GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD1225

Title: 'No First Night Out' pilot

Executive Summary:

The draft London Housing Strategy includes a new policy commitment on rough sleeping: to minimise the flow of new rough sleepers onto the street, by working with local authorities and voluntary sector partners. Considering this new commitment, the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group recently indicated its support for a 'No First Night Out' (NFNO) pilot that would support a number of London boroughs' local authority housing options services to identify new approaches and interventions to assist in prevention and minimisation of rough sleeping. In addition, the pilot would seek to generate learning that could be shared with other such services. Up to a maximum of £80,000 from the 2014-15 rough sleeping budget could be made available for this pilot and awarded as grants to local authorities and to voluntary sector organisations working with them. There is scope to allocate this over 2014-15 and 2015-16 by offering additional funding to London bidders to a new Department for Communities and Local Government funding programme that supports the prevention of single homelessness and rough sleeping, where their proposals support the outcomes proposed for the NFNO pilot.

Decision:

That the Executive Director approves:

(a) expenditure of up to a maximum of £80,000 from the 2014-15 rough sleeping budget to be allocated as grant funding to local authorities willing to be part of a 'No First Night Out' pilot; and

(b) allocation of this funding in parallel with the Department of Communities and Local Government's forthcoming 'Preventing Homelessness' funding.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities. It has my approval.

Name David Lunts **Position** Executive Director, Housing and Land

Signature **Date** **10 June 2014**

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

In 2008, the Mayor of London set London's first ever target to eradicate rough sleeping in the city, with specific commitments to ensure that no one lives on London's streets and that nobody arriving there sleeps rough for a second night. He has since been working closely with the capital's local authorities and voluntary organisations. The work has yielded considerable progress. In particular, the proportion of those new to the streets who spent a second night out has fallen from 41% in 2008/09 to 25% in 2012/13.

However, considerable challenges remain. The flow of new rough sleepers to London's streets has risen in recent years. It is for this reason that the revised draft London Housing Strategy introduced a new Mayoral commitment on rough sleeping: to minimise the flow of new rough sleepers onto the streets. Moreover, in recent months, local authorities and their partners have reported finding it increasingly difficult to prevent those new to the streets from spending a second night out. [redacted]

Local authority housing options services have a key part to play both in stemming the flow of new rough sleepers to the streets and in ensuring that those who arrive on the streets can be prevented from spending a second night out.

In relation to stemming the flow of rough sleepers, those facing homelessness often seek advice from local authority housing options services. It is of concern that almost two fifths of individuals with a connection to a London borough who were seen by the Mayor's flagship service No Second Night Out (NSNO) between its launch in April 2011 and the end of December 2013 had previously done so. This proportion also seems to be growing: in 2011, less than three in ten of those seen by NSNO had previously sought advice from housing options services, but by 2013 the proportion was almost half.

Preventing new rough sleepers from spending a second night out depends on access to assessment provision, particularly NSNO hubs and also the GLA-funded No Living on the Streets (NLOS) service. Maintaining throughput in these services requires local authority housing options services to provide advice to users of these services promptly and to have in place effective pathways of provision for rough sleepers into which they can refer NSNO and NLOS users. That this process does not always operate as smoothly as it might is apparent in the fact that, in 2013, 37% of those who stayed in NSNO hubs for longer than the 72 hours within which the hubs seek to complete assessments did so for reasons related to housing options services' processes or provision.

In April 2014, the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group (MRSG) discussed ways in which the Mayor might fulfil his commitment to work with housing options services and voluntary sector organisations to minimise the flow of rough sleepers to the streets. The group were supportive of proposals that GLA fund a 'No First Night Out' (NFNO) pilot project that would help a number of London local authorities effectively and reliably identify, advise and assist:

- those who are at risk of rough sleeping, as evidenced by support needs or other indicators that participants identify as relevant risk factors in the course of the pilot project; and
- those who enter assessment provision having reached the streets, and who require help to move on from assessment provision and avoid returning to the streets.

As well as developing approaches and interventions to assist these groups, participating local authorities would be expected to develop and disseminate resources through which they can share their learning with other housing options services.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) participate in the MRSG and, following this discussion at the group's April meeting, they indicated that they planned to make funding available nationally for prevention of single homelessness and thus rough sleeping. It makes sense to dovetail the allocation of Government and Mayoral funding, given the close affinity between the objectives of the two projects. Partnership working will also provide opportunities to publicise the NFNO funding. It should encourage London authorities who might otherwise not have done so to think about how their proposals could focus specifically on preventing and minimising rough sleeping and should thereby increase the overall amount of funding invested in support of this objective. DCLG are willing to include a paragraph in their prospectus, due for publication the week beginning 9 June 2014, alerting London authorities to the availability of Mayoral funding and to share with us the proposals of London bidders seeking funding from the Mayor. GLA can make some supplementary information available on its website, including an addendum to DCLG's application form that asks London bidders seeking Mayoral funding some additional questions about how they will meet the particular objectives of the NFNO pilot.

