

ANNEX A: EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: APPLICATION FORM

[DN: MUST upload this as a separate document or the LAs will return it as part of the whole prospectus which is v annoying to look through.]

SUPPORTED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

NAME OF PROPOSAL

Lead local authority	Birmingham City Council
Other local authorities or partners	Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, WM Police, WMFS, Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council, Spring Housing
Name, position/title and contact details for an accountable officer within the lead local authority	Guy Chaundy Acting Head of Service, Strategy & Enabling, City Housing Directorate Guy.Chaundy@birmingham.gov.uk
Name and contact details for the Chief Executive, for the lead local authority	Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive Deborah.Cadman@birmingham.gov.uk

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Narrative overview of the proposal

Please briefly summarise your proposal, including the challenges faced within your local authority area, your proposed activities, and the proposed outputs and outcomes of the pilots (max 500 words).

In November 2020, Birmingham began a pilot with £1.8m funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (previously MHCLG) to introduce and test new arrangements and oversight of the exempt sector including setting up new multi-disciplinary teams to undertake a regime of inspections and reviews and roll out a new Birmingham Quality Standard and Charter of Rights to drive up standards for tenants.

Prior to the pilot, the City was seeing year on year increases in SEA claims, rising from 11,000 in 2017 to 21,000 in December 2020. Since our intervention work, the increase in exempt accommodation units has plateaued with the total linked to Housing Benefit claims reaching 21826 in December 2021. While the claims may have plateaued since the pilot teams were implemented, there have been good outcomes from the property and support inspections and reviews, however there is still

an increasing number of providers and properties in the city. Based on current funding and capacity, the inspection regime is operating on an eight-year cycle based on the current number of SEA properties in the city. The current level of funding has only allowed us to have a light touch approach at the current level of funding for the sector size in Birmingham.

Below is a summary table based on the information in the pilot evaluation which shows the relative funding, scope of SEA claims and inspection outputs the different pilot authorities have achieved. It is clear that the level of funding for Birmingham was not comparable to the other authorities based on their relative sector size and the SEA claims to be targeted.

Local Authority	Total funding	SEA claims targeted through pilot	Inspections Completed (Sept 21)	Resident Support Reviews completed (Sept 21)
Birmingham	£1.8m	21628	517	7930
Hull	£1.6m	1076	322	207
Blackpool	£1.4m	622	102	279
Blackburn with Darwen	£0.42m	269	24	186
Bristol	£0.25m	211	60	121

While awaiting further details of funding as part of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme, the council agreed 1 year fixed term funding of £1.9m in order to support some continuation of the teams through 2022/23, and allow the time for the necessary national legislative and regulation changes to emerge, in order to maintain the operational teams at the capacity through the pilot, finalise our Supported Housing Strategy and deliver the recommendations from our Overview & Scrutiny review in December 2021 (see attached report). There is an expectation that these recommendations and improvements are necessary and the council requires ongoing additional funding to achieve this. There is no mainstreaming of the teams within current council resources apart from the one-off investment for 2022/23.

We have developed 3 funding options –

Gold is maintaining the current level of resource over 3 years with additional innovation around accelerating the Quality Standards accreditation, delivering our Supported Housing Strategy and improvements to Tenant and resident engagement.

Silver would be reduced capacity within all the pilot teams and unlikely scope for additional innovation

Bronze would be a significantly scaled back approach with less oversight of inspections, scrutiny of HB claims, abandoning of the Quality Standards and lack of ability to address issues identified by local residents. More importantly, this option would impact on identifying issues around quality of support for vulnerable individuals. This will all lead to reduced credibility of both Birmingham City Council and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities.

If DLUHC were able to accelerate the necessary changes to legislation and regulation, this could lead to an impact on the sector size and reduce the resource requirement of the city council.

In the table below is a high-level summary of the objectives, activities, outputs and outcomes – including an indication of impact from the funding model where this is relevant.

Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<i>Implement improved management of supported housing.</i>	<p>a) Establish a multi-disciplinary team to tackle local quality and value for money issues in a holistic and joined up way.</p> <p>This team will bring together cross-Council and external partner expertise to undertake all activities below in particular multi-disciplinary inspections.</p> <p>Continue to roll out to providers the Birmingham Quality Standards & Charter of Rights for Tenants</p>	<p>Multi-Disciplinary Team established</p> <p>Operational Group meeting 2x weekly</p> <p>Multi-agency inspections, reviews, investigations</p> <p>Quality Standards providers 25 per year – Gold 10 per year – Silver</p>	Improve the quality of supported exempt accommodation across Birmingham
<i>Drive up standards of accommodation and support.</i>	<p>b) Review support arrangements, including safeguarding, through person-centred assessments of the support being provided to individuals within each property inspected.</p>	<p>Teams established</p> <p>Support Reviews – 400 per year</p> <p>Safeguarding Reviews – 45</p> <p>2-6 month HB reviews 9-10,000</p> <p>Impacted significantly if not Gold/Silver</p>	Support provided to tenants is tailored, sufficient and value for month
	<p>c) Carry out property inspections and enforcement of accommodation standards to ensure housing is accessible, appropriate, safe and hazard-free.</p>	<p>Team already established</p> <p>Property Inspections – 500-800 per year (Gold/Silver)</p> <p>Category 1 hazards – 2000-3000</p> <p>Category 2 hazards – 1500-2000</p> <p>Impacted significantly if not Gold/Silver</p>	Housing is accessible, appropriate, safe and hazard free
<i>Improve value for money of supported housing.</i>	<p>d) Scrutinise new and existing Housing Benefit claims to ensure claims are legitimate and reasonable.</p>	<p>New HB claims – 35,000 per year</p> <p>Undertake whole property or provider reviews of HB claims in response to Inspections – 300-400</p> <p>Silver/Bronze significantly reduced</p>	Accommodation and support is sufficient, costs are reasonable and demonstrate value for money
<i>Intervene in Housing Benefit applications relating to new provision, where it is unsuitable, does not meet</i>	<p>e) Develop a standardised local approach to managing new provision including (Housing-Benefit related) Gateway Reviews for new providers or new schemes.</p>	<p>Multi-disciplinary scrutiny of SEA status applications from new providers, or existing providers not signed up to Quality Standards – 10 per month</p> <p>Gold only</p>	Birmingham is able to better manage supply, based on local need

<i>local need or does not meet local authorities' expected standards.</i>			
	f) Develop a strategic plan for cohorts accommodated in short-term ('transitional') supported housing , based on a comprehensive assessment of local need and supply, with a local plan to meet future need (to be completed in year one).	<p>Maintain the Supported Housing Needs Assessment</p> <p>Supported Housing Strategy and Delivery plan (dependent on reforms)</p> <p>Reduction in provision – 50% over 5 year period (as defined within our needs assessment)</p> <p>A council-wide approach to referrals into non-commissioned provision</p> <p>Silver – significantly reduced capacity</p> <p>Bronze - abandon</p>	Birmingham understands the need for Supported Accommodation in their area and can plan to meet it
<i>Support neighbourhoods and communities affected by the symptoms of poor-quality provision.</i>	g) Investigate and address anti-social behaviour on a partnership basis to improve wider communities and neighbourhoods affected by poor quality provision	<p>Community Safety Investigations of ASB issues – 300-500</p> <p>Community Protection Orders</p> <p>Eviction of tenants</p> <p>Waste management and other ASB support implemented</p> <p>Gold/Silver only</p>	Tenants of SEA provision and local residents live in community focused neighbourhoods
	h) Investigate Organised Crime Groups in the exempt accommodation sector as part of a partnership-based approach working with WM Police and other partners.	<p>Community Protection orders</p> <p>Arrests -</p> <p>Gold/Silver only</p>	<p>Better understanding of criminal activities within poorly managed exempt accommodation</p> <p>Identification of organised crime groups</p> <p>A decrease in organised crime activity in supported exempt accommodation</p>
	i) Develop a single, clear route for citizens to access information about supported exempt accommodation, to get involved and to raise concerns and complaints	<p>Single complaints process linked to corporate complaints and councillor casework system</p> <p>Web content for providers, tenants and local residents</p> <p>Work with providers to introduce Welcome packs for residents</p> <p>Gold only</p>	<p>Citizens living in exempt accommodation are empowered through effective communication and access to information and support.</p> <p>Wider residents are able to access better information, support and live in improved neighbourhoods</p>

1.2 Overview of proposed spend

The totals here should summarise the total costs, as detailed in the rest of the proposal.

