

Cabinet Meeting	
Meeting Date	13 th April 2022
Report Title	BEAM Partnership – Housing and Employment Support
Cabinet Member	Cllr Ben Martin, Cabinet Member for Housing
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Lead Officer	Roxanne Sheppard, Housing Options Manager
Key Decision	Yes/No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To enter into a spend to save pilot in partnership with Beam.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Cabinet with an opportunity to enter into a partnership arrangement with social enterprise Beam to access their platform and support for our homeless households.

2 Background

- 2.1 In 2017 the introduction of the Housing Reduction Act extended the Council's Statutory duties to incorporate prevention and relief duties. Prevention duties include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure settled accommodation.
- 2.2 These responsibilities are reflected in The Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy with priorities to prevent homelessness and reduce the need for emergency and temporary accommodation.
- 2.3 In 2019 the Housing Options service was restructured to create dedicated teams around prevention, homelessness, and accommodation. Although implementation of the new structure has not been smooth due to the onset of the pandemic. Having dedicated focused teams has enabled focus on different residents needs and the development of different interventions to support these needs.
- 2.4 Demand for the service remains high, at the end of Q3 we have carried out 699 initial assessments of those 288 (41%) were owed a prevention duty and 388 (56%) were owed a relief duty only 23 (3%) were not threatened with homelessness. At the end of December 2021, we had 323 households in

temporary accommodation. Of those cases we owed a prevention duty around 60% have been resolved with finding suitable accommodation for 6+months, which although an excellent outcome demonstrates that more needs to be done.

- 2.5 The 2021/22 budget for Temporary Accommodation is £1.5m, which is net of housing benefit, grant income and contributions from clients. The gross position is closer to £3m.
- 2.6 Demand for the service is not predicted to reduce, with current economic issues in the UK and the cost-of-living crisis is a concern for many. It is predicted that low-income families will be disproportionately impacted, and this is likely to translate in an increase in homelessness.
- 2.7 The team have a range of tools to assist including rent deposit and guarantees and strong linkage with local landlords to enable sustained tenancies. We are constantly looking at ways to improve support our clients and are currently working on several initiatives to enhance our offer.
- 2.8 We have been exploring a partnership opportunity with Beam. Beam are a social enterprise that have been established to tackle social problems – starting with homelessness. Beam’s crowdfunding platform can help individual homeless people overcome financial barriers to career progression for someone experiencing homelessness - including training, transport, tools and even childcare. But the model does more than just remove financial barriers. A key part of Beam’s model is crowdsourcing support from the people who fund the campaign. When people donate, they often write confidence-boosting messages of support and even surface job and work experience opportunities. Beam currently have 26,716 supporters who regularly donate to support campaigns. Campaigns are usually successful within weeks, enabling motivation and momentum for the client.
- 2.9 The model also provides dedicated support works for the clients to assist and support them. BEAM have links with over 100+ employer partners providing access to quality jobs and support is provided for the first 3 months of starting in work. Case studies from beam can be viewed [here](#).
- 2.10 BEAM will support multiple groups
 - People at risk of homelessness
 - People without access to benefits
 - People rough sleeping
 - People in temporary accommodation.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposal is to enter a spend to save pilot for 1 year with Beam. The 12-month programme will enable Beam to work with 50 homeless clients. The expected outcomes of the pilot are 38 people start jobs, 15 people leave homelessness and 23 people avoid homelessness.

- 3.2 The cost to the Council for the pilot is £80k which provides dedicated caseworkers as well as a local marketing drive to raise awareness. Beam have an impact calculator based upon their previous work with other local authorities and using Swale's data and it is predicated that total cashable savings would be £132,530 and therefore providing a net overall saving of £52,530.
- 3.3 As this is a spend to save pilot, it is proposed that the £80k is taken from the Temporary Accommodation budget to support this initiative.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 That we don't enter a partnership with Beam and continue to respond in the existing way. This is not recommended as the volume of cases is increasing and we have limited resources to assist our homeless households and need to diversify our response.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 None.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Priority 3 - Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone. Building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all
Financial, Resource and Property	The contribution to the partnership from the Council is £80k and this will be taken from the temporary accommodation budget. This will enable BEAM to work with 50 clients. The model predicts total cashable savings would be £132,530 and therefore providing a net overall saving of £52,530.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	[Waiting confirmation from Beam on the partnership arrangements. Waiver may be requested dependent on answer]
Crime and Disorder	Some of our client base are offenders and ex-offenders, providing support to stable housing and employment direct reduces the likelihood of further offending or re-offending.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	Support with stable housing and employment has a positive correlation to improved health outcomes.

Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	As Beam will be dealing with potentially vulnerable adults, then compliance with the Council's Safeguarding Policy will be ensured.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	The scheme is targeted at vulnerable clients who are at risk of homelessness. Beam operates a transparent equality monitoring process as part of their scheme.
Privacy and Data Protection	Clients will only be referred to the scheme with their consent and any privacy and data protection requirements will be dealt with within the partnership agreement.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

None

8 Background Papers

None.