

# Beam Partnership – Housing & Employment Support

For the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

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## Summary

**Lead Member:** Cllr Hugo Pound – Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

**Lead Director:** Paul Taylor – Director of Change and Communities

**Head of Service:** Gary Stevenson – Head of Housing, Communities & Environment

**Report Author:** Stuart Clifton – Housing Services Manager

**Classification:** Public document (non-exempt)

**Wards Affected:** All

Approval Timetable	Date
Portfolio Holder	28 July 2022
Management Board	20 July 2022
Report Published	29 July 2022
Decision due not before	8 August 2022

## Recommendations

Officer recommendations as supported by the Portfolio Holder:

1. That the Head of Housing, Health and Environment, in consultation with the Head of the Legal Partnership, is authorised to enter into a partnership with Beam to commence fundraising and personalised support for access employment and accommodation within the Private Rented Sector (PRS) for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Tunbridge Wells, on a 12-month pilot.
2. The Head of Legal Partnership is authorised to negotiate and complete all necessary agreements, deeds and documents arising from this decision

# 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In 2017 the introduction of the Housing Reduction Act extended the Council's statutory homelessness duties to incorporate duties to prevent and relieve homelessness. 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.
- 1.2 These responsibilities are reflected in the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy with priorities to prevent homelessness, along with an aim to reduce the need for emergency and temporary accommodation.
- 1.3 During 2021-22 the Council accepted 485 applications from persons who were experiencing homelessness, or were threatened with homelessness. The lack of employment is one of the leading structural reasons that contributes to homelessness, as non-working and low-income households face extreme difficulties accessing suitable and affordable accommodation.
- 1.4 In 2021-22, of the 485 applicants experiencing homelessness, or threatened with homelessness, 275 working aged applicants (57%) were not in any form of employment, education or training (NEET). Single persons or childless couples represented 66% of those NEET applicants.
- 1.5 The lack of employment and difficulties accessing affordable private rented sector accommodation is a significant barrier of moving households out of temporary accommodation. As at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 there were 67 households in temporary accommodation, with 53 of these households (79%) not being in any form of employment, education or training.
- 1.6 Tunbridge Wells is a borough facing enormous affordability challenges with accommodation, with there being a significant affordability gap for private rented accommodation and home ownership. This affordability gap is also being made worse by the current global cost of living and energy crisis.
- 1.7 The table below demonstrates the affordability gap facing non-working households seeking for accommodation within the private rented sector.

Property Size	LHA Rate	Median Market Rent	Monthly Affordability Gap
Room	£433.81	£550 pcm	- £116.19
One Bedroom	£693.12	£795 pcm	- £101.88
Two Bedroom	£897.52	£1,050 pcm	- £152.48
Three Bedroom	£1,126.89	£1,300 pcm	- £173.11
Four Bedroom	£1,495.91	£2,040 pcm	- £544.09

- 1.8 In addition to the affordability gap between the LHA rate and median market rents, is the added challenge of the benefit cap limiting the amount of benefits a working-aged person is entitled to. For single adults this is £13,400 per year (£1,116.67 a month) and for childless couple or families to £20,000 per year

(£1,666.67 a month). One way in which a person or family can be exempted from the benefit cap is through obtaining employment and earning at least £658 per month.

- 1.9 The Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 - 2026 outlines key strategic priorities for the Council to address homelessness in the area, particularly through early identification of and assistance to those who are at-risk of homelessness earlier, including exploring new ways to access accommodation within the Private Rented Sector (PRS).
- 1.10 The Council is also embarking on the three-year Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI-5) from 2022-25 where there is a strong focus on eliminating rough sleeping through the early prevention of homelessness and improved access to affordable accommodation.
- 1.11 Beam are a social enterprise that innovatively tackles the root causes of homelessness, by supporting individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness into employment and/or the private rented sector. Beam partners with local authorities to provide long term, sustained support by removing the financial barriers that prevent its service-users from starting work. These barriers can include access to laptops and/or childcare. Beam's flexible fundraising model removes these financial barriers quickly; on average it takes less than a month.