The NFNO pilot would be funded from the 2014-15 rough sleeping services budget, but with funding released over two years - 2014-15 and 2015-16. This would mean that the GLA's funding period corresponded with DCLG's, without committing any resources from a post-2015 budget that has not yet been confirmed by Government. If a post-2015 budget is, as anticipated, confirmed, it is likely that there will be considerable pressure on the funding available. It is therefore preferable to allocate funding for this pilot project from the 2014-15 budget.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

The proposed NFNO pilot is intended to facilitate lasting improvements in the capacity of local authority services to:

- identify those seeking housing options advice who are at risk of rough sleeping,
- ensure that these individuals receive high quality advice,
- provide options that suit the needs of this group, and
- deliver the support necessary to maximise take up of the options offered.

The outcomes expected of the pilot are as follows:

- **improved understanding of particular barriers and aids to preventing and minimising rough sleeping:** Questions participating local authorities might seek to answer through their participation in the pilot include the following:
  - Are those who may end up rough sleeping able to access advice in the first place?
  - How consistently are individuals at risk of rough sleeping identified?
  - Is there scope to identify them more reliably and, if so, what are the main risk factors to look for?
  - Do those who are at risk of rough sleeping receive high quality advice?
  - Are there suitable options available to them?
  - Do those at risk of rough sleeping consistently engage with the advice given and take up options available? If not, are there ways of improving engagement?

- **approaches and interventions through which housing options services can prevent and minimise rough sleeping are developed and embedded in services' practice**
  - Participating local authorities should develop these by drawing on their improved understanding of particular barriers and aids to preventing and minimising rough sleeping.
  - They should embed these approaches and interventions in the practice of housing options services.

- Once embedded, the approaches and interventions should deliver significant and lasting reductions in the proportions of rough sleepers connected to participating local authorities who end up on the streets having previously sought advice from housing options and who overstay in NSNO and NLOS hubs. While recognising that changes of this nature can only be delivered over time, the Mayor would expect to see evidence of change before the end of the period over which funding is awarded.

- **resources that can be used by other London local authorities are developed and disseminated**
  - Participating local authorities should produce a durable resource that reflects their own learning and can be used by other London local authorities to help them more effectively prevent and minimise rough sleeping.
  - Participants should also disseminate and promote the resource to London local authorities and those who work with them to tackle rough sleeping.

3. Equality comments

The overall aim of the NFNO pilot is to prevent and minimise rough sleeping. As such, it is expected that the project will have only positive impacts on potential or actual rough sleepers who may receive assistance through the pilot, irrespective of any protected characteristics. It is not anticipated that such positive impacts will vary between rough sleepers from different equality groups who may benefit from the pilot.

Insofar as a large majority of those who sleep rough are male, the pilot may yield disproportionate benefits for men, but this is because of the profile of its target group, rather than due to any intrinsic bias in the design of the pilot. It is also the case that those from ethnic minority backgrounds are over-represented among rough sleepers. By reducing the numbers of people reaching the streets and the time that some of those who do reach the streets stay there, the service may have positive impacts for those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Any local authorities who secure funding to participate in the NFNO pilot are bound by the public sector equality duty.

4. Other considerations

4.1 Key risks and issues

Risk description	Rating	Mitigating action
Few or no bids are received	Green	One voluntary sector organisation funded by the GLA's rough sleeping programme has already been in discussion with two or three local authorities about the scope for work to improve their rough sleeping prevention work. The idea of funding a NFNO pilot was discussed at the MRSG in April 2014 and during or following that discussion, a number of local authorities indicated that they were interested in participating. Promoting this pilot alongside DCLG's 'Preventing Homelessness' funding should ensure the funding has a high profile among London authorities.

Bids are received, but come from local authorities who are already performing relatively well in preventing and minimising homelessness.	Green	GLA has used data from its NSNO service to assess the relative performance of local authorities in this area. (See the accompanying paper for the MRSG.) This analysis will be used in assessing how bids received score against the 'Evidence of need' criterion.
Bids are received, but their quality is poor.	Amber	Information on the GLA website, to which DCLG's prospectus will direct London bidders interested in Mayoral funding, will set out clear objectives for the pilot and criteria for assessing bids. This should help bidders frame bids that deliver the outcomes expected. GLA will also liaise with Homeless Link's London Regional Managers, so that they are equipped to offer local authorities advice on preparing bids – as they will for those bidding for DCLG funding.
Local authorities use funding allocated to fund existing provision, in a context where they are subject to pressures on their budgets.	Green	Information on the pilot made available on GLA's website will make clear that this is not permitted. Where it is not clear from bids to DCLG and supplementary information provided to GLA that participating local authorities are seeking to provide an additional service, further questions can be asked of these authorities about current and planned provision. Quarterly monitoring of work completed with funding allocated can also be used to ensure that recipients are not funding existing provision.
Participants in the pilot struggle to identify (affordable or replicable) interventions that help local authorities prevent and minimise rough sleeping, with the upshot that the service has no positive impact	Amber	Information on assessment criteria made available on GLA's website will make clear that bidders should explain ways in which they anticipate they would work to deliver the objectives of the project. While local authorities are undoubtedly seeking to prevent and minimise rough sleeping in a challenging context, there are a range of avenues they could pursue to improve outcomes that would not require high levels of expenditure. Work to enable more consistent identification of and more effective engagement with those at risk of rough sleeping are examples.
The approaches and interventions identified by participating local authorities are not embedded in their practice, so positive outcomes arising from the pilot are lost once the funding ends.	Green	Bids will be assessed against a sustainability criterion. In describing this, information made available on the GLA website will make clear that bidders are expected to explain how they will sustain outcomes in participating local authorities' housing options services after March 2016. GLA can also use regular monitoring to ensure that recipients of funding remain attentive to this element of their work throughout the funding period.

