**Invitation to submit an Expression of Interest**

**I-1138**

**Oxfordshire’s Homelessness Alliance**

Oxfordshire County Council invites potential providers to Express an Interest in the above.

**Background**

**Introduction and local context**

Oxfordshire is a large county made up of four district council areas and the City of Oxford. 750,000 people live in the county, concentrated in Oxford and large market towns; significant areas of the county are rural.

Homelessness is a key issue within the county, exacerbated by relatively high house prices, particularly in the south of the county. Most people who sleep rough do so in the City and this is where most of the supported accommodation and support services are concentrated. Although the City of Oxford has the highest levels of homelessness, we know that tackling homelessness needs to be a collective and county wide effort, with many of the housing solutions lying outside the City.

A strong and emerging partnership of statutory and voluntary community sector partners have been working over the long term to prevent and resolve homelessness. There is also a high level of commitment to ending homelessness and to finding better solutions which are centred around people’s needs and aspirations.

**Commissioning**

Although the County Council is leading on the commissioning process, on behalf of the partners that are contributing to the pooled budget, the commissioning is a truly collaborative effort. The City Council in particular, is informing and jointly leading the commissioning, as a major investor in services.

The commissioning is a central part of the wider system transformation that we are working to deliver in Oxfordshire. This transformation is about better integrating the housing, social care and health responses to homelessness and working with people with lived experience, providers and other stakeholders to make sure that no one sleeps rough in Oxfordshire.

**Strategic context**

The vision and priorities for ending homelessness are set out in the County Wide Strategy as follows:

**Vision**

To prevent and resolve homelessness, so that no one sleeps rough in Oxfordshire and that sustainable housing solutions are found so that the impact of homelessness on people’s lives is reduced.

**Principles**

* We treat people in need of our services with respect
* We acknowledge people as individuals and work with their strengths
* We work in a ‘psychologically informed way’, understanding how past trauma and adverse childhood experiences affect people who experience homelessness
* We actively involve people affected by homelessness in identifying solutions and offer choice wherever possible
* We avoid ‘gatekeeping’ in the delivery of services
* There is a human face to our services so that the person who is homeless has a named person they can contact
* We focus on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of people who experience homeless, addressing the whole person, not just housing needs
* We co-operate to deliver a co-ordinated and consistent service across the county
* Take action to maximise the resources available to deliver the vision
* We will engage positively with the voluntary sector and faith-based groups
* Senior leaders across the system will seek to influence and lobby national policy and longer-term funding developments across MHCLG, Dept of Health, MOJ etc

**Priorities**

* Proactively prevent homelessness
* Rapid response to rough sleeping
* Focus on the person, not the problem
* Timely move on
* The right home in the right place

We are commissioning for outcomes and inviting Alliances, made up of a minimum of four providers, to tell us how they will organise themselves to collectively deliver on these outcomes. Equivalent contracts will be held with each member of the alliance.

As statutory organisations, we will work with the successful Alliance to design a system that will enable the vision - To prevent and resolve homelessness, so that no one sleeps rough in Oxfordshire and that sustainable housing solutions are found so that the impact of homelessness on people’s lives is reduced - to become a reality. This is a shift away from our historical commissioning approach where service volumes rather than outcomes were specified and fixed.

The service start date is the 1st April 2022 and the contract length will be five years with an option to extend for 36 months in aggregate.

Expressions of interest must be submitted via the South East Business Portal <https://sebp.due-north.com/> Suppliers will need to register (if not already registered).

The closing date for tender returns is 12.00 noon on 28th June 2021