Option 1 – Gold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 1 funded by Birmingham City Council - £1.99m Maintaining capacity of pilot teams, and accelerate roll out of Quality Standards Adjusted to account for pay awards in future years Additional benefits capacity to manage gateway review of new provision Improvements to tenants and resident engagement and participation Additional provider training Year 2 & 3 – additional capacity to deliver on Supported Housing Strategy, commissioning activity, manage referrals, provider exit 			
Activity	Year 1 costs (£)	Year 2 costs (£)	Year 3 costs (£)
Activities to improve quality (see para [25] of the Prospectus):			
a) Implementing Multi-disciplinary teams & oversight	BCC funding	See costs below	See costs below
b) Support reviews/Safeguarding	£195,286	£195,286	£195,286
c) Supported Housing Property Inspections	£866,377	£866,337	£866,337
d) Housing Benefit Reviews /VFM	£193,044	£193,044	£193,044
e) Provision Gateway Reviews	£102,153	£102,153	£102,153
f) Year 2 & 3 - Needs assessment / strategy / plus additional capacity referrals and provider exit)	Pilot funding 2021/22	£66,369 £47,816	£66,369 £120,430
g) ASB and Community Safety investigations and improvements	£278,150	£278,150	£278,150
h) Organised Crime investigations and partnership with WM Police	£51,000	£51,000	£51,000
i) Tenant & customer engagement and participation	£47,816	£47,816	£47,816

Strategic planning / lead	£76,894	£76,894	£76,894
Monitoring and evaluation	£61,206	£61,206	£61,206
Any other costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Standards & Charter of Rights roll out (partially self-funding Year 3) Legal costs Training programme (ongoing development / delivery) 		£100,000 £25,000 £30,000	£50,000 £25,000 £30,000
Total	£1.99m (BCC)	£2.14m	£2.16m

Option 2 – Silver

- **Year 1 funded by Birmingham City Council - £1.99m**
 - Maintaining capacity of pilot teams, and accelerate roll out of Quality Standards & Charter of Rights
 - Adjusted to account for pay awards in future years
 - Additional benefits capacity to manage gateway review of new provision
 - Improvements to tenants and resident engagement and participation
 - Additional provider training
- **Year 2 & 3**
 - Reduced capacity in all pilot teams – Inspections/Reviews
 - Reduced capacity to roll out of Quality Standards and Charter
 - Reduced capacity to deliver on our Supported Housing Strategy and manage provider exit
 - No additional capacity around gateway reviews to manage new provision
 - No additional resource to deliver improvements to tenant engagement and participation
 - No additional capacity to deliver provider training

Activity	Year 1 costs (£)	Year 2 costs (£)	Year 3 costs (£)
Activities to improve quality (see para [25] of the Prospectus):			
a) Implementing Multi-disciplinary teams & oversight	BCC funding	See costs below	See costs below
b) Support reviews/Safeguarding (reduced capacity)	£195,286	£147,470	£147,470
c) Supported Housing Property Inspections (reduced capacity)	£866,377	£661,682	£661,682

d) Housing Benefit Reviews /VFM (original pilot capacity)	£193,044	£193,044	£193,044
e) Provision Gateway Reviews	£102,153	No resource	No resource
f) Year 2 & 3 - Needs assessment / strategy / commissioning / provider exit (reduced capacity)	Pilot funding 2021/22	£49,826 £47,816	£49,826 £47,816
g) ASB and Community Safety investigations and improvements (reduced capacity)	£278,150	£232,573	£232,573
h) Organised Crime investigations and partnership with WM Police (reduced capacity)	£51,000	£25,500	£25,500
i) Tenant & customer engagement and participation	£47,816	No resource	No resource
Strategic planning / lead	£76,894	£76,894	£76,894
Monitoring and evaluation	£61,206	£61,206	£61,206
Any other costs			
• Quality Standards & Charter of Rights roll out (reduced capacity partially self-funding Year 3)		£100,000	£50,000
• Legal costs		£25,000	£25,000
• Training programme (ongoing development / delivery)		No resource	No resource
Total	£1.99m (BCC)	£1.62	£1.57

Option 3 – Bronze

- **Year 1 funded by Birmingham City Council - £1.99m**
 - Maintaining capacity of pilot teams, and accelerate roll out of Quality Standards & Charter of Rights
 - Adjusted to account for pay awards in future years
 - Additional benefits capacity to manage gateway review of new provision
 - Improvements to tenants and resident engagement and participation
 - Additional provider training
- **Year 2 & 3**
 - Significantly reduced capacity in all pilot teams – Inspections/Reviews
 - Abandoning further roll out of the Quality Standards
 - Not working in partnership with the Police, WMFS, BVSC, Spring Housing
 - Inability to deliver on Supported Housing Strategy and manage provider exit
 - No additional capacity around gateway reviews to manage new provision
 - No additional resource to deliver improvements to tenant engagement and participation

