

GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Date: 27th November 2020

Subject: Reform Investment Fund – GM Young Person’s Homelessness Prevention Pathfinder Programme

Report of: Andy Burnham, GM Mayor

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides an update GM Young Person’s Homelessness Prevention Pathfinder programme.

RECOMMENDATION:

The GMCA is requested to:

Agree to release £663,000 from the Reform Investment Fund in order to launch a Young Person’s Homelessness Prevention Pathfinder in response to the additional support needs created by Covid-19.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Andrew Lightfoot, Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA (Andrew.lightfoot@greatermanchester.gov.uk)

Jacob Botham, Public Service Reform Team, GMCA (Jacob.botham@greatermanchester.gov.uk)

Molly Bishop, Strategic Lead for Homelessness, GMCA (Molly.bishop@greatermanchester.gov.uk)

Equalities Implications:

It is anticipated that Young Person's Homelessness Prevention Project will support young people from a range of different ethnic backgrounds and circumstances. Information will be collected and analysed as part of pathfinder in order to build a picture of the different support needs of young people that will be fed into the design of any longer-term project. In addition as part of the the pathfinder a co-production panel made up of individuals with lived experience of homelessness will be established. A central element of it's remit will be to ensure that providers and commissioner take account of the needs of different individuals and groups.

Financial Consequences

It is proposed that the pathfinder through a preventative approach will seek to provide a more cost effective viable alternatives for young people that would potentially end up having to make use of crisis provision. The pathfinder will be supported by a Cost Benefit Analysis that will seek to demonstrate the financial benefits to different parts of the public purse. This will feed into any decision making around whether to proceed with longer term project beyond the course of the pathfinder.

TRACKING/PROCESS			
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		Yes	
EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN			
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?		No	
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee		

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The GM Reform Investment Fund has already played an important role in supporting the homelessness response during Covid-19 when in March GMCA invoked emergency powers in order to allocate £1.6m from the RIF in order to support the 'Everyone In' policy. The majority of this funding was used to procure alternative accommodation and support options for homeless individuals in the city-region.

1.2 Prior to the Covid-19 crisis work had commenced on the development of a proposition for a four year GM Homelessness Prevention project focusing on under 35s. Subject to CA approval this was to be funded through a contribution of approximately £3-4m from the DCMS Life Chances element of the Reform Investment Fund. In line with conditions attached to this element of the funding when it was allocated by central government there was a requirement for match funding to be identified for the project and it was to take the form of an outcomes based contract, most likely in the form of a Social Impact Bond.

1.3 Positive progress had been made on developing core design principles for the programme, informed by analysis of data, discussions with Local Authorities and engagement with local VCSE organisations. A preferred social investor (Bridges) had been appointed through a competitive process.

1.4 Whilst the Covid-19 has impacted on the development of the business case for the full 4-year project there remains an opportunity to launch the programme earlier in the form of a Pathfinder within the next few weeks. This will provide some additional short-term capacity to support 250-300 young people who find themselves presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness as well as enabling the design team to build up a clearer picture of the type of support that may be required from the longer term project. It will also enable the Social Investor to build relationships with local providers that are best placed to deliver the objectives of the pathfinder and the longer-term project should it proceed.

2.0 PROPOSED APPROACH TO THE PATHFINDER

2.1 The following information provides more detail around how it is envisaged the Pathfinder will work.

- It is proposed that a maximum allocation of £663,000 is released from the GM Reform Investment Fund in order to launch the Pathfinder project with the understanding that if successful it will be developed into a longer term 3-4 year outcome based contract.
- The Pathfinder contract will be for a period of up to 12 months (likely to run from January 2021 until January 2022) – period and triggers to be agreed with GMCA.
- The geographical focus of the Pathfinder will initially be on the 2 or 3 Local Authority areas where the greatest volume of need has been identified (Manchester, Salford and Bolton).

- Having been appointed as the preferred Investor Bridges will set up Greater Manchester Better Outcomes Partnership (GMBOP) as the Special Purpose Vehicle /Social Prime specifically to lead the delivery of the Pathfinder contract.
- GMBOP will work with a selected number of local partners during the Pathfinder contract to test delivery assumptions and intervention models.
- As part of the co-production element of the Pathfinder, further market engagement, discussion with LA/locality stakeholders, gap analysis and testing with co-production panel will all take place to ensure there are appropriate local delivery partnerships in place to deliver the longer term contract.
- The pathfinder will inform the pricing and outcome targets for the longer-term contract through consultation with Local Authorities (and other commissioning partners) on the value of the service, savings/impact and shared insight/learning.
- A central aim is to invest in community capacity that provides co-ordinated responses around person, place and prevention. This will involve extensive engagement with VCSE organisations and GMCA as GMBOP looks to develop a strong supply chain for a longer term contract.

Objectives for the Pathfinder

- The focus of the Pathfinder will be on homeless prevention and referral pathways will be set up so that appropriate prevention activity can take place.
- It is anticipated that 250-300 young people will be supported through the Pathfinder with the emphasis on those under 25's but with some provision for those aged 25 - 35 years old.
- The principle outcomes for the young people referred to the Pathfinder will be to prevent them becoming homeless, by interventions (e.g. mediation) to keep them in family homes / current accommodation provision or through accessing and sustaining suitable alternative stable housing.
- The Pathfinder will prioritise linking into the existing GM infrastructure as well as helping to identify and fill gaps. It is not the intention to set up a potentially competing private rented sector accommodation finding service.
- Short and long term ambitions for the programme will also focus on linking young people into the opportunities/ offers that are available to them in GM such as employment/training support, health services in addition to specific initiatives designed to support Care Leavers.
- There are likely to be three different referral pathways: i) Young People (under 35) presenting to their LA Housing Options team in the Prevention Duty (i.e. not yet homeless, but at risk of becoming homeless in the next 56 days, ii) Young people at risk of homelessness referred directly from community organisations, iii) Young people recently re-housed after being part of the COVID Temporary accommodation provision or ABEN.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

3.1 Should the Pathfinder project go ahead a further report will be presented to GMCA towards the end of the project with recommendations on whether to proceed to the longer term project or not. As described above this will be subject to GM identifying match funding to sit aside the contribution from the GM Reform Investment Fund.

3.2 Longer term within the context of the 'Everyone in' policy and the anticipated economic impact of Covid-19 on young people this project would sit alongside A Bed Every Night Phase 3, Housing First and the Ethical Lettings Agency as a key component of the GM Homelessness response over the next 2 – 4 years.