

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2471

**Title: StreetLink, StreetLink London and Night Workers**

### 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. The Mayor has been expanding these services since taking office, and he is expanding them further this year. This Director's Decision seeks approval to grant-fund the GLA's contribution to the London element of the StreetLink service for £50,000 for a further year, the development and management of a London version of the StreetLink website for £45,000, and additional staffing for the StreetLink phone line for £14,958.

This funding will enable the continuation and enhancement of the StreetLink service until the end of March 2021. It will also enhance the information available to Londoners and the StreetLink phonenumber resources. This will help more people sleeping rough in London to leave the streets, by enabling services to intervene early as a result of contact being made with the StreetLink service.

### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Housing & Land approves:

1. Up to £50,000 of grant funding to Homeless Link as a contribution to the London element of the StreetLink service;
2. Up to £45,000 of grant funding to Homeless Link to build and manage a version of the StreetLink website for London; and
3. Up to £14,958 of grant funding to St Mungo's for additional StreetLink night worker roles.

### 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:**

17 March 2020

## 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, 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 needs (50 per cent mental health, 42 per cent alcohol, and 41 per cent drugs). New rough sleepers account for 62 per cent of all those rough sleeping in London, and the number of new rough sleepers is increasing significantly, rising by 24 per cent between 2017/18 and 2018/19. The number of new rough sleepers is increasing at a faster rate than the number already sleeping rough or returning to rough sleeping after a period of time in a form of accommodation<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2 Since 2016, the Mayor has coordinated efforts through his Life off the Streets (LOTS) 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 Rough Sleeping 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 (LOTS) programme. They are services for people with experience, or at risk, of sleeping rough, 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. When the Mayor came to office, the GLA was spending £8.45m per annum on its rough sleeping services. This year the total GLA budget for rough sleeping services will have more than doubled to over £19m, not including the funding outlined in this DD.
- 1.4 The Mayor contributes grant funding to the national StreetLink service (see MD1532). Other funders are the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Homeless Link, and the Welsh Government. The service enables members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them. Its aims are to:
  - promote public awareness of what people should do if they see someone sleeping rough;
  - provide a referral line and digital applications to enable members of the public to take action on rough sleeping;
  - link rough sleepers into local support services, so that they can be supported off the streets; and
  - provide data and evidence to enable the MHCLG to hold local authorities and their partners to account for how they respond to meeting the needs of rough sleepers.
- 1.5 StreetLink is a partnership between St Mungo's and Homeless Link. St Mungo's delivers the national StreetLink telephone line, as well as processing website and mobile app alerts in London. Homeless Link delivers and manages the national StreetLink website, the StreetLink case management system and database.
- 1.6 Services to address rough sleeping result in significant savings to the public purse, with the estimated cost of rough sleeping ranging from £20,000 to £48,000 per person per year. Savings arise from improved outcomes in areas such as mental and physical health, social care and employment, and a lower incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) appointed Homeless Link as the lead partner for StreetLink when it began

<sup>1</sup> CHAIN Annual Report Greater London 2019. Retrieved November 13, 2019, from <https://data.london.gov.uk/download/chain-reports/0538e6f7-b746-4391-9aab-c7e5fe3083da/Greater%20London%20full%202018-19.pdf>

funding the project in 2012. Although St Mungo's operationally delivers the phoneline, Homeless Link retains overall responsibility for delivering the aims, objectives and outputs. Since the service began, Homeless Link and St Mungo's have, via StreetLink, helped thousands of rough sleepers connect with services and receive positive outcomes. StreetLink nationally receives around 18,000 alerts per quarter. Typically, 50% of these are for rough sleepers in London, and 2,500 of these alerts result in a positive outcome for the rough sleeper<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the GLA Rough Sleeping Team is satisfied that this represents value for money.

- 1.7 MD1532 approved grant-funding for StreetLink to 31 March 2020, and further funding is therefore required to extend the service for a further year. In addition, more resources are needed expand and enhance the current service<sup>3</sup>, given the rising numbers of rough sleepers, the potential for more Londoners and rough sleepers to use it and the lack of StreetLink capacity to deal with increased volumes of referrals. It is therefore proposed that GLA grant funding is provided as follows:
- £50,000, to continue the core StreetLink service for one year;
  - £45,000, to enable Homeless Link to build and manage a custom version of the StreetLink website for London. The StreetLink London website will continue to allow members of the public to alert StreetLink to people who are sleeping rough, but with a London-specific website incorporating different and additional information and functionality. The website will provide London-specific content; and
  - £14,958, to enable St Mungo's to provide additional StreetLink night worker roles. The StreetLink night workers will manage and maintain the StreetLink 24-hour telephone line to enable the public to pass on details of rough sleepers to an appropriate service, and for rough sleepers to contact StreetLink directly, at any time of day and night.

