



Report of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy and Service Transformation

Special Cabinet – 7 May 2020

Funding for Emergency or Temporary Supported Housing Scheme for Homeless Vulnerable People during the Covid-19 Crisis - Ty Tom Jones

Purpose:	In direct response to the current Covid-19 situation, a project has been commissioned to bring Ty Tom Jones (also known as The Foyer) in Alexandra Road, Swansea, back into use to accommodate up to 20 single people
Policy Framework:	Homelessness Strategy
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal, Welsh Government (WG)
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that Cabinet: 1) Approves the project set out in paragraph 2.2 below; 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Place, the Chief Legal Officer and Chief Finance Officer to enter into any agreements necessary to ensure the delivery of the project and to protect the Council's interests; 3) Delegates authority to the Director of Place and the Chief Finance Officer to recover all expenditure associated with the delivery of the project from Welsh Government; 4) Reviews the project in six months when there is a clearer picture of the impact of Covid 19 and necessary ongoing requirements.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In direct response to the current Covid-19 situation the Council is looking to provide additional temporary accommodation for homeless, vulnerable people. This is required to ease the immediate pressure in existing provision that is likely to continue to build over the coming months. A project has been commissioned to bring Ty Tom Jones (also known as The Foyer) in Alexandra Road, Swansea, back into use to accommodate up to 20 single people.

2. Project overview

- 2.1 The building is owned by Pobl Housing group who will act as the landlord of the scheme. The Council will appoint The Wallich and Caerlas to provide 24 hour support provision for single homeless people (age 18+) with low to medium support needs. The initial project will run for 12 months from May 2020 to May 2021. Pobl will provide additional intensive housing management for the scheme for 2 hrs a day for 5 days a week. As the landlord Pobl will collect the rents and service charges and will be responsible for on-going maintenance of the property. A service level agreement will be in place between Pobl, The Wallich and Caerlas.

3. Project Costs

- 3.1 The Council will seek to reclaim costs from Welsh Government (WG) using funding WG has been made available to enable Councils in Wales to support homelessness services during the crisis. The project will start taking referrals as soon as possible with a view to opening from 8th May 2020.
- 3.2 Pobl have undertaken works to bring the property up to a satisfactory standard, including electrical works and installation of CCTV. In order to reduce delays in the process, they are also sourcing furniture, kitchen appliances, bedding supplies and providing other items that will be required. It is proposed that these costs will be paid to Pobl by the Council and reclaimed from the WG Covid funding. The total cost estimates for this element of the work are £73,476 and the breakdown is in the table at 3.3.

- 3.3 The set up costs are projected as follows:

Date costs incurred	Nature of works	Provider	Cost £
April 2020	Work to bring property up to standard	Pobl	17,000 (estimate)
April 2020	Electrical works to building	Pobl	18,000
April 2020	Installation of CCTV	Pobl (Guardian security)	12,576
April 2020	Supply of furniture and other items	Pobl via own supply chains	20,900 (to date)
April to December	Replacement supply of furniture and other items or for additional rooms if required	Pobl via own supply chains	5,000
Total Projected Set up costs			73,476

- 3.4 In terms of ongoing revenue funding the project will be staffed by The Wallich and Caerlas. They have provided full cost breakdowns and the annual staffing costs are £345,005. The Council will contract with both organisations to provide the required support to service users. The specification and contract terms will be based on existing Housing Support Grant commissioning arrangements to ensure consistency of contracting monitoring and service evaluation. The Council will monitor the contracts and pay the monthly costs which will then be reclaimed from Welsh Government.

Support costs	Provider	Cost £
May 2020 to May 2021	The Wallich	273,505
May 2020 to May 2021	Caerlas	71, 500
Total Staffing costs		£345,005

4. Contingency Planning

- 4.1 In the event that the organisations suffer staff shortages due to an outbreak or through the need for self-isolation, it is likely that the project would need to be staffed by Agency staff, at additional expense or by Council staff. It is also the case that more staff could be needed in extreme circumstances if the number of bed spaces in the project needs to increase beyond the agreed limit of 20. It is suggested that additional contingency of £10k is budgeted for to cover such circumstances. This would bring the total projected cost to £428,481.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The intention is that this project will be funded in its entirety from the WG Covid -19 funding. WG has made available an initial amount of £30m to support Local Authorities across Wales to deal with the impact of Covid-19. This is an initial tranche of funding and WG have recognised that more will be needed. As part of the Covid-19 funding package, £10m has been earmarked to ensure that the vulnerable, the homeless and rough sleepers have access to sanitation, can be effectively isolated and have access to medical and other support. As this is emergency funding it will be claimed on a monthly basis in arrears, rather than up-front, to fund the project for 12 months.
- 5.2 WG have been made aware of the project and its indicative costs. It is the Council's intention to continue with monthly claims to cover ongoing support costs. However, given the requirement for monthly claims to be submitted, it must be highlighted that there is no on-going commitment from WG to fund this project past the immediate crisis, so this is at some risk to the Council. In the event that the funding does not cover the 12 month costs, these will have to met by the Council. In addition to ongoing monitoring of the contract in respect of monthly costs, the project will be reviewed after 6 months to determine its effectiveness.
- 5.3 In the event that WG funding does not cover the ongoing monthly costs, given the extreme pressures on homelessness which has been added to by the Covid 19 pandemic and its legacy, a request will be submitted to the Housing

Support Grant (HSG) Commissioning Group to fund the project past the 6 months point for the remainder of the 1 year contract.

- 5.4 Going forward to the 2021/22 financial year, if the service evaluation has shown it is an effective contributor to the longer term homelessness strategy, linking with the review of other such services, a longer term application to commission this project could be made to the HSG Commissioning Group.

6. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 6.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

- 6.2 An EIA Screening Form has been completed and a full EIA report is not required at this stage (Appendix 1). The Council will use the Welsh Government's (WG) funding that has been made available to enable Councils in Wales to support homelessness services during this crisis. The project will need to start taking referrals as soon as possible with a view to opening from 8th May 2020. The project comes under the Council's Homelessness Strategy which was subject to a full EIA in 2018. The project will allow for support to be directed to the most vulnerable and will have a positive impact on any protected group which uses the service.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 In light of the urgency of the situation, a waiver from the requirements of competition under the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules has been submitted for approval, in relation to the set-up and ongoing support costs.
- 7.2 Appropriate contracts will be entered into with Pobl, Caer Las and The Wallich to reflect the liabilities and obligations referred to in this report. The Council will monitor the contracts and pay the agreed monthly support costs which will then be reclaimed from Welsh Government

Background Papers – None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - EIA screening form