

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date **05 NOVEMBER 2020**

Report of: **DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Subject: **ROUGH SLEEPING INITIATIVE FUNDING 2020/21**

SUMMARY

At the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel in March 2020, Members requested an item be brought to a later meeting to update them on the new funding received to tackle the issue of rough sleeping in the Borough. This report sets out details of the funding received following a bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative programme.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Housing Scrutiny Panel consider the content of this report and make any comments or raise any questions for clarification.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Rough Sleeping Initiative was first announced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in March 2018 and funding was allocated to 83 areas across the country with the highest levels of rough sleeping to help people off the streets. In December 2018, the MHCLG set out their approach for allocating the remaining £11m to support those local authorities outside of the 83, develop or extend short term interventions to prevent and relieve rough sleeping.
2. Fareham Borough Council made a successful bid for funds and we were allocated £59,850 for the financial year ending 31 March 2020. We were able to increase the Outreach Service in Fareham with an additional 1.6 FTE posts and provide a small personalisation fund. The posts were hosted by Two Saints and worked alongside the existing Hampshire County Council contracted service.
3. These posts have made a significant difference to the level of support provided to rough sleepers and have been key to getting some rough sleepers into sustainable housing solutions. In 2018 Fareham reported 19 rough sleepers in the annual rough sleeping snapshot exercise. This figure had reduced to 10 rough sleepers in the borough during the exercise for 2019. Whilst we recognise the limitations of a snapshot figure, the exercise provides for a consistent comparison that shows the broad trend of rough sleeping in the area.
4. The next annual rough sleeping snapshot exercise is scheduled for 18 November 2020.

2020/21 FUNDING

5. In December 2019 we worked in partnership with MHCLG, Two Saints and Gosport Borough Council to review the Outreach posts and to consider the gaps and challenges we faced in further reducing rough sleeping in both areas. As a result, we made a further bid to the Rough Sleeping Initiative fund and in February this year, we were notified that we were to be granted £141,450 to continue the existing 1.6 FTE Outreach roles for the coming year (to cover Fareham only) and to appoint a Complex Needs Navigator and an Accommodation Procurement Officer (to cover both Fareham and Gosport).
6. Preparations for the new posts commenced however due to the national lockdown and Public Health England guidance, the decision was taken to postpone recruitment whilst we prioritised our resources to respond to the pandemic. MHCLG were fully supportive of this postponement and as with all other Rough Sleeping Initiative funded local authorities, agreed to amend the delivery timeline accordingly.

NEW POSTS

7. The two new roles are designed to provide more intensive support and focus particularly on assisting those leaving prison and those with complex needs (such as substance misuse issues, mental health needs and behavioural challenges) to find and maintain suitable accommodation. The roles work together to identify rough sleepers for whom traditional housing solutions are not working and to find other more bespoke housing options.

COMPLEX NEEDS NAVIGATOR

8. Local systems can often be complex and for some of the people who sleep rough, finding a way to access the support they need can be challenging. Navigators are key workers with a small, distinct caseload of people who sleep rough. Their work is targeted at those who would benefit from tailored support due to higher complex needs and who are often entrenched rough sleepers. Many of these individuals will traditionally have been hard to engage with and may have cycled through numerous services in the past. Key to success lies with the building of a trusting, non-judgemental relationship with the individual that is maintained throughout their journey to sustaining positive outcomes.
9. The post, hosted by Two Saints, was filled in June 2020 by an experienced Outreach worker who had recently returned from maternity leave and is currently working with 10 individuals in Fareham. The following outcomes have been achieved:
 - No contact to daily contact with services (Navigator & 101 Gosport Road)
 - Support to contact Gas and Electric Companies
 - Support to manage tenancy – i.e. locks changed
 - Accessing pregnancy test
 - Registration with GP and supporting those needing to accessing a dentist
 - Support to obtain a mental health assessment and access to specialist drug and alcohol services
 - Support to attend court/bail dates
 - Support to obtain colostomy bags from the supplier
 - Support to claim correct benefits and creation of budgeting plans
 - Support with food parcels and clothing
 - Support to access furniture – creating good relations with charities to ensure quick movement for clients. Good access to a number of items needed to furnish accommodation.
 - Support to contact with external partner agencies including probation, police, local authority/support to provide proofs
 - Support to get GP appointment and blood tests
 - Wellbeing checks and calls
 - Obtaining funds through donations to provide essential household items for those moving into accommodation. For example, white goods.
 - Raising/sharing concerns to all those partner agencies in Fareham, whom may encounter these clients
 - Communication with discharge teams for clients being discharged as homeless

ACCOMMODATION PROCUREMENT OFFICER

10. This role works closely with our Housing Options Team, Two Saints, the Outreach Team and the Complex Needs Navigator to identify suitable housing solutions to meet the needs of rough sleepers and those moving on from supported housing.
11. Key tasks include
 - (a) Developing opportunities to access private rented sector accommodation, including direct lets, property purchase and private leasing schemes
 - (b) Developing creative, bespoke housing solutions for those currently sleeping

rough and for those ready to move on from supported housing

- (c) Researching examples of housing solutions that work nationally for rough sleepers and share best practice models

12. The successful candidate took up the post in July 2020 and whilst some progress has been made with local landlords and research projects, there are unfortunately no tangible outcomes to date.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

13. MHCLG require all Rough Sleeper Initiative funded local authorities to report progress and achievements. However, due to the pandemic, MHCLG suspended this requirement and therefore monitoring has been undertaken at a local level between us, Gosport Borough Council and Two Saints.

CONCLUSION

14. This report provides panel members with an update about the funding received to help tackle the issue of rough sleeping in the Borough.

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None

Reference Papers:

MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy August 2018

MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative funding 2020 to 2021

Enquiries:

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