## **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. The overarching objective is to enable rapid interventions that will help people to exit rough sleeping quickly and sustainably. Such interventions not only greatly benefit their recipients, but also reduce the costs to the public purse arising from entrenched rough sleeping.
- 2.2. StreetLink is critical to the success of rough sleeping outreach services in London. This is because it utilises members of the public as the 'eyes and ears' of the service, spotting and quickly reporting new rough sleepers who can then be found by outreach teams and engaged with support to end their rough sleeping. It also enables people experiencing rough sleeping to have 24-hour access to someone who can put them in touch with the appropriate support service to help them to move them away from the streets.
- 2.3. The proposals in this decision will help:
- to ensure that when new rough sleepers arrive they do not spend a second night out; and
  - to provide entrenched rough sleepers with a route off the street.

### **Website**

- 2.4. Londoners make extensive use of the existing national StreetLink service. StreetLink receives more referrals from London than from any other part of the country, with around 60 per cent of all alerts made to StreetLink coming from London. However, messaging on the national-facing StreetLink website has to cover all of England and Wales. There is an unmet need for London-specific online

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<sup>2</sup> StreetLink Q3 2019-20 Usage Report, Homeless Link

<sup>3</sup> Mayor of London's Rough Sleeping Plan of Action 2018. Retrieved November 13, 2019, from [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/rough\\_sleeping\\_plan\\_of\\_action\\_1.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/rough_sleeping_plan_of_action_1.pdf)

content and functionality to reflect the complex pattern of services available to people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping in London.

- 2.5. The proposed new StreetLink London website will be separate from the national website and have its own domain ([www.streetlink.london](http://www.streetlink.london)), although it will interact directly with the national StreetLink database. It will retain all the same functionality as the national website to share information about people rough sleeping, but will additionally be a London-specific experience, and the alerting 'journey' will be tailored to ensure alerts are as effective as possible for London-based referrals.
- 2.6. New website content will be London-specific, including information on winter campaigns to support rough sleepers in London, SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol<sup>4</sup>) activation, and available resources and advice at a borough level. This information, in particular when SWEP is activated, will be quickly updated and will satisfy the acknowledged desire from members of the public to know how organisations and local authorities across London are responding to periods of extreme and life-threatening weather to support people rough sleeping.
- 2.7. A new StreetLink London brand will be developed. This will be reflected on the new website and available for use in public communications by London boroughs, homelessness charities, and other organisations to promote the new website.
- 2.8. The StreetLink London website will enable members of the public to donate to the StreetLink fundraising page, as they can on the national website, and which last year raised around £100,000, with approximately 60 per cent of donations coming from London.

#### *Self-referral line*

- 2.9. The main objective of this additional funding will be to maintain the StreetLink 24-hour telephone line to enable the public to pass on details of rough sleepers to an appropriate service.
- 2.10. In recognition of the need to enable members of the public to contact StreetLink by phone seven days a week, in January 2019 the StreetLink team expanded to include four 0.5 FTE night worker roles, to cover the hours between 11pm and 7am.
- 2.11. The staffing structure devised to deliver this overnight service has proved to be insufficient to consistently offer the required availability of the StreetLink phone line during night-time hours. Recruitment difficulties and staff absences have been higher than anticipated and the capacity of other night workers to cover extra shifts has been limited. As a result, the StreetLink phone line has had to close on a number of occasions during the night. The greatest impact of these closures has been in London.
- 2.12. At the same time, the Mayor has enhanced the options available during the night to respond to StreetLink phone alerts for people rough sleeping in London. Owing to the introduction of Rapid Response and other urgent response outreach services, the response time to StreetLink alerts has improved dramatically.
- 2.13. Over the coming months, as additional services become available in London for the winter period, any lack in consistent night time service from StreetLink will greatly impact the effectiveness of these essential services during the coldest time of year. This could ultimately lead to more missed opportunities to support rough sleepers this winter and help them to rebuild their lives away from the street.
- 2.14. Additional night staffing will allow the current single StreetLink night shift to be split into two shifts. It will improve performance overall and reduce the need for line closures by increasing the hours with double staff cover. It will also improve the likelihood that staff absences can be mitigated by amending the shifts of other staff members already present that day.

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<sup>4</sup> The GLA activates pan-London SWEP when the air temperature is forecast to reach zero degrees in London. SWEP provides short-term shelter to anyone rough sleeping, to protect life and offer support and accommodation during extreme weather.

2.15. As a result, the service will:

- operate a 24/7 telephone line service including staffing and premises equipped to manage up to 50,000 calls a year; and
- reduce downtime for the StreetLink phone line overnight (11pm-7am) to below 10 per cent and sustain this.

2.16. This project will be delivered jointly by St Mungo's and Homeless Link, and aligns with the Mayor's objectives to ensure a sustainable rough off the streets for every rough sleeper in London. However, the GLA will not receive any direct benefit.

### 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;
- 62 per cent were new rough sleepers;
- 84 per cent were male; and
- 56 per cent were in the 26-45 age group.