The approaches and interventions identified by participating local authorities are not replicated elsewhere, because participating authorities neglect to develop and disseminate resources that can be used by other London authorities. This could limit the positive impact of the pilot project,	Green	Bids will be assessed against a sustainability criterion. In describing this, information made available on the GLA website will make clear that bidders are expected to outline how they will develop and disseminate resources that can be used by other London local authorities to help them more effectively prevent and minimise rough sleeping. GLA can also use regular monitoring to ensure that recipients of finding remain attentive to this element of their work throughout the funding period.
The approaches and interventions identified by participating local authorities are not replicated elsewhere, limiting the positive impact of the pilot project, because other authorities do not take up the resources available.	Amber	GLA can use monitoring to ensure participating local authorities have developed appropriate plans for promoting the resource developed. Work can be undertaken through the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group and with partners such as the London Councils' Housing Needs and Homelessness Group, the sub-regional Homelessness Coordinators and Homeless Link to encourage take up of the resources available.

4.2 Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

Funding a NFNO pilot is in keeping with a new Mayoral commitment, made in the revised draft London Housing Strategy 2014, to work with local authorities and the voluntary sector to minimise the flow of new rough sleepers to the streets. It also supports longer-standing strategic aims, particularly the target that those new to the streets are prevented from spending a second night out, and will complement the work of the GLA-funded NSNO service.

4.3 Impact assessments and consultations

The Mayor's Rough Sleeping Commissioning Framework 2011-15 was made available for public consultation. The revised draft statutory London Housing Strategy has been subject to a full integrated impact assessment and undergone statutory consultation with the London Assembly and functional bodies and with the public.

In line with a request from the Deputy Mayor for Housing, the Housing Investment Group will be asked to review these proposals at its meeting on 27 June 2014. Given the timetable for implementation, the paper presented will be for information.

5. Financial Comments

5.1 Approval is being sought for expenditure of up to £80,000, to be allocated as grants to local authorities as part of a 'No First Night Out' pilot. The total cost will be funded from the 2014/15 Rough Sleeping budget, with spend of £30,000 being incurred in 2014/15 and £50,000 in 2015/16.

5.2 Any changes to this proposal, including budgetary implications, will be subject to further approval via the Authority's decision-making process. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

5.3 The Programme, Policy and Services unit within the Housing and Land Directorate will be responsible for managing this project and ensuring that all project activity and expenditure complies with the Authority's Financial Regulations and Contracts & Funding Code.

6. Legal Comments

6.1 Sections 1-3 of this report indicate that:

6.1.1 the proposals in respect of which the Director's approval is sought may be considered to fall within the GLA's powers to do such things as are facilitative of or conducive to the promotion of social development in Greater London;

6.1.2 in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the GLA's related statutory duties to:

(a) Pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;

(b) Consider how the proposals will promote the health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and

(c) Consult with the appropriate bodies.

6.2 Section 1-3 above indicates that the contribution of up to £80,000 to local authorities or voluntary organisations working with them amounts to the provision of grant funding and not payment for works, supplies or services. Officers must ensure that:

6.2.1 the funding is distributed fairly, transparently, in accordance with the GLA's equalities and in manner which affords value for money in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code; and

6.2.2 an appropriate funding agreement is put in place between and executed by the GLA and the recipients before any commitment to fund is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	**Timeline**
Launch of DCLG prospectus and publication of additional information on GLA's website	Week commencing 9 June 2014
Assessment of bids	August 2014
Allocations announced	Sept 2014
Milestones agreed with recipients of funding	autumn 2014

8. Background/supporting papers

MRSG paper 'The role of local authority housing options services in the prevention of rough sleeping in London'

Draft DCLG funding prospectus

Draft information for GLA website, including funding prospectus

Public access to information
Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and other legislation. Information on this decision will be included in the Mayor's report and decision list. The form will be available publically from then. Any facts and advice that should not be made automatically available on request should not be included in Part 1 but instead on the separate Part 2 form. Deferment is only applicable where release before that date would compromise the implementation of the decision being approved.

Is the publication of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, for what reason:

Until what date: Not applicable
Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:	Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)
Drafting officer: Deborah Halling, Senior Policy Officer, Housing and Land has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:	✓
Assistant Director/Head of Service: Alan Benson and Debra Levison have reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.	✓
Financial and Legal: The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.	✓

Executive Director, Resources

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial and legal advice have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Signature **Date**