

CABINET

DATE	14/07/2021
REPORT OF	Councillor Callum Proctor – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Sharon Wroot, Executive Director, Environment, Economy and Resources
SUBJECT	Rough Sleeper Initiative Year 4
STATUS	Open with the exception of Appendix A which is exempt under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 07/21/04

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The delivery of Rough Sleeper Initiatives (RSI) through Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) contributes to the Council's key outcomes of Sustainable Communities, Health, Wellbeing, Feel Safe and are Safe, by enabling access to housing and support options. The Rough Sleeper funding provides individuals access to a range of support packages to enable them to live independently. Initiatives address housing, both mental and physical health issues, access to health and substance misuse services and provision of emergency/short-term and longer-term accommodation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The RSI funding provides individuals access to a range of support packages within the community to equip them to live independently and to secure and sustain long term housing within North East Lincolnshire therefore reducing the numbers of rough sleepers and preventing those with complex needs from becoming homeless.

Following a funding proposal submitted in March 2021, the Council have been awarded £445,098 ring-fenced revenue which covers the period 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022 and is additional to the Quarter 1 allocation of £130,438 and £60,000 uplift already confirmed and received in April 2021, to continue the interventions already in place over the previous 12 months.

The total RSI allocation for 2021/22 is £635,536.

Interventions will ensure we have a pathway approach to supporting rough sleepers into suitable accommodation options with dedicated, specialised support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Supports the recommendations to award the framework to the preferred tenderers detailed in Appendix A.

2. delegates authority to the Executive Director, Environment, Economy and Resource, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Tourism to award and to ensure that all necessary actions in relation to implementation are carried out; and
3. authorises the Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets (Monitoring Officer) to execute and complete all requisite legal documentation.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The decision allows the Council to award the grant funding for the MHCLG agreed Rough Sleeper Initiatives in North East Lincolnshire to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers and prevent those with complex needs from becoming homeless.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

1.1 The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the Government's vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. Since March 2018, the Government's rough sleeping initiative (RSI) has funded local authorities to provide specialist services to help the most vulnerable people in society off the streets and into secure accommodation.

1.2 Review of previous 12 months of RSI funded initiatives:

Harbour Place

Over the past 12 months, the MHCLG funding has facilitated the refurbishment of the night shelter, to provide individual rooms, rather than dormitory style rooms, due to the requirement to be Covid-safe. The funding secured expansion of rough sleeper street outreach support, mental health, and substance misuse support. When the night shelter had to close at the start of lockdown their Team provided very much needed housing related support to those the Authority placed due to the 'Everyone In' initiative in March 2020. The numbers could not be managed purely by the Authority Homelessness Prevention Service.

1.3 Hull & East Yorkshire MIND

MIND have provided two Navigators, to provide intensive, psychological support to entrenched rough sleepers and engage them in statutory and voluntary services/provision. In addition, they have provided housing related support to those in the Strand St project (see below) with multiple and complex needs, along with mental health support from a specialist support worker.

1.4 We Are With You

A specialist alcohol and substance worker has been working from Hope Street night shelter, providing support to those who want intervention and support around their addiction. It was identified that 90% of the rough sleepers accommodated by the local authority during the lockdown, had substance issues and that the client group needed additional, dedicated support in this regard. They have provided Naloxone administering training to Harbour Place staff, resulting in them directly intervening with a rough sleeper who had overdosed on the streets, and because of which, the man made a full recovery after a short hospital stay. They have also made arrangements to do the training with other RSI partners.

1.5 Rehousing Pathway (Longhurst Group and Lincolnshire Housing Partnership)

We have provided social housing tenancies for 10 former rough sleepers through our rehousing pathway partnership, with Longhurst Group providing the housing related support and properties offered by both Longhurst Group and Lincolnshire Housing partnership. The Authority take on the tenancy for 12 months and give the 'tenant' a licence agreement to occupy. At the end of the 12 months, providing they have been a good tenant, maintained the accommodation and paid their rent, they are given a social housing tenancy agreement in their name and the support is transferred to our commissioned housing related support services. Of the 10 licences given this year, 8 have proved successful. Those who have not managed to maintain the property have been moved into alternative, more intensive support provision. The success rate of this intervention is at 80%.

1.6 Strand Street supported accommodation programme.

Due to additional funding streams from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government such as Next Steps Accommodation Programme, Cold Weather Provision and Protect Plus during the year, specifically aimed at facilitating additional provision for rough sleepers, the Authority set up a group of self-contained flats, with security and mental health/substance misuse and housing related support all provided on-site which has proved very successful and financially cost-effective.

