

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date **14 July 2022**

Report of: **Head of Housing & Benefits**

Subject: **Homelessness Funding Bids - Update**

SUMMARY

This report provides the Panel with information about the successful bids for grants made by Fareham Borough Council's Housing Options Team to the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative fund.

RECOMMENDATION

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

INTRODUCTION

1. There is considered to be four forms of homelessness. A person might experience only one of these forms, but could encounter some or all of them:
 - (a) Statutory homelessness – persons owed the main duty of assistance by a local housing authority
 - (b) Single homelessness – persons living in supported housing (including hostels, refuges and supported lodgings)
 - (c) Street homelessness – persons sleeping rough in places not designated for habitation
 - (d) Hidden homelessness – persons accommodated in insecure arrangements often with relatives or friends, but just as often with people not previously known to them
2. Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness. Rough sleepers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and studies have found strong correlations between homelessness and a multiplicity, and increased severity, of both physical and mental health conditions.
3. Successive governments have put in place various initiatives to tackle rough sleeping but despite considerable efforts, the official national rough sleeper counts showed increases every year after new methodology was introduced in autumn 2010 up to the autumn 2017 count. The results of the 2017 count were published in January 2018 and showed a 169% increase in the number of people sleeping rough in England since 2010 was recorded.

ROUGH SLEEPING INITIATIVE

4. In August 2018, the government published the national Rough Sleeping Strategy which outlined how they intended to support local authorities to end rough sleeping by 2027.
5. The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), also launched in 2018 is a key part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy. It seeks to support people sleeping rough off the streets and develop their wellbeing and stability, helping to reduce the number of people rough sleeping in both the short and longer term and was originally targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough. It was expanded in 2019 providing the opportunity for all local authorities to bid for funding to support the establishment or enhancement of coordinated local support services for rough sleepers or those at risk of sleeping rough in their area.
6. The initiative includes funds allocated directly to local authorities, as well as a specialist team of Advisors made up of rough sleeping and homelessness experts from local authorities and the third sector. The team also has specialist advisers with knowledge in health, care leavers, employment, prisons and probation, and the faith sector to ensure a holistic approach to the rough sleeping issue. The team work closely with local authorities to help develop capability and deliver interventions to tackle rough sleeping.
7. The grant has been released annually since 2019 and the most up to date research estimates the number of rough sleepers is now 43% lower than predictions had RSI not been in place.

8. Fareham Borough Council has maximised each opportunity to bring funding into the area and submitted a successful bid each year, in partnership with Gosport Borough Council securing £59,850 in 2019, £141,450 in 2020 and £293,813 in 2021. Our bids have been produced following significant engagement with service users, specialist homelessness service providers, agencies such as the Police and Probation, drug and alcohol misuse service providers, and internal departments such as the Community Safety Team and Neighbourhood Team.
9. In each bid, the Council has had to demonstrate how our rough sleeping response meets the four objectives set out in the Rough Sleeping Initiative:
- (a) **Prevention** – Activities to stop people sleeping rough for the first time
 - (b) **Intervention** – Support for those currently sleeping rough to move off the streets
 - (c) **Recovery** – Support for those who have slept rough to ensure they do not return to the streets
 - (d) **Systems Support** – Systems and structures to embed change and monitor progress
10. 2019/20 - Following a cut in HCC funding for homelessness services in 2018, FBC successfully bid for funding to provide additional Outreach Services in Fareham.
11. 2020/21 – A successful bid was made to ensure the Outreach service was maintained together with two new posts (Complex Needs Navigator and Accommodation Procurement Officer) to work across Fareham and Gosport.
12. 2021/22 – A successful bid was made to ensure the continuation of the existing interventions mentioned above, but also included further funding to provide an additional Complex Needs Navigator, funds to develop 5 Housing First schemes, a new post of Homelessness Prevention & Mediation Officer plus funding for specialised support in accommodation for former rough sleepers.
13. 2022/25 - In November 2021, DLUHC announced that the next funding round would be a three-year settlement spanning 2022-25. Our bid set out the interventions needed to effectively respond to our current need and detailed how these can be flexible so we can shift emphasis over the course of the three-year programme from services focusing on emergency accommodation and crisis intervention to services which supports individuals to sustain a life away from the streets and preventing people rough sleeping for the first time. This supports the Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy commitment to end rough sleeping in the borough. On 19 May 2022, we received confirmation that our bid had been successful and have been awarded an allocation for 2022 to 2025 of £1.08m.
14. The table below shows a breakdown of the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding secured. A summary of each intervention can be seen at Appendix A.