## 2. Beam Overview

- 2.1 Beam 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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](#).
- 2.4 The journey of a Beam service user has six stages:
  - i. The service-user is referred to Beam by the Council's Housing Options Team or a charity partner.
  - ii. A Beam employee is assigned to the service-user as a personal case worker.

- iii. The service-user and their case worker decide on a personal budget which will lead to employment, informed by a strengths-based assessment of the service-user. Training courses are provided by third party providers and are in a range of disciplines from electricians to accounting. For tenancy support, service-user assessment looks at property size entitlement, housing benefit based on borough and property size, plus budgeting for bills and factoring in changes in work status. Due diligence will be undertaken to ensure funding for the courses is not readily available from TWBC or one of its partners.
- iv. Beam removes all financial barriers on their fundraising site (<https://beam.org/campaigns>) through donations from members of the public. All costs are covered, including the cost of training courses and house deposits, as well as other requirements including equipment, travel, moving costs and childcare, and listed transparently on the website. The average fundraising campaign is £3,000. As well as financial support, messages of support from members of the public also have an important motivational effect on Beam's service-users.
- v. Once the funds have been raised, Beam pays for the budget items listed on the website (no cash is given to service-users) and the service-user attends training and / or work preparation groups. Throughout the journey, one-to-one support continues at the level required by the service-user.
- vi. The service-user is supported to find full-time work or PRS tenancies. Support includes, CV and interview preparation and connections to prospective employers. Beam has partnerships with a variety of employers (e.g. Bupa, Royal Mail, Waitrose). For tenancies, support involves property search skills, home safety and tips for viewings.

2.5 To date Beam have supported nearly 1000 service users and report that 81% have found employment and 83% of those persons sustaining work for over 3 months. A further 73% of service users have moved into stable accommodation, with 93% having sustained their accommodation for at least 6 months.

2.6 The benefits of Beam's approach are that:

- i. People who are homeless and at risk of homelessness get into skilled, secure and well-paid work or PRS tenancies
- ii. Local authorities and Central Government save money in support costs (e.g. costs of temporary accommodation)
- iii. High levels of investment (average £3,000) are made in disadvantaged people that would otherwise be unaffordable
- iv. Members of the public are engaged in helping people in their community.

### 3. Beam proposal

3.1 The proposal is to enter a pilot spend to save for 12 months with Beam. The 12-month pilot programme will enable Beam to work with 50 clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. 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 £80,000, plus £900 additional PRS support service per tenancy signed, 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 Tunbridge Wells' data and it is predicated that total cashable savings would be £401,201 and therefore providing a net overall saving £321,201, or savings achieved of £5.02 per £1 spend.
- 3.3 As a social enterprise initiative, the total investment through the crowd funding is expected to be in the region of £150,000 to fund the 50 clients referred to support their access to employment and accommodation.
- 3.4 The Beam services are a unique response to provide an opportunity for homeless households to attract crowd funding to assist unblocking the issues they currently face. The crowd funded options include help to access employment, training costs and access to help with housing. This partnership will enable 50 of our clients to access this unique service and provide support for them to utilise the platform effectively. We have researched and cannot find a similar service that provides the same service.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the £80,000 and additional £900 per PRS tenancy secured, is taken from ring-fenced grant funding that is specific to the prevention and relief homelessness and rough sleeping.

## **4. Options Considered**

- 4.1 Option 1 – agree to the partnership with Beam for a 12-month pilot to support 50 clients currently homeless or at risk of homelessness, to access employment and accommodation, through their unique fundraising model.
- 4.2 Option 2 – to not partner with Beam and to continue to support clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through the usual forms of housing options, such as funding deposits and advanced rent.

## **5. Preferred Option and Reason**

- 5.1 The preferred option will be Option 1
- 5.2 Option 1 is the preferred option as this provides a unique opportunity to support 50 clients into both employment and to secure accommodation. The estimated net savings on return offers a great spent to save opportunity to further help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to start skilled, secure and well-paid jobs and leave, or prevent, homelessness. The pilot will help drive forward the Council's Homelessness Strategy and commitment to helping identify

and prevent those at-risk for homelessness, help homeless residents find employment and/or suitable housing, and become financially secure

## **6. Consultation on Options**

- 2.1 A sound reference has been provided by a former Head of Housing at the London Borough of Southwark who previously commissioned Beam to deliver an employment service and has spoken extremely positively of the partnership with Beam and service they delivered.
- 2.2 Consultation has also taken place with the Housing Services Managers at two other Kent districts, who have agreed to pilot with the Beam service or seeking approval for the pilot respectively.

