County booked hotel.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The cost of the Countywide Partnership to this Council is £17,000. It is proposed that this cost is funded by an allocation from the latest Covid-19 Government grant received by this Council of £100,000.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The Partnership agreement has been fully considered at all stages by the Council's Legal service. Recommendations from the Council's Legal service have been incorporated within the Partnership Agreement attached at Annex B which has now been agreed by all legal parties involved. It is proposed that authority to enter in to the finalised Agreement is delegated to the Interim Chief Executive.
- 4.2. In response to the pandemic, and to support Local Authorities in ensuring that anyone rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping was given appropriate housing support and accommodation, the MHCLG added additional priority need and vulnerability criteria to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This stated that 'those with a history of rough sleeping should be considered vulnerable in the context of COVID-19, taking into account their age and underlying health conditions.'
- 4.3. Signposting to further guidance to assist agencies with the assessment of the homelessness sector was also included in the update entitled Coronavirus (COVID 19) – Clinical homeless sector plan: triage – assess – cohort – care.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. Due to the Countywide spirit of the Partnership agreement, alongside the high rental and property value in the Cotswolds, there is a risk that no properties will be sourced in this District.
- 5.2. Cotswold District Council clients may be offered accommodation outside of the District if accommodation is not available in the area.
- 5.3. If it is not suitable for clients to be accommodated outside of the area due to support needs or disruptions to support networks, Cotswold District Council clients may not be offered any accommodation under the P3 Leasing Scheme.
- 5.4. There is also a risk that the volume of Gloucester City clients may overwhelm the scheme, however this has been mitigated by the creation of the Allocations process and inclusion of a 'local offer first' consideration.
- 5.5. The contract with P3 includes a requirement to assess the scheme at the half way point when 25 properties have been sourced and allocated. At this point the Council could choose to either redirect P3 into sourcing accommodation in the

District, or withdraw from the scheme.

- 5.6. If the Council decides not to enter into the scheme, there could be reputational damage within the Countywide partnership.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. Low Impact – Few members of the general public / staff will be affected by this proposal. EIA attached, Annex D.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1. The Council could choose to set up its own leasing scheme to fulfil the needs of their remaining cohort, however this would be far more costly than joining a larger scheme.
- 8.2. To provide a support service for up to 8 properties would need a part time officer at a cost of around £10,000 - £12,000 a year in salary costs.
- 8.3. A leasing scheme would need to offer the landlord a rent guarantee, property maintenance and for this cohort, extensive housing support. The Local Housing Allowance for Cirencester for example is around £550 per calendar month however open market rental costs for a 1 bed property in the Cirencester area range from £550 to £800 per calendar month. Therefore for the Council to provide landlords with the same leasing service, it would make a loss of a minimum of approximately £125 per month for the support element alone (more support may be needed depending on the clients assessed need) as the maximum income that could be gained would be the Local Housing rate of £550.
- 8.4. With any repairs being in addition to this, increased capability within the Property Services Team would be needed to carry out regular repairs, or a contract entered into with an external contractor.
- 8.5. A further budget would be needed to return the property back to the original state prior to the lease ending.
- 8.6. In order for the scheme to be financially viable for the client to sustain long term, rents would need to be within Local Housing Allowance rates.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. None.

(END)