Intervention	Funding 2019-20	Funding 2020-21	Funding 2021-22	Funding 2022-23	Funding 2023-24	Funding 2024-25
Outreach and In-reach Services	£57,850	£57,850	£65,000	£69,559	£71,324	£73,067
Personalisation budget	£2,000	£8,000	£11,598	£6,000	£6,000	£5,000
Complex Needs Navigator	-	£37,300	£71,314	£86,526	£89,458	£45,822
Recruitment/training costs	-	£1,000	£2,500	-	-	-
Accommodation Procurement Officer	-	£37,300	£37,300	£37,300	-	-
Homeless Prevention & Mediation Officer	-	-	£30,105	£40,666	£41,249	£41,661
East Street (FBC only)	-	-	£14,833	£34,898	£35,583	£36,658

Housing First	-	-	£46,163	£80,821	£67,094	£45,822
Flexible Surge Accommodation funding	-	-	£15,000	£10,000	£8,000	£6,000
Mental Health Outreach	-	-	-	£32,930	£49,400	-
Acton Lodge	-	-	-	-	£33,000	£33,000
Total	£59,850	£141,450	£293,813	£398,700	£401,108	£287,030

RISK ASSESSMENT

15. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report

CONCLUSION

16. These additional resources and specialist support have undoubtedly improved the options available to rough sleepers in the Borough. In 2018, there was an average of 19 individuals sleeping rough on a typical night across Fareham, this number is now consistently between 2 and 5. Those currently sleeping rough are all known to the Housing Options service and have been made offers of accommodation on many occasions. They are maintaining various levels of engagement with the Outreach services and work will continue to bring them in off the streets, aide their recovery, rebuild their lives and prevent them from returning to rough sleeping.

17. The previous fragmented, short-term and resource-intensive competitive nature of the funding made long-term and sustainable homelessness provision difficult therefore we welcome the multi-year funding programme as it gives us certainty of funding for rough sleeper services over the next three years. It enables us to build on the progress of recent years and to move increasingly from a focus on intervention to one which supports long-term recovery and prevents rough sleeping.

Appendices: A – Rough Sleeping Initiative funded initiatives

Background Papers:

None

Reference Papers:

DLUHC Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

Enquiries:

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

APPENDIX A

Intervention name	Service Description
Complex Needs Navigator	<p>These cross-borough roles provide intensive, individually tailored support to our most difficult to reach homeless clients and ensures they have access to health, accommodation and other specialist support. These clients often have complex and challenging histories which have previously led to difficulties in them accessing and sustaining accommodation. This role enables the gradual building of trust with the client group, which is required to break down barriers and remove some of the more entrenched impediments to engagement. In turn, clients feel able to take up offers of accommodation and other interventions to help them sustain this in the long-term. During 2021/22, the Complex Needs Navigators have managed 39 such cases, just over half of which were rough sleeping at the time of referral and has helped all but 4 of these individuals move off the streets.</p>
Personalisation budget for Complex Needs Navigators	<p>Funding a range of activities such as travel costs to view accommodation, goods and equipment to enable take up of accommodation, and unlocking other barriers to accommodation, such as the provision of enhanced financial or other support offers to private landlords.</p>
Outreach/In-reach service	<p>The cross-borough Outreach/In-reach Service is currently funded via two separate streams – 1.5FTE posts funded by HCC which is shared across both boroughs and 1.6FTE posts funded by RSI. With this larger team, we have successfully matched different workers to each individual which has improved engagement and provided intensive support when people move into accommodation. The increased Outreach/In-Reach Service has improved information about, and engagement with, rough sleepers, and has had a positive effect on the public's perception of the availability of support. Throughout the pandemic and in response to the government's 'Everyone In' initiative, we saw an increase of approximately a third across both services. Although there have been particular pressure points during this time, the overall trend is an increasing proportion of in-reach cases. Outreach remains important, as a recent spike in rough sleeper numbers, reflected across the county, demonstrated that the work of the Outreach team was vital in bringing these numbers down again quickly. We recognise that the provision of accommodation is only the first step to long-term recovery so, as other interventions progress, it is envisaged that the Outreach service will gradually transform and refocus to supporting those in accommodation and preventing any return to the streets.</p>
Homelessness Prevention & Mediation Officer	<p>Both Local Authority areas have reported a higher-than-average number of prevention and relief duties owed to individuals whose family or friends are no longer willing or able to accommodate them. This cohort of whom c.35% are under the age of 24, are at significant risk of rough sleeping unless dedicated prevention work is undertaken, specifically tailored to the individual and their circumstances. An average of 8 individuals are at risk of sleeping rough each month as they have been asked to leave their accommodation by family or friends. Our qualified Mediator provides an enhanced homelessness prevention service to young individuals who are at specific risk of rough sleeping as opposed to the broader work of the Housing Options teams. Additionally, the post holder focuses on upstream homelessness prevention work to avoid individuals reaching crisis and thereby reduce the demand for emergency responses. Since embedding this cross-boundary post in October 2021, 15 individuals have been able to remain at home following intensive mediation. A further 7 individuals have been able to remain temporarily at home whilst alternative accommodation is sought. 2 individuals have moved into settled alternative accommodation. A further 12 cases are currently ongoing.</p>
Housing First	<p>Housing First supports individuals who have multiple complex needs with a history of entrenched/repeat rough sleeping, enabling them to live in their own homes. This model has shown that the provision of a secure home provides the platform from which other issues can be addressed rather than the individual having to 'earn' housing. The funding has enabled both Authorities to bring 10 individuals, who had a demonstrable need for intensive</p>

