

CABINET

Wednesday, 13 March 2019

MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXTERNAL FUNDING TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS (REP1964)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires Waveney District Council (WDC) to develop and provide enhanced and tailored housing pathways for groups of people that maybe more vulnerable to homelessness than others (i.e. people with mental health issues, victims of domestic abuse, former prisoner and care leavers). The Government is particularly committed to assisting households that previously were not owed a main statutory homeless duty even if they were homeless through no fault of their own for example childless single people and childless couples who are not classed as vulnerable. The Government has acknowledged that these extra duties will require additional resources if local authorities are to fulfil them.
2. Therefore the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has invited local authorities to apply for grant funding to address some of the gaps in homelessness service provision.
3. These services rely upon personal relationships between the service provider and the end user. These relationships have been developed since 2017 when the service was introduced and any change in Service Provider will cause a breakdown in these relationships, negatively impacting upon the outcomes for the end user. Therefore an exemption from the Contract Procedure Rules is requested to enable the Council to directly contract with the existing Service Providers
4. **If the applications are successful, this report seeks Cabinet's approval:-**
 1. To accept MHCLG grant funding for the following service expansion/initiatives:
 - a) MHCLG Domestic Abuse Funding Suffolk wide fund of £270,000.00 administered through Suffolk County Council
 - b) MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) UP TO £220,000
 2. If successful in obtaining grant funding:
 - a) To exempt from the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) and in particular rule 8.1.1 and enter into the contract with current service providers to minimise any disruption to the existing services being expanded, as this needs to be delivered at pace.
 - b) The total amount of funding applied for in relation to the Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding is £220,000.00 and is therefore above the threshold for exemption under Contract Procedure Rules.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Chris Punt Cabinet Member for Housing
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Supporting Officers:	Andrew Jarvis Strategic Director 01394 4443234 andrew.jarvis@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Angela Haye Service Manager, Strategic Housing 01502 523134 angela.haye@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Changes to Homeless Legislation:

1.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires Waveney District Council (WDC) to develop and provide enhanced and tailored housing pathways for groups of people that maybe more vulnerable to homelessness than others (e.g. people with mental health issues, victims of domestic abuse, former prisoner and care leavers). The Government is particularly committed to assisting households that previously were not owed a main statutory homeless duty even if they were homeless through no fault of their own (e.g. childless single people, childless couples who are not classed as vulnerable). The Government has acknowledged that these extra duties will require additional resources if local authorities are to fulfil them.

1.3 Therefore the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has invited local authorities to apply for grant funding to address some of the gaps in homelessness service provision

1.4 It is important to highlight at this stage that vulnerable individuals may present with a number of issues and personal histories that overlap with each other, this increases the complexity of that individual case and impacts upon the Council's ability to assist in a meaningful way. (For example a former member of the armed forces may suffer with a physical injury and PTSD and use alcohol as a coping strategy). Under the Housing Act 1996 (HA 1996) some of these households will fall within a priority need requiring the Council to rehouse them but some households will not. As a result of the HRA 2017 the Council now has a responsibility to assist households that are not in priority need by agreeing a personalised housing plan setting how the housing need will be addressed. This requirement did not exist prior to the HRA 2017

1.5 The HRA 2017 has amended Section 179 (2) HA 1996 and housing authorities are now required 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; and,
- g) Victims of Slavery and Trafficking
- h) Any other group that the authority identify as being at particular risk of homelessness in their district (Rough Sleepers and Non- Priority Homeless)

1.6 Both Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils already work 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 are to stop the revolving door of service entry/exit across all of these services

1.7 Existing Services

1.8 The application for further funding from the MHCLG will be made with the objectives to improve and enhance the housing needs provision for identified vulnerable groups of people in east Suffolk. Existing external services for both Waveney District Council (WDC) and Suffolk Coastal District (SCDC) Council area are as follows:-

1.9 **Domestic Abuse Fund**- Satellite accommodation and specialist support for single women with complex needs. Provided by

- a) Orwell Housing- WDC
- b) Anglia Care Trust- SCDC

1.10 MHCLG Grant was allocated by Suffolk County Council (as the accountable body) to various District and Borough Councils to implement the above initiative locally. Suffolk Coastal was the lead partner for both Ipswich Borough and SCDC. Suffolk County Council have again been successful in their application for funding to further expand the service for vulnerable families, providing mental health advocacy and sanctuary type security provision (panic rooms in existing accommodation). Anglia Care Trust won the contract through a tendering exercise held by both Ipswich and Suffolk Coastal District Council. WDC also had its own grant allocation. Appendix A details the approved CPR Document for Domestic Violence Services in Waveney.

1.11 **Rough Sleeper Grants -Specialist Outreach Workers (Mental Health outreach) and Emergency “Whatever it Takes Fund”**. Provided by

- a) Notting Hill and Genesis Housing Association-SCDC
- b) Anglia Care Trust- SCDC
- c) Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust -SCDC
- d) Lowestoft Rising-WDC
- e) Access Community Trust-WDC

1.12 The Rough Sleeper Grant application was submitted and led by WDC the services seek to reduce rough sleeping in both Suffolk Coastal and Waveney by the Councils working in partnership with the above providers. The funding will expire in June 2019.

