

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 01 April 2019

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| <b>Portfolio:</b>            | Housing   |
| <b>Subject:</b>              | <b>Use of Housing Flexible Homeless Support Grant</b> |
| <b>Report of:</b>            | Managing Director of Fareham Housing                  |
| <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> | Providing Housing Choices                             |

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to seek Executive approval to allocate funds from the Flexible Homeless Support Grant to ensure the continuation of homelessness support services in Fareham following the reduction in funding for Social Inclusion Services by Hampshire County Council.

**Executive summary:**

In November 2017, Hampshire County Council (HCC) agreed a £2m reduction in the Adult Health and Care budget for Social Inclusion services. These services provide support for homeless people living in supported housing schemes across the county together with community support to vulnerable individuals or families requiring help to access or maintain accommodation.

The decision by HCC to reduce funding for Social Inclusion services from 2019 was part of a set of broader savings options (known as Transformation to 2019 Programme) to reduce spending. Although HCC has no direct statutory responsibilities to deliver homelessness support services, they accept that as these services are relied upon by some of the most vulnerable in society, they will continue to invest, albeit at a much-reduced rate.

In September 2017, HCC set up a Social Inclusion Advisory Group, comprising representatives from Adult Social Care, Mental Health and Substance Misuse, Public Health, Children's Services, Probation, Department for Work and Pensions as well as the district/borough Housing teams. This group was tasked with providing input into the reconfiguration of the existing Social Inclusion Services in preparation for public consultation. Following the public consultation on the proposed changes to the existing services, a decision was taken by HCC in December 2018 to deliver a financial saving of £1.8 million per annum from 1 August 2019 (the savings figure was reduced following an Equality Impact Assessment in May 2018).

To achieve this level of savings, HCC agreed to cease funding some of the services for homeless people and those threatened with homelessness that are currently available in Fareham. This report sets out the changes that will take effect from 1 August 2019 and how the proposals for additional investment by Fareham Borough Council will ensure the continuation of homelessness support services for our most vulnerable residents.

**Recommendation/Recommended Option:**

It is recommended that the Executive approves:

- a) the commissioning of Social Inclusion Services in partnership with HCC from 1 August 2019; and
- b) a budget allocation of £70,000 from the Flexible Homeless Support Grant to fund the additional investment required for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 March 2021

**Reason:**

To secure the provision of homelessness support services in Fareham for those in greatest need.

**Cost of proposals:**

The Flexible Homeless Support Grant received from Central Government (payable over three years to support the implementation of the 2018 Homelessness Reduction Act) has sufficient reserves to fund these proposals which total £42,000 per annum (£70,000 for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 March 2021) and will secure the provision of homelessness support services for those in greatest need.

**Appendices:**

None

**Background papers:**

Hampshire County Council (Adult Social Care & Health) Decision Report 5/12/18

**Reference papers:**

None

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## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Date:</b>        | 01 April 2019                                  |
| <b>Subject:</b>     | Use of Housing Flexible Homeless Support Grant |
| <b>Briefing by:</b> | Managing Director of Fareham Housing           |
| <b>Portfolio:</b>   | Housing  |

#### INTRODUCTION

1. In November 2017, Hampshire County Council (HCC) agreed a £2m reduction in the Adult Health and Care budget for Social Inclusion services. These services provide support for homeless people living in supported housing schemes across the county together with community support to vulnerable individuals or families requiring help to access or maintain accommodation.
2. The decision by HCC to reduce funding for Social Inclusion services from 2019 was part of a set of broader savings options (known as Transformation to 2019 Programme) to reduce spending. Although HCC has no direct statutory responsibilities to deliver homelessness support services, they accept that as these services are relied upon by some of the most vulnerable in society, they will continue to invest, albeit at a much-reduced rate.
3. In September 2017, HCC set up a Social Inclusion Advisory Group, comprising representatives from Adult Social Care, Mental Health and Substance Misuse, Public Health, Children's Services, Probation, Department for Work and Pensions as well as the district/borough Housing teams. This group was tasked with providing input into the reconfiguration of the existing Social Inclusion Services in preparation for public consultation. Following the public consultation on the proposed changes to the existing services, a decision was taken by HCC in December 2018 to deliver a financial saving of £1.8 million per annum from 1 August 2019 (the savings figure was reduced following an Equality Impact Assessment in May 2018).

