

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2395

Title: Prisoners Abroad

Executive Summary:

The GLA commissions and funds a range of pan-London rough sleeping services, which collectively form the Mayor's 'Life off the Streets' programme. This Director Decision (DD) approves spending of £110,000 (comprising £60,000 of funding from the GLA budget and £50,000 from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) to grant fund Prisoners Abroad's resettlement service for former prisoners deported to London from a period in prison abroad. This will help prevent people rough sleeping upon their return to the capital and support them to reintegrate into society. It will also reduce the risk of reoffending and the risk to public safety.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Housing and Land approves:

1. MOPAC making a revenue grant of £50,000 to the GLA under section 120/121 of the GLA Act 1999; and
2. expenditure of £110,000 to grant fund Prisoners Abroad's resettlement service until the end of September 2020.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

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: Rickardo Hyatt

Position: Interim Deputy Executive
Director Housing and Land

Signature:



Date: 30/09/19

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. During 2018/19, 8,855 people were seen sleeping rough in London – more than double the number in 2010/11. Of these, 62 per cent were new to the street, 51 per cent were non-UK nationals, and 31 per cent were from Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Around three-quarters had one or more support need, with 50 per cent having a need related to mental health, 42 per cent alcohol, and 41 per cent drugs.
- 1.2. Since 2016, the Mayor has coordinated efforts through his 'No Nights Sleeping Rough' (NNSR) taskforce to identify, implement, lobby for, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions to tackle rough sleeping. In his London Housing Strategy, the Mayor set out his aim that there should be a sustainable route off the streets for every rough sleeper in London. In June 2018, he published his Plan of Action which outlines the steps that need to be taken by City Hall, the Government, and others to achieve this.
- 1.3. Since taking office, the Mayor has been expanding the pan-London rough sleeping services the GLA funds and commissions. These services collectively form his 'Life off the Streets' programme. They are services for rough sleepers, or initiatives to tackle rough sleeping, that cannot or would not be provided at a London borough level, as they are pan-London or multi-borough in their remit.
- 1.4. In 2018/19, the last settled base for four per cent of people new to London's streets (93 people) was prison. Of all rough sleepers seen in London during 2018/19, over a third had been to prison at some point in the past. Data from the Plan of Action suggests this proportion was significantly higher among long-term rough sleepers (49 per cent) and those who had returned to rough sleeping after having accommodation (57 per cent) than others. For more than one in 10 people who returned to rough sleeping after having successfully accessed accommodation, going to and then leaving prison was the direct cause of their return to the streets. Effectively supporting people with histories of offending is therefore vital to preventing street homelessness.
- 1.5. The challenges for those who have been in prison abroad and face deportation back to London are particularly complex. Typically arriving at Heathrow, most former prisoners come with few, if any possessions, money or clothes. Most of those deported have been out of the UK for many years. Moreover, they often have very few friends or family to turn to, often due to the length of time they have been away. In addition, prisoners deported from overseas generally receive no support from local authorities, where typically the legislative duty to secure accommodation would not apply due to no borough connection. Furthermore, a lack of knowledge of the welfare systems and services means that people can face long delays in receiving welfare support. As a result, deportees are in an extremely vulnerable position.
- 1.6. Prisoners Abroad is a human rights and welfare charity that has – for over 20 years – been providing humanitarian aid, advice, and support to British citizens who have been in prison overseas. An external evaluation of the organisation found that 78 per cent of ex-prisoners returning from abroad would have ended up rough sleeping without their support.¹
- 1.7. The organisation has, to date, been funded mainly through charitable donations. The recent loss of a major funder means that the resettlement service component of the project is currently under threat, and the organisation has approached the GLA for one year's funding (of £110,000) to cover their funding shortfall.
- 1.8. The funding will help ensure that deportees experience 'no first night out', through the provision of immediate emergency accommodation at the point of need, once ex-prisoners arrive in London. The service will also provide subsistence support and medical assistance for deportees with

¹ 'Evaluation of Prisoners Abroad's London Hardship Fund' (2018), M&E Consulting (external evaluation)

physical/mental health issues, where appropriate. Prisoners Abroad also facilitate access to welfare services and longer-term accommodation.

- 1.9. As well as preventing rough sleeping, Prisoners Abroad's holistic approach to supporting former prisoners helps to meet MOPAC priorities relating to reducing reoffending. It does so by providing access to essential needs combined with wider support to non-criminal networks through their peer support groups and Work Preparation Programme. This therefore also contributes to MOPAC's commitments around working with target groups such as violent offenders, those with mental health and substance misuse issues, female offenders and persistent offenders as set out in the Mayor's 'A Safer City for All Londoners': Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021.
- 1.10. An absence of this service would leave ex-offenders arriving in the capital with little or no support, a lack of formal risk assessment upon arrival, a high likelihood of rough sleeping and an increased risk of reoffending. Prisoners Abroad's wealth of expertise in the area means they are best placed to provide this service where no other organisation currently has the mandate or ability to do so.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The overarching objective of the Prisoners Abroad service is to resettle violent offenders, offenders with mental health and substance misuse issues, and female offenders recently deported to London following imprisonment overseas, to reduce reoffending and, in turn, minimising the risk to public safety whilst preventing people from rough sleeping. The expected outcomes are as follows:
 - 90 per cent of deportees avoid rough sleeping upon return to London;
 - British prisoners are better prepared for release;
 - deportees are better able to secure and maintain a home;
 - deportees feel less isolated;
 - deportees are better able to access welfare/social support systems;
 - deportees are better prepared to (re-)enter work, education or training;
 - deportees are assessed on five major needs² that could contribute to their offending behaviour; and
 - deportees report an improvement in 80 per cent of their identified needs at the end of the service due to the support provided.
- 2.2. To achieve these expected outcomes, 200 deportees will be provided with advice and support, with the following outputs:
 - 140 British prisoners abroad receive the 'Coming Home' handbook or a starter pack on preparing for release;
 - 75 British prisoners have completed needs assessments while in prison abroad and upon arrival into London;
 - 160 deportees are provided with subsistence support and basic necessities;
 - 75 deportees are provided with emergency accommodation;

