

# **Budget & Performance Panel**

## **Review of Homeless Service Level Agreements**

**26<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

### **Report of Corporate Director (Community Services)**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides an update on the Service Level Agreements between Strategic Housing and voluntary agencies and the outcomes of the multi-agency monitoring that has been carried out. It proposes that Agreements be reviewed after approval of a new Homelessness Strategy in July 2008 and recommends continued funding in 2008/9.

This report is public

#### **1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Cabinet be recommended to approve that

- funding continues through the existing five service level agreements with voluntary agencies dealing with homelessness for the financial year 2008/9
- revised SLA agreements be negotiated as appropriate following the approval of the new Homelessness Strategy in July 2008

#### **2 BACKGROUND**

The City Council's Strategic Housing Services has Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with five voluntary organisations. It has provided two separate streams of funding to Lancaster and District YMCA through one SLA this financial year. Continued funding for Portland St formed the subject of a separate report to Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> February and does not form part of this report.

#### **SLA Funding**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>2007/8 £</b>	<b>2008/09 £</b>
Lancaster and District YMCA	23,000	23,500
Signposts	14,800	15,100
Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service	30,900	31,500
Lancaster and District Womens Aid	11,600	11,800
Morecambe Homeless Action	3,600	3,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>83,900</b>	<b>85,600</b>

The SLAs run from October 2005 to the end of March 2008. The agreements are usually reviewed annually and to this end, organisations are required to produce a report and (since April 2007) multi-agency monitoring data. As the current agreements are due to expire in March 2008, a review would entail looking at what new objectives the Council would want organisations to meet in future agreements.

### **3 THE RENEWAL PROCESS**

The City Council is required to produce a new Homelessness Strategy by July 2008. To this end, a Homelessness Review is being carried out and the Homelessness Strategy will follow the completion of the Review. This is being directed by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group, a multi agency group chaired by the Cabinet Member - Housing, Cllr John Gilbert.

When the Strategy has been agreed, it will be clear what the new objectives are that the Council will want to agree with organisations (assuming that such partnerships continue to be seen as an effective way of delivering services). It is therefore more sensible to review and revise the agreements after July than now. Should the Council wish to end an agreement, or should any of the agencies decide not to enter into a new agreement, six months notice would need to be given. It is therefore proposed that decisions be made about entering into new agreements by the end of September, so that full notice can be given before the end of the next financial year.

Meanwhile, the current agreements can be renewed for a year.

### **4 MULTI AGENCY MONITORING (MAM)**

MAM data has been provided by all the organisations in receipt of SLA funding. This entails each organisation completing a standard form, with a unique reference, for each client that they see. The forms are also being completed by the housing advice staff in Strategic Housing Services. The unique reference (initials and date of birth) allows any double counting of clients who go to more than one agency to be checked.

Although the analysis has highlighted some discrepancies in how the form is completed by different agencies, it has proved an excellent tool for getting a broad picture of the overall numbers of homeless in the District and a breakdown of their characteristics. The analysis is attached at Appendix A. In the future, we should also have a clearer picture of what is happening to people over time and be able to see how many can successfully be assisted to resolve their housing problems.

All agencies involved in completing forms have been sent copies of the analysis, which will be used to inform the Homelessness Review.

### **5 CONCLUSION**

All agencies in receipt of funding have complied with the City Council's requirement that MAM forms be completed. In light of the timing of the Homelessness Strategy it is sensible to await the completion and approval of the Strategy before renegotiating the Service Level Agreements which would otherwise expire at the end of March 2008.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The service level agreements are closely linked to the Homelessness Strategy and have a direct impact on how efficiently the City Council can deliver the actions outlined in the strategy.

The Corporate Plan includes the following high level priority :-

“Working with our partners to deliver strong, stable, sustainable communities with a decent home for everyone.”

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The service delivery supported through SLAs should have a direct positive impact on aspects of diversity, community safety, human rights and sustainability.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The 2008/09 General Fund includes budgets in respect of Homeless Service Level Agreements which total £85,600. This allows for a 2% inflation increase on 2007/08 budgets.

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER’S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report has no legal implications.

#### **MONITORING OFFICER’S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Service Level Agreements agreed in 2005.  
MAM monitoring data provided by organisations with SLAs

**Contact Officer:** Sheelagh O’Brien

**Telephone:** 01524 405837

**E-mail:** sobrien@lancaster.gov.uk