The move on options from the street and night shelter are limited. Often rough sleepers do not want to share with others, and in many cases due to their substance use and/or mental health needs, it is not safe or suitable. Hostel and supported accommodation providers refuse to accommodate them due to former arrears and behaviour.

Housing benefit covers the intensive housing management costs incurred by the Service, which we are unable to claim in bed and breakfast for example, so as well as receiving support, they are learning to maintain a tenancy and any cost of maintenance, replacement/repair of household items, is covered in our recouped benefit income. We separate the housing management from the support, as the client group can be difficult to engage with, so acceptance is not expected all the time, but the adherence to tenancy conditions is monitored by the Authority. The success rate of this scheme is currently running at 70%.

1.7 Rough Sleeper numbers in 2018 were 22 and as of today's date now stand at 10.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 By providing services to meet the complex and intersecting needs of the client group this will impact positively to reduce instances of cyclical homelessness and rough sleeping.

2.2 During the period in which Covid-19 restrictions were implemented there was a directive from Central Government to accommodate and support rough sleepers, classified as a vulnerable group, to ensure they were not left at risk of contracting the virus. Following the easing of lockdown

arrangements, services have worked together to support those who were accommodated to ensure they did not return to rough sleeping. The information collected during this period has helped the Council to shape the future provision of housing related support and develop further the holistic, person-centred approach to supporting those with complex needs, which we believe is important to prevent homelessness and reduce the demand on other public services and outlets.

- 2.3 Rough sleeping accommodation and support initiatives are already in place and the numbers of rough sleepers has reduced since the introduction of the funding in 2018. Investment into this area reduces the demands, both physical and financial, on other local authority, social care and health services. Value for money is tested through the submission of rough sleeper data to the MHCLG monthly.
- 2.4 The delivery of RSI across the borough enables the Council and partners to support our most vulnerable residents to access accommodation and support to prevent homelessness, rough sleeping, and sofa-surfing. Interventions are designed to improve individual's health and wellbeing.
- 2.5 No human rights or equality and diversity issues are impacted.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Not accept funding and grant Providers to provide RSI:

To not accept the funding for rough sleeper initiatives as agreed by MHCLG, could result in the delivery of rough sleeper initiatives ceasing, which would lead to a significant increase in the number of people approaching the Council for homelessness assistance, increased instances of rough sleeping and begging. We would anticipate an increase in sofa-surfing and rough sleeping across the borough. Alternatively, at a time when reducing rough sleeping is a priority for the Government, the Authority may incur additional costs in accommodating those who become homeless.

- 3.2 Explore options to terminate delivery of RSI programme.

The Council has maintained its commitment in funding the support offered to rough sleepers and rough sleeper services. The removal of such a programme across the Borough would create a significant increase in demand on services in the public and welfare sectors for those most in need. Removing the funding for street outreach workers and navigators for example, would remove the frontline face to face / direct services for those residents in crisis. The funding also funds 2 Support Workers to continue to support those rough sleepers who are accommodated, so they can access support as and when they reach out in need.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Not accepting the funding could be considered as a reputational risk; rough sleeping is a government priority, and from a community perspective, the prevalence of rough sleeping can impact on the public's perception of the Council's wider improvement and regeneration activities.
- 4.2 The revised rough sleeper interventions will deliver improved outcomes for

rough sleepers and individuals with complex needs at risk of rough sleeping.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The interventions outlined in Appendix A will support the Council's key objectives and support delivery of the Council's vision.
- 5.2 There is no call on Council reserves.
- 5.3 Value for money will be demonstrated by reduced numbers of those who face rough sleeping and repeat homelessness and improved social capital.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 To enable interventions to be delivered across the borough there is a need for support and outreach workers to travel to locations. A variety of transportation methods are used including the use of personal cars, bikes, public transport, and walking.
- 6.2 Where clients are accommodated within shared housing or hostel settings, providers have continued to develop their recycling programmes and raise awareness with client groups regarding the importance of recycling and how to recycle properly, in line with local collections.
- 6.3 Where accommodation is provided, secured for individuals, Providers will ensure potential thermal comfort issues are reported to the Home Improvement Team and appropriate action taken where required, to improve the energy efficiency of the dwelling.

7. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

There has been no engagement with Scrutiny at this stage..

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The full costs of the interventions will be covered by the external funding.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

In receiving the funds outlined the Council will have to comply with the terms of funding and ensure that the anticipated outcomes and value for money indicators are achieved and demonstrated. This will be through robust governance and monitoring so as to ensure delivery generally. Officers are accustomed to engagement with MHCLG and colleagues from Legal and other service areas are able to support where appropriate.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications.

11. WARD IMPLICATIONS

Rough Sleeper Interventions will be carried out across all wards in the Borough.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

13. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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