○ No additional capacity to deliver provider training			
Activity	Year 1 costs (£)	Year 2 costs (£)	Year 3 costs (£)
Activities to improve quality (see para [25] of the Prospectus):			
j) Implementing Multi-disciplinary teams & oversight	BCC funding	See costs below	See costs below
k) Support reviews/Safeguarding (reduced capacity – mainly advice)	£195,286	£109,023	£109,023
l) Supported Housing Property Inspections (reduced capacity)	£866,377	£384,412	£384,412
m) Housing Benefit Reviews /VFM (original pilot capacity)	£193,044	£156,737	£156,737
n) Provision Gateway Reviews	£102,153	No resource	No resource
o) Needs assessment / strategy / commissioning / provider exit (reduced capacity)	Pilot funding 2021/22	No resource	No resource
p) ASB and Community Safety investigations and improvements (reduced capacity)	£278,150	£186,995	£186,995
q) Organised Crime investigations and partnership with WM Police (reduced capacity)	£51,000	No resource	No resource
r) Tenant & customer engagement and participation	£47,816	No resource	No resource
Strategic planning / lead	£76,894	£76,894	£76,894
Monitoring and evaluation	£61,206	£61,206	£61,206
Any other costs			
• Quality Standards & Charter of Rights roll out (reduced capacity partially self-funding Year 3)		No resource	No resource
• Legal costs		£25,000	£25,000
• Training programme (ongoing development / delivery)		No resource	No resource
Total	£1.99m (BCC)	£1.0m	£1.0m

2. IMPROVING OVERSIGHT OF QUALITY AND VFM

2.1 Local context and targeted market

*Please provide a summary of the nature and scale of the issues with quality and value for money faced within your area. Provide data and evidence wherever possible, and where it is not available, please provide a best estimate. **NB: bids that do not demonstrate the importance of the scale and severity of the problems faced will not be successful.***

Please outline the local supported housing provision which you would look to target through the Supported Housing Improvement Programme. This should set out what part of the local supported housing sector resource will be focused on, based on available local knowledge where possible, of where the interventions would be expected to deliver the greatest benefit. Our expectation is that this will be focused on parts of the non-commissioned sector (particularly the short-term/transitional market) where local authorities often do not have oversight through service commissioning.

Supporting evidence or information on why this group(s) would benefit from additional oversight could include:

- *An estimated assessment of the scale of this accommodation, including number of units where possible.*
- *Any evidence of poor quality, including poor accommodation standards or inadequate support.*
- *Current housing benefit spend on supported housing per month*
- *The known impacts of poor quality on individuals*
- *Any other impacts of poor quality-accommodation and support*

See attached

- **Scrutiny Review report,**
- **Supported Housing Needs Assessment**
- **Draft Supported Housing Strategy**

2.2 Details of proposed interventions

Please use this section to provide a summary high-level strategy and delivery outline (plan). This should include anticipated timings of inspections or other enforcement activities over all three years, key milestones such as full team recruitment, completion of need/supply assessments and strategic plan, and the plan for regular monitoring and evaluation.

Please provide high level milestones setting out the approach on how the strategic planning will be undertaken, including in particular a detailed assessment of the current demand and provision for client groups housed in the area in the types of supported housing causing most concern e.g. short-term transitional supported housing.

Please provide details of how a multi-disciplinary team approach will be used to tackle poor-quality supported housing, the structure of the team and how this will be resourced.

Please provide an overview of your plan to deliver each of the core interventions and the staff/resourcing required to do so. This includes:

- *Reviews of support and safeguarding arrangements*
- *Enforcement of accommodation standards*
- *Scrutiny of Housing Benefit claim*
- *Gateway approach*

Where you do not believe a core intervention is appropriate to your local authority context, and do not plan to undertake it, please explain this clearly.

If you wish to undertake any other activities, please describe them and how they are appropriate to your local context.

Your proposal should also set out what could still be delivered if a funding award from DLUHC were to represent only 75% of the overall amount requested.

Please provide summary details of how you will resource the monitoring and evaluation required – either through an existing role in the programme (e.g., 0.5 FTE of one role) or additional resource; and agreement that financial data provided will be provided with S151 Officer assurance.

Please confirm that your overall proposal and expression of interest has been reviewed by your S151 Officer.

See attached

- **Scrutiny Review report,**

We have provided in the Summary section 1.1 and 1.2 a narrative and breakdown of activities, and outputs according to the funding awarded. The recommendations in the Scrutiny Review Report set out the proposed interventions in addition to the successful partnership activities already in place.

<i>Name, and position/title, of accountable officer for the lead local authority</i>	
<i>Signature</i>	