



CABINET

Monday 8 July 2019

RAPID REHOUSING PATHWAY GRANT FUNDING – ROUGH SLEEPERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 requires local authorities to develop and provide enhanced and tailored housing pathways for groups of people who are more vulnerable to homelessness than others including people with mental health issues, those experiencing domestic abuse, ex-offenders and care leavers. The Government is particularly committed to assisting rough sleepers or people who are at risk of rough sleeping with the goal of halving the numbers of people sleeping rough by 2022. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) therefore invited local authorities to apply, within a short time scale, for Rapid Rehousing Pathway grant funding to address some of the gaps in homelessness service provision for rough sleepers.

East Suffolk Council was successful in its application to this fund which will be paid by MHCLG directly to East Suffolk Council via a Section 31 Grant Determination. Total funding for the financial year 2019/20 is £292,553.00 to be paid in 2019, comprising of £5,000.00 capital funding and £287,553.00 revenue funding. The MHCLG have also emphasized the need to deliver both projects at pace.

The grant allocation will be used to deliver two linked projects:

- a) Somewhere Safe to Stay- £171,368

To deliver this project, East Suffolk plans to commission emergency bed spaces for rough sleepers in both Felixstowe and Lowestoft with associated 24 hour staffing cover

- b) Supported Lettings - £121, 185

To deliver this project, East Suffolk plans to recruit directly employed Supported Lettings Officers to source and support service users in move-on accommodation

This report seeks Cabinet's approval to:-

1. Accept MHCLG grant funding to deliver the following projects:

- a) Somewhere Safe to Stay emergency bed spaces £171,368
- b) Supported Lettings £121,185

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
Cabinet Member:	<p>Cllr Richard Kerry</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Housing</p>
Supporting Officer:	<p>Name: Angela Haye</p> <p>Job Title: Housing Needs Service Manager</p> <p>Telephone Number: 01502 523134</p> <p>Email address: angela.haye@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</p>

1 RAPID REHOUSING PATHWAY

- 1.1 The **Rapid Rehousing Pathway** was launched as part of the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018. This bid-round incorporated 4 elements of the Pathway and will increase the provision available for rough sleepers, and those at risk of sleeping rough, in 108 areas across the country. The 4 elements consist of the following:
- i. Somewhere Safe to Stay Hubs: 72 hour bed spaces to enable rapid assessment and to support service users to get the right help quickly at the right time;
 - ii. Supported Lettings: support for former rough sleepers to sustain their accommodation in homes made newly available across both the private and social housing sector;
 - iii. Navigators: to ensure that rough sleepers are able to access a range of support services;
 - iv. Local Lettings: to set up or extend local lettings agencies to engender good working relationships with private landlords in the local area.
- 1.2 The Council has already received additional funding to continue its outreach work and the local letting agency option would need a longer lead in time to allow for the development of a scheme (if approved). Given the current position a decision was made to focus the funding application on the first two elements.
- 1.3 The HRA 2017 has amended Section 179 (2) HA 1996 and requires housing authorities to design advice and information services to meet the needs of all people within their district including, in particular, the needs of the following groups:-
- a) People released from prison or youth detention accommodation;
 - b) Care leavers;
 - c) Former members of the regular armed forces;
 - d) Victims of domestic abuse;
 - e) People leaving hospital;
 - f) People suffering from a mental illness or impairment;
 - g) Victims of Slavery and Trafficking; and
 - h) Any other group that the authority identify as being at particular risk of homelessness in their district (rough sleepers and non- priority need homeless)

- 1.4 The Council already works in partnership with a number of statutory and third sector service providers, identifying and responding to groups who are at risk of homelessness. There are nevertheless still key pressure points and gaps within our local partnerships and service provisions. Partnership working will continue to be a critical success factor if the Council is to stop the revolving door of service entry/exit across all of these statutory and third sector services.