3.3. People rough sleeping in London are over-represented among those with protected characteristics of sex, mental health need, and age. As the client group for this service is largely new rough sleepers, the proposals in this paper are likely to have positive impacts on these groups. Furthermore, it is likely that various aspects of the service, including the night staffing, will foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those we do not, via the introduction of a new workforce.

### 4. Other considerations

4.1. Key risks and issues:

Risk description	Rating	Mitigating action
StreetLink fails to attract sufficient alerts to justify the costs involved	Green	Homeless Link, St Mungo's and others promote the StreetLink service, which has increased alerts year-on-year since it was launched in 2011. The Mayor's rough sleeping campaign contributed to a 53% increase in referrals to StreetLink in December 2018 compared the previous year.
Rough sleeping services that rely on StreetLink are unable to achieve their outcomes due to downtime or lack of capacity	Green	St Mungo's have appointed experienced managers to the service to manage change, including the introduction of new services. They have a large and reliable pool of trained volunteers so that can respond flexibly to meet peaks in demand as required.



Launch of the website is delayed	Green	Homeless Link have a clear delivery timetable which has been developed in consultation with the GLA, the StreetLink team (St Mungo's), website designers (Un.titled) and Salesforce developers (Extentia).
Website content is not rapidly updated at key points, such as when SWEP is activated	Amber	Homeless Link receive the same SWEP alerts as local authorities and services responsible for responding to SWEP and have a process in place for immediately updating the StreetLink London website when SWEP is activated or deactivated. There is also a thorough handover process to ensure a trained member of staff is always able to update the website accordingly.
Additional staffing is not sufficient to cover increased demand over the winter period	Amber	St Mungo's have used shift data since January 2019 to identify the required staffing to sustain a night phone service, although the effectiveness of this will be prone to influence from external factors such as severe weather, staff sickness and turnover.
Recruitment issues affecting the sector may slow the intake of new staff and delay delivery	Green	St Mungo's have recently pooled their recruitment of multiple available roles, resulting in a large number of suitable applicants being interviewed and identified as being suitable for these roles. A further pooled recruitment may be required but St Mungo's experience in doing this indicates this is likely to be successful.

#### *Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

#### 4.2. The objectives of the proposals are in line with:

- the Pan-London Rough Sleeping Commissioning Framework 2016, priorities 1, 4 and 7;
- the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Plan of Action; and
- the Mayor's London Housing Strategy, policy 7.2.

#### *Impact assessments and consultations*

#### 4.3. This alteration of the StreetLink website is well within the existing service parameters. The new website will be tested to ensure it meets all accessibility requirements.

#### *Declaration of Interest*

#### 4.4. The officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this form do not have an interest to declare in accordance with the GLA's policy on registering interests which might, or might be seen to, conflict with this Director's Decision.

### **5. Financial comments**

#### 5.1. This decision seeks approval to expend:

- £50,000 to grant fund Homeless Link for the London element of the national StreetLink service from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021;
- £45,000 to grant fund Homeless Link to develop and launch a StreetLink London website by 1 December 2019 (£30,000) and to manage the website until 31 March 2021 (£15,000); and
- £14,958 to grant fund St Mungo's to cover the cost of two additional 0.5 FTE night workers for the StreetLink phone line between 1 November 2019 – 31 March 2020.

- 5.2. This grant will be funded from the Mayor's Rough Sleeping budget of £8.45m per annum for 2019/20, and rough sleeping growth bid for StreetLink App of £0.1m (approved for 2020/21).

## 6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the executive director concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion 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, the executive 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 and foster good relations 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 (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the executive Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the contribution of up to £95,000 to Homeless Link and up to £14,958 to St Mungo's amount to the provision of grant funding and not payment for services. As the officers have set out in paragraph 2.16 above, the Authority will not receive any direct benefit from the activities the subject of the said funding. As set out in section 12.3 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code, decisions to award funding should generally be made on the basis of a transparent, competitive application project and, in any case, value for money must be demonstrated. The officers have set out at paragraph 1.6 how these requirements have been met.
- 6.4. Officers must ensure that appropriate funding agreements be put in place between and executed by the Authority and the recipients before any of the funding be transferred to the recipients.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The GLA will monitor the service on a quarterly basis as part of its standard contract monitoring processes, to assess the service performance against targets. As with other pan-London rough sleeping services funded by the Mayor, the performance of this service will be reported to the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development each quarter.

Activity	Timeline
Funding agreement signed	
Project start date [Website]	1 October 2019
Project start date [Night workers]	1 December 2019
Project start date [StreetLink core service]	1 April 2020
Project end date [Website]	31 March 2021
Project end date [Night workers]	31 March 2020
Project end date [StreetLink core service]	31 March 2021

### 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:

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:**

Christian MacNamara has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service:**

Rickardo Hyatt 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 16 March 2020.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

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

Signature

*M. D. Ellis*

Date 16.3.20