## **7. Implementation**

- 7.1 If the recommendation is agreed a waiver from Contract Standing Orders will be submitted.
- 7.2 The Council and Beam will co-create an action plan for the identification of clients over the pilot and local employers.

## **8. Appendices and Background Documents**

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Climate Emergency Impact Assessment

## **9. Cross Cutting Issues**

### **A. Legal (including the Human Rights Act)**

As the BEAM offer is unique and for a one-year pilot, a waiver from Contract Standing Orders will be submitted.

Internal rules relating to evidence of market testing if requesting a waiver will also need to be followed.

Lucinda MacKenzie-Ingle, Team Leader, 12 July 2022

### **B. Finance and Other Resources**

The contribution to the partnership from the Council is £80,000k plus £900 per tenancy secured. This will be funded from the Rough Sleeper Initiative and Homelessness Prevention Grant funding. This will enable Beam to work with 50 clients to secure employment and accommodation. The model predicts total cashable savings would be £401,201 and therefore providing a net overall saving of £321,201.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

### **C. Staffing**

The partnership with Beam will provide additional resources to support the statutory responsibilities of the Housing Options Team to prevent and relieve homelessness. There will be no additional staffing requirements required.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

### **D. Risk Management**

No risk management implications have been identified.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## E. Environment (inc. Biodiversity) and Sustainability

A Climate Emergency Impact Assessment must be undertaken at the start of any new project etc. and as part of project planning and not as an 'add on' towards the end of completing the committee report.

The climate emergency impact assessment has not identified any significant positive or negative impact on carbon or the environment, although it has identified some possible smaller positive impacts.

The service will predominately be delivered remotely, minimising any carbon emissions from transport, as the service provider is based in inner London. Accommodation that will be secured for clients but meet the minimum level of energy efficiency standards, of an EPC rating of at least an E, however, we would seek to ensure where possible that accommodation have an EPC rating above an E rating.

Assisting clients to secure local employment opportunities and accommodation, will help reduce meet for longer distance travel and commuting, creating opportunities for the use of greener modes of transport to be used.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## F. Community Safety

Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998

*17(1) Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.*

Some of the client base are likely to be offenders and ex-offenders, providing support to stable housing and employment direct reduces the likelihood of further offending or re-offending.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## G. Equalities

Section 149, Equality Act 2010

*149(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –*

*(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*

*(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*

*(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

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.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## **H. Data Protection**

Article 5, General Data Protection Regulation 2016

*1. Personal data shall be:*

*(a) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject;*

*(b) collected for specific, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes;*

*(c) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;*

*(d) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;*

*(e) kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed;*

*(f) processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.*

Beam is compliant with General Data Protection Regulations and has two privacy statements; one for website users and donators and one for service users.

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.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## **I. Health and Safety**

As Beam will be dealing with potentially vulnerable adults, then compliance with the Council's Safeguarding Policy will be ensured

## J. Health and Wellbeing

- 1. Areas of deprivation: Will the proposal have an impact (positive or negative) on those living in areas of deprivation within the borough (40% most deprived in the country). These are Sherwood, Southborough and High Brooms, Broadwater and Rusthall.*
- 2. Healthier lifestyle opportunities: Will residents be more or less able to make healthier lifestyle choices such as physical activity (e.g. active travel, access to green spaces or access to leisure facilities), healthy eating (e.g. proximity or access to take away shops, allotments, food stores) and being smokefree*
- 3. Social and Community networks: Will the proposal make it easier for people to interact with one another e.g. encouraging community engagement*
- 4. Living and Working Conditions: does the proposal improve work or home environments, increase job, education or training opportunities, improve access to health services or housing*
- 5. General Socioeconomic, cultural and environmental conditions: Are there any other factors that may impact the above*

The project will support clients who are without employment and are homeless or at risk of homelessness. To secure both stable housing and employment has a positive correlation to improved health outcomes.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022