

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**15 MARCH 2021**

### **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT – STRATEGY AND PROJECT DELIVERY**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update and seek approval from committee members to fund targeted intervention projects to deliver the councils Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2024, funded from homelessness prevention grants/reserve.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 As detailed in the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy – Annual Delivery Update presented to Homes and Communities on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The current five-year Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2024 was informed by a comprehensive review of homelessness carried out in 2018 and subsequently the strategy was launched in April 2019.

2.2 As a reminder, the aims of the Strategy are to:

- Prevent as many residents as possible from becoming homeless
- Ensure that if anyone has to sleep rough, it is brief and does not happen again
- Help as many residents as possible to move seamlessly from one home to another without the need for emergency or temporary accommodation
- Provide a good quality service that customers are highly satisfied with

The objectives of the Strategy are:

- To improve financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homelessness, through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system
- To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies
- To deliver additional supported housing and housing related support as required
- To increase the amount of private rental sector (PRS) housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies
- To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met, in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs
- To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness
- To achieve high customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Housing Options
- To ensure services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated.

The strategy is framed around eight themes:

- Theme 1 Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness
- Theme 2 Responding to the shortage of social housing
- Theme 3 Supported housing and housing related support
- Theme 4 Working with the Private Rented Sector

- Theme 5 Addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness
- Theme 6 Reducing the impact of homelessness on the community
- Theme 7 Improving Customer Services for people who are homelessness
- Theme 8 Improving the data available to relevant agencies

2.3 The strategy includes a vision that the population should be living in, or can access, homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community, that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents.

Central to achieving this vision is ensuring that homelessness affects the smallest possible number of residents and where it does; there is help available to quickly resolve their situation so that it does not happen again.

2.4 The table below provides an overview of two projects, which are currently funded through the Councils Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation to help deliver our strategy aims and objectives. The Council's Homes and Communities receive an annual update and scrutinise performance outturns – which are attached at **Appendix A**.

Organisation	Value of Grant 2020/21	Proposed continuation of funding to 2023/24	Link to Community Plan	Link to Homelessness Strategy	SLA Term
Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice – Debt Project	£50,000 (split between Housing Options and Housing Management)	£150,000	Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents	Theme 1 - Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness	2020/21
Furniture Project	£5,000	£15,000	Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area.	Theme1- Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness	2020/21
	<b>£55,000</b>	<b>£165,000</b>			

*Note: synergies with the councils discretionary grants programme*

### 3.0 Proposals

#### Homelessness Trends

3.1 The Housing Options Team have remained very busy during 2020/21. There have been many complex cases including mental health, drugs, alcohol and offending behaviour. The numbers of presentations during this time has remained reasonably similar with 199 in quarter one and 212 in quarter two. Both of these quarters are slightly down on the same periods last year, 275 for quarter one and 273 for quarter 2 2019/20.

The Homeless Reduction Act has only been in for two years; therefore, we are no longer able to show comparisons with previous statutory acceptances due to the shift in legislation.

- 3.2 Reasons for approaching the service remain similar to previous periods – loss of private sector tenancies, family and/or friends no longer willing to accommodate and domestic abuse.
- 3.3 In addition to the day-to-day elements, the team have also worked exceptionally hard to deliver the governments 'Everyone In' programme in the first round of lock down. Nine rough sleepers were placed into temporary accommodation. Of those nine, one returned to his previous partner, four lost the accommodation due to behaviour (of which three to custody). Two had no recourse to public funds, one abandoned the accommodation and the last was successfully rehoused.

