

OFFICER DELEGATION**TO BE UPLOADED TO THE INTERNET BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Date: 24/03/20	Ref No:
Type of Operational Decision:	
Executive Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Council Decision <input type="checkbox"/>
Status: Urgent	
Title/Subject matter: Stepping Stone Project- Dispersed 15 bed provision	
Budget/Strategy/Policy/Compliance – Is the decision:	
(i) within an Approved Budget	
(ii) in accordance with Council Policy	
Equality Impact Assessment [Does this decision change policy, procedure or working practice or negatively impact on a group of people? If yes – complete EIA and summarise issues identified and recommendations – forward EIA to Corporate HR]	No

Details of Operational Decision Taken [with reasons]:

In this challenging climate, there is a pressing need to identify suitable self-contained accommodation, for vulnerable customers at risk of Covid 19, or have been infected. This has also been recognised as a need by the Government, GMCA and also by local demand. The need is for the following customer groups:

- People sleeping rough on the streets that have been infected with Covid 19 and need to be isolated
- Those that are ready to be discharged from hospital and are placing strain on increasingly finite hospital beds
- Single homeless or childless couple who have the symptoms of Covid 19 and cannot be accommodated shared housing.

Current Context

Bury Council commissions the following services where the identified customer groups can be accommodated.

- A Bed Every Night (ABEN) - This has been funded as a 15 bed provision, however this has been reduced to 10 to mitigate the risks of spread of infection.
 - Bury Bridges (Adullam) and Bury Gateway (Calico). Both services are accommodating rough sleepers, however they are now at full capacity.
- The housing options are increasingly limited, unless alternative provision is identified.

Risks

- The rough sleeper community is characterised with underlying health problems, where there is greater vulnerability to infection. If there is a rough sleeper that is infected and uses the ABEN provision, the health implication for them and others can be fatal. Also, the implications of this to the wider community is well documented.
- More people rough sleeping due to lack of provision
- Needed hospital beds not being available due to people who are ready to be discharged not accommodated in the community.

Proposal

The Council has approached a number of providers to ask for the assistance. The Stepping Stone Project (SSP) is such an organisation. For a minimum of a 6 months pilot, SSP would provide for both those not infected by Covid 19 and those that are:

- 15 Fully furnished one bedroom properties with self-contained facilities including toilets and kitchen
- Properties will be situated in the borough
- Support checking customers in and out of property each day if they are healthy
- Daily support (daily telephone support during COVID19)
- Basic evening meal and breakfast
- Free utilities to the customer

Bury Council would:

- Underwrite any debts/costs from unused properties. It should be noted, that it is very unlikely that these self-contained properties will be void.
- Refer vulnerable customers for properties.
- Work with the provider to move customers into more secure accommodation, so that there is a greater benefit for the homeless community.

Contract Costs:

- Circa £55 per night rental charge to Housing Benefit, not Bury Council. The authority will facilitate fast process of these claims.
- Circa £30k for Supported Housing Worker during pilot period per 15 properties.

Recommendation

The recommendation is to progress with this proposal for a 6 month period. There is a need now to have suitable provision in place. SSP is a reputable housing provider in the Greater Manchester area and there is a strong confidence that they are able to deliver this provision quickly.

Referral pathways will be drafted in conjunction with relevant teams in the Council and SSP.

Decision taken by:	Signature:	Date:
Joint Chief Finance Officer (CCG & LA)		
Interim Executive Director - Communities & Wellbeing		
Head of Workforce – Communities & Wellbeing		
Members Consulted [see note 1 below]		
Cabinet Member/Chair		
Lead Member		
Opposition Spokesperson		

Notes

1. It is not generally a requirement to consult with any Members on Operational Decisions but where a Chief Officer considers it necessary to consult with the appropriate Cabinet Member and/or Lead Member, they must sign the form so as to confirm that they have been consulted and that they agree with the proposed action. The signature of the Opposition Spokesperson should be obtained to confirm that he/she has been consulted.
2. **This form must not be used for urgent decisions.**