² Anticipated to include five of the following: emergency housing, long-term housing, medication/medical advice, addiction, access to ID, welfare, contact with family, isolation, finding a job/education/training, bank account access.

- 70 deportees are supported into longer-term accommodation;
- 90 deportees are made to other services, including healthcare;
- 60 deportees attend the Work Preparation Programme and peer support groups;
- 110 deportees are supported to access welfare benefits;
- 155 deportees are provided with travel documents or cards and mobile phones;
- Prisoners Abroad produces a detailed funding strategy for future support; and
- 75 offenders have updated needs assessments and action plans which are reviewed with Resettlement Officers at key stages of the Resettlement Pathway and end of service.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and GLA are subject to a public-sector equality duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being "relevant" protected characteristics).
- 3.2. Of those seen rough sleeping in 2018/19:
 - 51 per cent were non-UK nationals;
 - 50 per cent had a mental health need;
 - 16 per cent were women;
 - most of those seen rough sleeping (56 per cent) were in the 26-45 age group;
 - eight per cent were under 26 years old;
 - 12 per cent were over 55; and
 - five people were under 18.
- 3.3. As people rough sleeping in London are over-represented among those with the protected characteristics of race and disability. Various aspects of the project's work will foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not. The peer support function will ensure that deportees (many of whom are likely to have a protected characteristic) build strong relationships with others who also have experience of the criminal justice system, though may not share their protected characteristic. Furthermore, one of the project's key objectives, to reduce isolation amongst deportees will help ensure that deportees are more socially integrated and able to foster good relationships with others.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

Risk description	Inherent risk			Mitigating action	Residual risk		
	Prob	Impact	Overall		Prob	Impact	Overall
Grant funding is for one year only	4	3	12	<p>Prisoners Abroad have a short timescale to prepare and set up alternative funding streams. However, one of the outputs for the organisation is a sustainable funding strategy for the future.</p> <p>Prisoners Abroad have been operating for over 20 years and no other organisation currently has the capacity or the expertise to provide this service. Therefore, there is unlikely to be competition from other providers to provide this service.</p>	1	3	3
There is insufficient demand for the service	3	4	12	<p>The aim of working with 200 former prisoners is based on demand for the service in previous years.</p> <p>Prisoners Abroad have long standing partnerships with central government, local authorities and other justice organisations. This ensures that any referrals are directed to Prisoners Abroad.</p>	1	2	2

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.1 The objectives of the proposals are in line with

- the pan-London Rough Sleeping Commissioning Framework 2016 priorities 1, 8, and 9;
- the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Plan of Action;
- the Mayor's London Housing Strategy policy 7.1; and
- the Mayor's 'A Safer City for All Londoners': Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021.

Impact assessments and consultations

4.2 The London Housing Strategy and 'A Safer City for All Londoners': Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 was subject to a full public consultation and the Pan-London Rough Sleeping Commissioning Framework 2016+ was made available for consultation with key stakeholders and partners. All were subject to a full equalities impact assessment.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision requests approval for the receipt of £50k from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).
- 5.2. The decision also requests approval for expenditure of a grant of £110k to fund Prisoners Abroad resettlement service. The service will help to prevent up to 200 British ex-prisoners deported to the UK from abroad sleeping rough on the streets in the period up to September 2020.
- 5.3. The expenditure of £110k will be funded from the £50k received from MOPAC as part of this decision and £60k from the allocated 2019-20 and 2020-21 Rough Sleeping Budget.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director fall within the statutory powers of the Authority to promote and/or to do anything which is facilitative of or conducive or incidental to social development within Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority'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 improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
 - (c) consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested of him, the Director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3. The proposed grant of up to £110,000 to Prisoners Abroad may be viewed as a conditional gift rather than a contract for services and supplies. The officers are reminded that they must comply with the requirements of the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code, when they distribute the said funding. Furthermore, the officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement be put in place between the Authority and Prisoners Abroad before any funding is distributed.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Funding agreement signed	1 October 2019
Project start date	1 October 2019
Project end date	30 September 2020

Appendices and supporting papers:

None.

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If YES, for what reason: No

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form –NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Maya Walker has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Debra Levison has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

Financial and Legal advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 30 September 2019.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature

M. D. Bllg

Date

3.10.19