### **Rough Sleepers**

- 3.4 Through analysis of the Street Outreach Reports, the number of rough sleepers in Newark and Sherwood has increased. The Street Outreach Team carry out weekly visits to assist rough sleepers and submit updates to us, we also receive monthly street count reports, which show that in 2020, numbers have increased from zero rough sleepers found in January and March (note that the shelter was still open) to 2 in May and June and 6 in August and October. The last monthly street count reports, in January 2021 identified 1 rough sleeper.
- 3.5 This is not in keeping with the rest of the county, however, one of those consistently found was previously offered accommodation under 'Everyone In' but refused and another had accommodation available to him at Wellow Green but declined to use it and remained on the streets in Newark.
- 3.6 We now have our Winter Night Shelter Provision in place, this commenced on 16<sup>th</sup> November and we have placed twelve rough sleepers, two of which have been rough sleeping for some time. One has been consistently rough sleeping for at least two years and the other is nearing 70 years of age and has been homeless and rough sleeping periodically for at least the last 8 years.
- 3.7 As governance to oversee and ensure a successful outcome for as many as possible a Multi-agency Rough Sleeper Action Group has been established. The group meet fortnightly and includes partners such as the Police, DWP, CGL, housing, Framework (various services) and Public Protection.
- 3.8 The 2020/21 Winter Night Shelter provision has been adapted, due to Public Health Guidance. Current plans include a teatime drop in service at Newark Baptist Church, which includes a meal and support through a triage assessment, which will result in a referral for emergency accommodation if necessary. More than 30 individuals have made use of the drop in so far.
- 3.9 Emergency Winter Night Shelter provision has been arranged by utilising five void flats on Lincoln Road that will not be relet due to the Yorke Drive Regeneration Project, in addition we have block booked four rooms in a local B&B. On average eight rough sleepers made use of the Winter Night Shelter in 2019/20, therefore, we initiated eight self-contained units of accommodation for rough sleepers and one unit for Covid symptomatic or diagnosed cases.

### Homelessness Prevention Grant

3.10 Please find below an overview of the Homelessness Prevention grant allocation and reserve:

<b>31/03/2019</b>	<b>£455,881.25</b>	Balance b/f
31/05/2019	-£99,173.00	MHCLG Flexible Homelessness Support Grant 2019-20
31/05/2019	-£30,964.00	MHCLG HRA New Burdens Funding 2019-20
05/08/2019	£10,000.00	Trf to A10213 to pay Ashfield DC our contribution to Framework Street Outreach Service
<b>31/03/2020</b>	<b>£576,018.25</b>	Balance b/f
30/04/2020	-£99,173.00	MHCLG Flexible Homelessness Support Grant 2020-21
30/04/2020	-£76,239.00	MHCLG HRA / Prevention Pot 2020-21
07/07/2020	£6,000.00	Contribution to Ashfield DC for Framework Street Outreach Service
10/08/2020	-£10,000.00	MHCLG Rough Sleeper Funding
19/08/2020	£15,500.00	V13 Upgrade + SR Split Civica Quotation V1.0
Pending	£316,800.00	Committed and agreed via an Urgency Item as a contribution towards the NSAP Capital Project – purchase of the six Alms-houses.
Pending	£6,395.00	Additional contribution to NSAP Capital Project for surveys and contractor costs
09/12/2020	£5,320.00	Court Order
	<b>£411,415.25</b>	Expected balance as at 31 Mar 2021

The Homelessness Prevention Grant principles are to:

- Prioritise prevention activity;
- Carry out homelessness activities in line with the principles of the homelessness reduction act;
- Reduce or eliminate the use of emergency B&B, particularly for periods over 6 weeks.

An overview of additional funding through the RSI, NSAP, Cold Weather funding and Protect Plus is provided in Appendix B and C.

### **3.11 Proposals**

A number of funding proposals are proposed below that not only support the themes and objectives within the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy and its action plan but also the objectives within the Community Plan:

Organisation/proposal	Value of Grant 2020/21 – 2023/24	How will we deliver	Link to Community Plan	Link to Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy
<p><b>Starter Packs</b> We would like to enable households to set up home after leaving temporary or supported accommodation by funding grants to pay for starter packs of essential items, which will include flooring. If required, loans for additional items could also be made available.</p> <p><b>Why</b> One of hardest things for people that are leaving supported or temporary accommodation is to furnish their property; there are no currently no services that can assist with items. In addition, charitable monies are harder to come by and we need to minimise residents turning to high interest lenders or loan sharks (links to other proposals within this report)</p>	40,000	Furniture Project are willing to assist/work with a flooring specialist to supply and fit carpets	Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area	Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness
<p><b>Welfare Benefits Advice Service</b> We propose to provide a Welfare Advice Service in Newark and Sherwood in partnership with Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice.</p> <p><b>Why</b> Citizens Advice Newark and Sherwood, as part of their post Covid Development Plan have identified a 92% reduction in volunteers who previously assisted with service delivery.</p>	120,000	Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice have an officer already in place with relevant skills but due to a loss of funding this service has been lost and the officer has been relocated	Improve the Health and Wellbeing of local residents	Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness

<p>Since 23rd March, 88% of issues relate to welfare benefits, debt or employment.</p> <p>The aim of the service is now to be the social safety net in navigating the welfare system and long-term plans are to fundraise for in house specialist teams.</p> <p>DWP State of the District report for October 2020: Those claiming UC in Newark Sept 2019 – 2342 Sept 2020 - 5540 An increase of 136%</p> <p>For specific ages 16-24 year olds Sept 2019 - 463 Sept 2020 - 1016 An increase of 119%</p> <p>Projected unemployment in Newark and Sherwood after furlough is expected to rise to 11.5% to 12% from the pre-Covid 4.5% (D2N2 Study).</p>		<p>within the service.</p>		
<p><b>Credit Union Co-ordinator</b> To contribute funding to employ a co-ordinator to promote Nottingham and Lincoln Credit Union (NLCU) in Newark and Sherwood</p> <p><b>Why</b> To ensure residents manage their debt and support any Employment and Welfare Advice Services we need to encourage long-term savings and affordable living, we can do this by providing and encouraging the use of an organisation with credit options that are acceptable and affordable.</p>	<p>30,000 (£5000 from Econ Regen historical funds)</p>	<p>A working group has been established to promote the service initially, NLCU will employ the co-ordinator</p>	<p>Improve the Health and Wellbeing of local residents</p>	<p>Reducing the impact of poverty on homelessness</p>

<p><b>School Engagement</b> To deliver homelessness prevention and awareness in secondary schools</p> <p><b>Why</b> By addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness, particularly in schools can reduce the number of young people experiencing homelessness in the next generation, assist those living in poverty or children of families already placed in temporary accommodation due to homelessness.</p>	20,000	Broxtowe Youth Homelessness will deliver to all schools in Newark and Sherwood.	Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area	Addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness
<p><b>Homeless prevention or tenancy sustainment</b> To assist young people with a child under 5 to manage a situation such as living in temporary accommodation to ensure future tenancy sustainment once moved on or to assist a family at risk of or threatened with homelessness</p> <p><b>Why</b> Officers have experienced waiting lists for families in need of support from Homestart while in temporary accommodation.</p>	24,000	Topping up existing funds to Homestart and prioritising through a SLA (note that if possible this will be linked to the work that Community Relations are doing to gain a presence in Ollerton)	Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to their local area	Addressing the causes and consequences of homelessness
Total Value	<b>£234,000</b>			

- 3.12 These initiatives support themes 1 and 6 and are being presented now to meet successful homelessness prevention needs. We plan to create working groups with partners around each theme and develop key work plans to meet the aims and objectives within the strategy.
- 3.13 SLT support the above proposals, **totalling £234,000**, Service Level Agreements containing performance targets and monitoring of outcomes will be agreed with quarterly performance meetings taking place with relevant partners.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 No further Equality and Diversity implications have been identified in addition to those already considered when the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleepers Strategy was completed and the EIA.

#### **5.0 Digital Implications**

5.1 There are no digital implications arising from this report.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications FIN20-21/9139**

6.1 The Homelessness Reserve was established to utilise, manage and control all government grant funding, specific to this initiative within the district. It is an earmarked reserve, which NSDC has built up over recent years, such that as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 the balance on the reserve was £576,018.25. This figure is expected to reduce to £411,415.25 by the end of the current financial year, with the Councils contribution to the purchase of the six Alms Houses, other small items of expenditure, but then offset by the grant income of £185,412 received in the current year.