	<p>support, into the Housing First programme. All units of accommodation are provided from our own housing stocks and support provided by Two Saints. Whilst we acknowledge that the cost of Housing First reduces over time as people require less support, there is a need to continue the programme for these individuals into a second and third year. The gradual reduction in support needs over this time will enable the programme to be flexible, allowing new cases to be brought in and to respond if someone who has been using the service for some time requires an increase in support. Due to the long-term nature of these placements and the complexity of the individuals accommodated, funding is required for the life of the programme to ensure they do not return to the streets.</p>
East Street (FBC only)	<p>Following successful bids to the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and Rough Sleeping Initiative, together with FBC financial contributions, FBC secured an additional 6 supported units of accommodation for former rough sleepers. This facility has provided us with additional capacity within our rough sleeper accommodation pathway and has given secure, supported accommodation to entrenched rough sleepers throughout the pandemic. These additional units ensure people sleeping rough have accommodation whilst their wider needs are addressed. This housing-led provision allows us to meet the needs of people sleeping rough more flexibly by increasing their choice and control over the options available to them locally.</p>
Acton Lodge	<p>These 10 units of supported accommodation provides vital cross-boundary capacity within our move-on pathways, providing increased options for those with lower-level support needs or who would not manage in the higher intensity, higher support hostels. The support provided is geared more toward putting in place the skills needed to achieve fully independent living, however, the County Council are withdrawing funding for this scheme from 1 April 2023. The Rough Sleeping Initiative funding from 1 April 2023 safeguards the continuity of this scheme.</p>
Mental Health Outreach	<p>In recent years, we have seen a steady increase in the number of individuals with identified or suspected mental health issues approaching our homelessness services (50% of clients in last 12 months) and they demand a disproportionate amount of time from Outreach and related services. Listening to those with lived experiences of rough sleeping has shown us that we need to bring mental health services to them rather than expecting them to engage with services themselves. From Autumn 2022, we will embed a specialist mental health navigator into the team to better meet the needs of our rough sleeper population, reach those we know are missing and enable wide-ranging and tailored support to all. We have achieved commitment from the NHS to second a mental health practitioner into a 20-month pilot scheme which will provide targeted and intensive mental health interventions in the community. Their work will be directed to those who are, or at risk of rough sleeping. They will provide mental health support, undertake assessments and deal with mental health deterioration or crisis. We believe this pilot will show our colleagues in the NHS that such a post is a vital role to be subsumed into their structures at the end of the pilot.</p>
Accommodation Procurement Officer	<p>Unfortunately, the success of this role has continued to be hindered by the pandemic, however, the post holder has developed a Guarantor Scheme which has helped clients access privately rented accommodation and has built positive relationships with landlords and local letting agents. Successful applications have been made to the Rent Guarantee Scheme, individuals have been assisted with Rent in Advance sums and additional properties have been added to our stock of managed-leased accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. The private rented sector provides a further choice in accommodation for former rough sleepers. By increasing the number of landlords willing to work with us, move on opportunities for those already in our rough sleeper pathway will be maximised and free up units of supported accommodation.</p>
Flexible Surge Accommodation Funding	<p>Provision of emergency accommodation to respond to seasonal demands, including winter and other surge provision.</p>