#### CURRENT SERVICES

4. HCC currently spends £4.2m per annum funding Social Inclusion Services across the county through the direct commissioning of three main types of service:
  - (a) Intensive 24/7 supported housing schemes (known as **Stage 1 accommodation**) for people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. It is important to note here that only the 'housing related support' such as managing tenancies and money, improving physical and mental health, managing and addressing drug and alcohol issues, finding employment, etc is paid for by HCC. The housing

costs are paid for by rent, which for most service users is covered by Housing Benefit.

- (b) 'Lower' level and/or 'move on' supported housing schemes (known as **Stage 2 accommodation**) for people who are homeless but have less critical needs or who are ready to move on from the more intensive supportive Stage 1 accommodation. As with the Stage 1 services, only the 'housing related support' within these schemes is paid for by HCC, the housing costs are paid for by rent, which for most service users is covered by Housing Benefit.
- (c) **Community Support** (including Street Outreach for people sleeping rough) services are available for any individual or family requiring housing related support to access accommodation or to maintain their current accommodation, regardless of their current housing status.

## CHANGES TO SERVICES IN FAREHAM

- 5. Senior officers have been working in partnership with HCC over the last 18 months to establish a mutually acceptable "core service" offer for the provision of HCC funded Social Inclusion Services in Fareham with effect from 1 August 2019.
- 6. The current HCC contract with Two Saints will be modified and extended to 31 March 2021. HCC have included an option to extend this contract for a further 12 months which would be exercised if more time is needed to fully explore all the potential opportunities for recommissioning services after 31 March 2021.
- 7. **Stage 1 accommodation and Street Outreach:** HCC have agreed and approved sufficient funding which will ensure the Stage 1 accommodation at 101 Gosport Road and the Street Outreach service are retained. These services are critically important and the commitment from HCC to continue to fund these core services is extremely positive.
- 8. **Stage 2 accommodation:** To achieve the level of savings required within the Transformation to 2019 programme, HCC will cease funding Stage 2 accommodation in areas where Stage 1 accommodation is being retained. Therefore, the support services currently attached to Acton Lodge will end.
- 9. **Community Support:** Community Support will be limited to people who are moving on from 101 Gosport Road, living in Acton Lodge or are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and have complex support needs which mean they are unable to access support from other sources.

## PROPOSALS

- 10. It is vital that supported 'move-on' opportunities remain to ensure there is an effective pathway out of rough sleeping and into independent living. Therefore, it is proposed that Fareham Borough Council supplements HCC's "core service" funding and co-commission the support services at Acton Lodge with HCC and Gosport Borough Council. It is also proposed that additional funding is provided by both boroughs to double the Street Outreach resource.
- 11. The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant received from Central Government (payable over three years to support the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act) still has sufficient reserves to fund these proposals which total £42,000 per annum (£70,000 for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 March 2021) and will secure the provision of homelessness support services for those in greatest need.

12. A number of additional posts have been created within the Fareham Housing structure over the last 12 months to meet our extended statutory responsibilities to prevent and relieve homelessness. This extra resource, together with existing partnerships and initiatives (such as the Troubled Families Programme) will provide support to people who will be unable to access the reduced Community Support service.

## **CONCLUSION**

13. HCC's decision to reduce their investment in Social Inclusion Services in Fareham, whilst disappointing, has been developed in partnership with officers and stakeholders. The significant additional funding proposed by Fareham Borough Council will enable the current contract with Two Saints to be modified and extended, minimises the disruption to service users and safeguards provision for the most vulnerable individuals who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough until March 2021.
14. Officers will continue to work with HCC and the other key partners to develop a range of options to deliver homelessness support services in Fareham after March 2021.

## **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Caroline Newman (Ext 4645)