6.2 The above proposals, if agreed will be funded partly from the existing reserve and also from future annual grant allocation that the Council will receive over the next three to four years.

#### **7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

7.1 The table at 3.11 includes the alignment to relevant objectives within the Community Plan.

#### **8.0 Comments of Director(s) or Housing Advisory Group**

8.1 The proposals set out in this report are practical and will help to support services for those facing challenges around securing and maintaining a safe and secure home. The housing advisory group have also had sight of these proposals and support the allocation of funds, with clearly set out rationale. There are synergies with our internal housing service too around making links and better alignment.

#### **9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- a. That member's note that the report has been presented to SLT on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and support the proposals.
- b. Members consider the contents of this report and approve the funding proposals to successfully deliver the councils five year Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024.

#### **Background Papers**

The details of any background papers you have used in writing the report (note these would then become public documents available for inspection) or if none used write "Nil". Background Papers are not published with the report as an appendix.

For further information, please contact Cheska Asman on Ext 5643.



Suzanne Shead  
 Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing

## Appendix A – Performance figures for Debt Project and Furniture Project

Provider	Performance Indicator	Target 2018/19	Outcome 2018/19	Target 2019/20	Outcome 2019/20	Target 2020/21
<b>Citizens Advice - Debt</b>						
	Total number of referrals	270	582	270	503	270
	Total number of individuals assisted	200	192	200	223	200
	Number of homeless preventions	125	133	125	104	125
	Of the above, numbr of potential NSH evictions prevented	30	33	30	48	30
	Number of Newark and Sherwood Homes individuals assisted	Data only	100	Data only	Data only	Data only
	Total value of rent arrears managed	£75,000	109,556	£75,000	£135,433	£75,000
	Total value of mortgage arrears managed	£100,000	341,114	£100,000	405,732	£100,000
	Training and awareness raising sessions	4	2	2	2	2
<b>Furniture Project</b>						
	Total number of referrals from NSDC Housing Options Team and Newark and Sherwood Homes	42	69	47	55	52
	Total number of referrals delivered for Housing Options Team and Newark and Sherwood Homes	38	66	42	51	47
	Total number of referrals received across Newark and Sherwood	167	155	150	150	167
	Total number of referrals delivered across Newark and Sherwood	158	151	145	143	161
	Tenure not provided	Data only	36	Data only	19	Data only
	Social Housing – NSH	Data only	136	Data only	99	Data only
	Private rent	Data only	21	Data only	8	Data only
	Owner/Occupier	Data only	7	Data only	9	Data only
	Other registered provider	Data only	24	Data only	5	Data only
	Number on waiting list (average)	Data only	27	Data only	29	Data only
	Average waiting times (average)	Data only	1-2 weeks	Data only	1-2 weeks	Data only

## **Appendix B - Overview of additional funding**

### **Rough Sleeper Initiative**

Funding has been successfully secured in Nottinghamshire under the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) for the last three years.

Back in January 2020, Nottinghamshire was awarded £836,916 additional funding by MHCLG and approval given to carry forward £355,397 underspend from 2019/20.

In addition to this £140,000, match funding was pledged by district and borough authorities (£10,000 each with our contribution coming from the Homelessness Prevention Grant) and by Framework (£70,000). Public Health continue to fund assertive Outreach Substance Misuse Workers to work alongside RSI funded roles; the value of this support is £79,000 for 2020/21. Allocated spending is explained at Appendix C.

Meeting have taken place to consider the fourth years funding bid, general ideas are to move more towards Health and Wellbeing this year, such as:

- Meaningful use of time;
- Rebuilding positive relationships;
- Peer mentors;
- Consideration of trauma or psychologically informed environments and the resulting impact on someone's life.

We have since been given assurance from MHCLG that we are guaranteed at the same amount of funding in year 3 (2020/21) and there will be a further announcement of an additional allocation in April 2021. Each authority has been asked to make a £10,000 contribution to the 2021/22 funding bid.