1.13 New Services

1.14 **Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI)**

This funding will also be linked to the Private Rented Sector (PRS) Access Fund as the PRS Fund is primarily for non statutory homeless. Relationships are already established at the service user and organisational level and the intention is to minimise any disruptions in the service from a customer point of view. The Council has completed an initial feedback questionnaire in order to provide an initial assessment about rough sleeping and our activity to prevent and reduce single homelessness within the local authority area. The MHCLG will consider whether the funding could be used to enhance what we already provide.

1.15 At the last Rough Sleeper estimate exercise conducted on the 14th November 2018, 14 entrenched rough sleepers were identified in WDC. A further 54 individuals have used the Project Thin Ice Enhanced Severe Weather provision which runs from the 1st November 18 to the 28th February 2019.

Performance Information			
Suffolk Coastal 1st April - 31st December 2018			
	No of people worked with		No of successful preventions
Prevention from Rough Sleeping	51		50
Relief from Rough Sleeping	17		15
Of which placed into			
	Emergency accommodation	Non Emergency Temp	Longer Term Settled
	18	3	24
Of which accessed			
	Substance Misuse Services	Mental Health Services	Employment/training
	8	39	2

Performance Information			
Waveney 1st April - 31st December 2018			
	No of people worked with		No of successful preventions
Prevention from Rough Sleeping	97		81
Relief from Rough Sleeping	29		28
Of which placed into			
	Emergency accommodation	Non Emergency Temp	Longer Term Settled
	33	22	54
Of which accessed			
	Substance Misuse Services	Mental Health Services	Employment/training
	59	47	2

- 1.16 The 2019-20 RSI funding is intended to support interventions that can be set up and delivered at pace, and will have an impact on Rough Sleeping and hidden homelessness (Sofa Surfing) numbers next year.
- 1.17 As the funding period will cover the time after the creation of East Suffolk Council the initial application refers to both WDC & East Suffolk. This initiative is likely to involve scaling up existing services. The following are provided as examples of activity that might attract funding:
- Rough sleeper coordinator role
 - Outreach provision (additional or new) & increased "in reach or floating support"
 - Increasing accommodation options for rough sleepers, i.e. hostels, access to PRS, dispersed tenancies with long term support
 - Specialist support, i.e. mental health and substance misuse, multi-disciplinary teams, financial management

- 1.18 The financial threshold for the Public Contract Regulation's 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). The decision relating to exemption from the CPR was approved for the Rough Sleeping Grant and the Satellite Funding /Specialist Support on the 15th February 2017 and the 10th July 2017 respectively.
- 1.19 Permission is requested if successful to exempt the services to be funded by the current grant funding allocation from CPR as the service is essentially being maintained or expanded and to change suppliers would cause disruption to the services provided. These services rely upon personal relationships between the service provider and the end user. These relationships have been developed since 2017 when the service was introduced and any change in Service Provider will cause a breakdown in these relationships, negatively impacting upon the outcomes for the end user.

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

- 2.1 The prevention and relief of homelessness as a statutory duty came into effect on the 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 that need appropriate housing (including applicants with autism and learning difficulties). Some identified groups are likely to be in 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
- 2.2 At the other end of the housing spectrum, the significant change in the legislation will result in applicants in non-priority need or those found intentionally homeless receiving some form of active assistance rather than merely being offered advice, resulting in the prevention of homelessness. The Private Rented Sector Access Scheme will also build incentives to improve the person's employment opportunities.

3 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The level of NHCLG grant being applied for is above the threshold of £50,000 which can be accepted by Officers.
- 3.2 It is not considered that there is any risk to WDC in obtaining this funding and it will enable WDC to expand its services to the homeless.
- 3.3 Whilst there would ordinarily be a requirement to procure the contracts the grant will fund, as these contracts are worth less than £615,278 WDC can elect to exempt these contracts from it's CPR rules therefore it is recommended that these contracts should be exempted as changing suppliers will be disruptive to the services provided.
- 3.4 As there are and will be Contracts between WDC and the Service Providers the Service Provider's performance can be monitored to ensure they are properly assisting WDC in provided its statutory functions.
- 3.5 WDC/East Suffolk Council has to provide a report by the end of 2019 to Central Government showing the progress made in reducing rough sleeping.

4 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 WDC considered not applying for this funding but this would limit the Services that could be provided.
- 4.2 WDC considered the option of tendering these contracts however it was felt that any change of Service Provider at this stage would cause disruption to the Services especially as they involved one to one contact with users with special requirements and the relationships and trust built up between the Service Providers and the users are integral to the success of the service. In addition the Government is expecting a report and successful outcomes by the end of 2019 and there is insufficient time to tender the Contracts and build up the relationships if there is a change of provider.

5 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To enable WDC to access the grant funding provided and to expand the Services provided to the homeless.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To approve application to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for funding for the following service expansion/initiatives:
 - a) MHCLG Domestic Abuse Funding County wide up to £270,000.00
 - b) MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding up to £220,000.00
2. For the reasons given in Paragraph 1.22 of this report, to exempt from the Contract Procedure Rules and in particular rule 8.1.1 and give authority to officers to enter into Contracts with current Service Providers for the following services;
 - a) MHCLG Domestic Abuse Funding County wide up to £270,000.00
 - b) MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding – Up to £220,000.00

APPENDICES – None

BACKGROUND PAPERS Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council's website but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
18.12.18	Rough Sleeper Initial Assessment Form	Angela Haye
17.12.18	Government Rough Sleeper Strategy	Angela Haye
17.12.18	MHCLG Domestic Abuse Fund Application	Angela Haye
17.12.18	Draft Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy	Angela Haye