2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.1 East Suffolk Council has already agreed in principle with both Notting Hill Genesis Housing Association and Access Community Trust to provide 9 emergency bed spaces. The Short Term Emergency Satellite Bed at 9 Buregate Road, Felixstowe continues to operate after the current Rough Sleeper Grant funding expired at the end of June 2019. It is proposed that the remaining 8 bed spaces will be provided through Access Community Trust in Lowestoft. The Thin Ice Project (Enhanced Severe Weather Accommodation) has provided a springboard on which to develop these services all year round. The funding will also provide for specialist hub workers.
- 2.2 It is intended that the Supported Lettings Officers will be employed directly by East Suffolk Council.
- 2.3 Services users will need to be moved on into alternative accommodation. This is likely to be either supported accommodation, the Council's own procured temporary accommodation, or longer term tenancies in the private rented or social housing sector. In reality landlords can view this client group as 'risky' and it is hoped that this risk will be mitigated by the dedicated intensive tenancy support.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 3.1 The prevention and relief of homelessness as a statutory duty came into effect in April 2018. One of the Council's Business Plan's Critical Success Factors is to 'improve access to **appropriate** housing to meet existing and future needs, including more affordable homes for local people'. There is a rising trend across the country regarding the number of people with complex needs who require appropriate housing (including applicants with autism and learning difficulties). Some identified groups are likely to have high priority but the housing solution needs to be in line with the person's support and care needs and aspirations to live a relatively independent and 'normal' life.
- 3.2 At the other end of the housing spectrum, the significant change in the legislation is resulting in applicants without a 'priority need' or who are found 'intentionally homeless', receiving some form of active assistance rather than merely being offered advice, to prevent homelessness.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial threshold for the Public Contract Regulations that apply for these services, Social and Other Specific Services Schedule 3 of the PCD (2) is £615,278 (014/24/EU-Provision of services to the Community).
- 4.2 The breakdown of proposed funding allocations to each identified Service Provider:

4.2.1 Somewhere Safe to Stay

- a) Notting Hill Genesis Housing Association: £25,000
- b) Access Community Trust: £146,368

Supported Lettings

- c) Supported Lettings £121,185
- 4.3 It is not considered that there is any risk to East Suffolk in obtaining this funding and it will enable East Suffolk to expand its services to the homeless within the time period of the grant.
- 4.4 Whilst there would ordinarily be a requirement to procure the contracts the grant will fund, as these contracts are worth less than £615,278 East Suffolk has elected to exempt these contracts from its CPR rules as changing suppliers will be disruptive to the services provided and could not be delivered at pace as required by the MHCLG.
- 4.5 As there are and will be contracts between East Suffolk Council and the service providers the service provider's performance can be monitored to ensure they are properly assisting the Council in provided its statutory functions.
- 4.6 A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the MHCLG and East Suffolk Council. Appendix A sets out the conditions of grant in relation to reporting requirements and deliverability.
- 4.7 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on 10th June 2019 with no negative impact implications for any protected characteristic except gender. The SSTS Hub arrangement with open sleeping areas may result in some people not feeling safe. Males are also likely to benefit more from the project than females due to the nature of the rough sleeping population, which is predominantly male. In mitigation there will be thorough risk assessments/ suitable overnight cover and the ability to place in alternative self contained nightly accommodation if needed. The project has been developed to address the needs of marginalised adults as regards access to services. MHCLG also requires the Council to report on the gender take up of the project

5 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 There was an option to not apply for the grant funding but it is recognised that the resources this will bring will help the Council meet its draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery objectives.

6 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Approval of the grant funding will enable the Council to expand the services provided to rough sleepers or those who are at risk of rough sleeping within the district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To accept the grant of £292,553 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to fund the following projects:

- a) Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub -£171,368
- b) Supported Lettings £121,185

Appendix A

Conditions of Grant

BACKGROUND PAPERS – Available from Angela Haye

Delivery Plan

Memorandum of Understanding

Equality Impact Assessment