### **Next Steps Accommodation Programme**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government launched the Next Steps Accommodation Programme on the 18 July 2020. The £266M fund was made available to provide accommodation and support for people experiencing homelessness and was split into two streams. A short term/interim accommodation (£105m) revenue only fund and a longer-term move on accommodation fund (£161M), both to be utilised by March 2021.

On the 17 September 2020, the Council was advised it been successful in securing an initial £22,846 from the £105M short-term revenue fund to deliver its winter provision for rough sleepers.

The longer Term Move-on Accommodation fund is part of an overall £433m available to deliver 3,300 units of accommodation and is split into £130M capital funding and £31M revenue funding.

We made an initial bid to purchase the six former Alms-houses on Northgate, Newark to provide interim supported accommodation for those with complex needs who are rough sleeping or vulnerably housed, as detailed below:

<b>Costs for 'First Steps' Accommodation at Northgate, Newark</b>	
<b>Capital Dwelling Costs</b>	
6 Alms-houses	670,000
Additional works to properties (to reach appropriate EPC standards)	34,000
<b>Final Costs</b>	
Total Cost for 6 dwellings	<b>£704,000</b>
<b>Proposed Grant Details</b>	
MHCLG Contribution at 55% of total costs	<b>£387,200</b>
<i>Requires a 45% funding contribution from the Council/match funding</i>	<i>£316,800</i>
<b>Revenue Costs</b>	
Specialist Rough Sleeper Support Worker Post	£8,700 (2020/21) £35,000 pa for 3 years
<b>Proposed Grant Details</b>	
*MHCLG Contribution	£28,080 per year
MHCLG Contribution of the 3 year 8 week period covered by the bid	£4,320 (2020/21 8wks) £28,080 (2021/22) £28,080 (2022/23) £28,080 (2023/24)
<b>Total Revenue Contribution for lifetime of the bid</b>	<b>£88,560</b>

On 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020, we received confirmation from Homes England that, following further due diligence we have been allocated the funding, subject to entering into a contract with Homes England.

### **Cold Weather Fund**

MHCLG have made a £10 million Cold Weather Fund available to support councils get rough sleepers off the streets during the winter by helping with the requirements to provide accommodation that is self-contained. A bid was placed for our maximum allocation of £6,400 and we have since been notified that this has been successful, the money will be used to provide a continued winter night Shelter.

### **Protect Plus**

MHCLG have allocated a further £15 million to assist the ongoing efforts to provide accommodation for rough sleepers during the pandemic. This scheme – called the 'Protect Programme' – will help areas provide additional support during the restrictions and throughout winter. Newark and

Sherwood DC have been allocated £5000, however, following discussions with MHCLG Advisors we have submitted a request for £11,246 to cover the cost of an additional flat, specialist support to assist the higher number of homeless EU nationals to apply for settled status and to cover the shortfall in previous allocations.

### Appendix C – Allocated Rough Sleeper Initiative costs 2020/21

Provision	Provider	Costs
Rough Sleeper Initiative Coordinator	Framework	£37,200
Lead authority (1 day pw to administer the funding)	ADC	£10,000
Street outreach team	Framework	£500,000
CPN	Nott's Healthcare Trust	£61,141.50
Call Before You Serve	Derby City Council	£53,597.60
40 YMCA bed spaces (ADC/MDC)	YMCA	£100,237
Landlord liaison officers (3FTE)	N&SDC NCHA MDC	£80,183 + £37,500 personalised budget
Prison navigator	Framework (previously DLNRCRC)	£35,000 + £12,000 personalised budget
MH navigator	Framework	£35,000 + £12,000 personalised budget
Social lettings agency	N Galloway – ended June 2020	£27,884.60
Admin support	ADC	£15,000
New navigator team (4FTE) – 'Nottinghamshire Prevention and Resettlement Service'	Framework – started Aug 20	£143,3000 + £34,500 personalised budget Note this is the 12 month cost from start date
Outreach wound care nursing	Sherwood Forest Hospital Trust	£31,468
GP enhanced access	CCG	£15,000
CGL outreach	CGL (Oct-Mar)	£57,299.40