

Direct Hostel Provision, Move On Accommodation and Support

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Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to confirm funding for 2017/18, towards the cost of provision of the direct access hostel and related services for very vulnerable clients who would otherwise be homeless.

Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan for January 2017.

Public Interest

3. This report covers the provision of services to vulnerable individuals who might otherwise be homeless by continuing to support the provision of a direct access hostel and related services.
4. It will be of interest to members of the public concerned about the provision of emergency housing for those in need in their local area and to members of the public concerned about the total cost to the public purse in the event that the provision was no longer available.
5. It will be of particular interest to any member of the public who is seeking such assistance themselves, or has a friend or relative in need of such assistance.

Recommendations

6. That the District Executive:-
 - a. Approve funding of £160,000 per annum is added to the Medium Term Financial Plan in 2017/18 for two years as an unavoidable budget pressure to fund Stonham, to provide services to assist single adults who are in need of accommodation, to prevent homelessness;
 - b. Note that there is a risk of £80,000 per annum associated with the structure of eligible/ineligible costs in relation to Housing Benefit that will be added as a Risk to Balances;
 - c. Approve in principle £35,000 funding in 2017/18 for Yeovil4Family, to provide a floating support service for vulnerable individuals at risk of homelessness to be

funded from a carry forward from 2016/17 (which will be subject to District Executive approval in June 2017);

- d. Note the outcomes of the funding from SSDC in 2016/17 as well as further outcomes achieved as a result of funding allocated from Somerset Positive Lives partnership.

Background

7. In April 2016, Members considered a report at District Executive about the cessation of the P4A contracts (Pathways for Adults) which came to an end in April 2016, following a decision by Somerset County Council.
8. The purpose of the contract covering services in South Somerset was to assist single adults who were in need of accommodation or 'housing related support', to prevent homelessness, and learn ways to live independently. It focussed on those who had a history of homelessness and those who had an offending background.
9. Following the ending of this contract (which was funded and monitored through SCC), SSDC District Executive approved the use of up to £240,500 to fund Stonham for a one year period (May 2016 – May 2017), to enable the services to continue, to avoid an immediate crisis in homelessness in South Somerset and to avert a collapse in the provider market for these very specialist and crucial services.
10. Members recognised that it was likely that there would be a need for SSDC to provide ongoing future funding and therefore agreed that a report would be brought back to District Executive on proposals for the future ongoing delivery of the service from May 2017.
11. SSDC has statutory duties under the 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) to prevent homelessness, provide suitable advice and assistance to those threatened with homelessness and help secure suitable alternative accommodation for those in priority need (as defined by the Act) who have become homeless 'unintentionally' (as defined by the Act). In addition a new Homelessness Reduction Bill is currently going through parliamentary processes, if enacted as currently drafted it will strengthen the Councils advice and prevention duties to all households threatened with homelessness.

Update

12. In May 2016, SSDC signed a new Service Level Agreement with HomeGroup (Stonham) who had previously been managing the hostel accommodation, but to deliver a modified service which would achieve better value for money and better outcomes for clients.
13. The new arrangements also modify the structure of intensive housing management and general housing management tasks in order to optimise the use of Housing Benefit that can be used to part finance the delivery of the service.
14. Through these new arrangements Stonham now provide:
 - High support – 24hr double cover – at Pathways Direct Access Hostel
 - 'Move on' medium and low support accommodation
 - Intensive Housing Management Support

- Street Rough Sleeper Team and Client Safe Sleep Provision
15. In order to improve partnership working and maximise the use of local resources to improve services to vulnerable people, it was agreed that SSDC's Housing and Welfare Service would (through existing budgets in 2016/17) provide:
 - Assessment of Individual Needs
 - Floating Support Service
 16. In addition, we helped Stonham to secure an additional £88,000 from the Positive Lives Board, to enable the transition from P4A into new the arrangements, which would be better designed to meet locally identified needs. These funds were provided by SCC and the decision was made locally to award this to Stonham to provide a support service to complement their work at the hostel accommodation. Through this they have been able to work proactively with clients, helping them not only sustain their tenancies but to develop the skills to move on and live independently in the future.
 17. Despite the initial uncertainties, restructuring the funding arrangements has had some very positive outcomes, outlined in this report. The process has helped generate a clearer demarcation between the 'housing related support' elements and the 'intensive housing management' elements of the on-site provision, which has not only freed up Stonham to provide a much more flexible, targeted service, but enables some of the costs to be covered by the rental stream, largely supported through Housing Benefit.
 18. Crucially, through channelling SSDC funding for the Direct Access Hostel, we have secured a level of direct provision whilst leveraging in the Positive Lives funding to provide additional support for vulnerable individuals, focussing on managing their lives more positively and healthily, with all the added value benefits that brings. This additional funding and work would have not taken place, without the SSDC core funding for the hostel.

Outcomes for 2016/17

1. Stonham (HomeGroup) - £140,500 funded by SSDC:

Direct Hostel Provision and related support

19. The contract for this work runs from May 2016 – May 2017. Accommodation is provided at Pathways (Newton Road Yeovil) and 165-167 Sherborne Road (Yeovil). The SLA is for the provision of support and intensive housing management for homeless single people and childless couples, aged 25 and over. As well as running the direct access hostel, Stonham support their clients to prepare them for when they move on to alternative accommodation, such as helping people achieve the Home Achievement Programme (tenancy accreditation), complete benefit forms and tools for independent living.
20. The outcomes and achievements for Quarters 1 and 2 (May 16 – Oct 16) are below:
 - 96 referrals to the service; 70 referrals were accepted
 - Provision of accommodation for 30 adults at any one time
 - 23 clients exited the service
 - Average length of stay 166 days

- Only 2 individuals returned to the service after exiting
 - Reasons for exiting included planned move-on, rent arrears, abandonment, prison and anti-social behaviour
 - Downstairs communal areas redecorated and PCs provided for residents use
 - Coffee and chat hour every day to promote communal space and engage closely with clients
21. All clients are supported to identify their own individual needs and intensive work with on-site staff helps them identify move-on accommodation, whether that is through an alternative Stonham accommodation (with low/to medium support) or they are gold banded and move on to live independently.
22. Stonham work closely with partner organisations to provide wraparound support for clients including SDAS (Drug and Alcohol service), probation, ReThink and mental health services. They work very closely with the police both on individual casework and on rough sleeper issues.

Rough Sleeper Outreach Service

23. There has been a significant increase in rough sleeping across the UK over the past year, largely attributed to the rising cost of housing, shortage of affordable housing, changes in benefits through the government's Welfare Reform programme, together with a chronic shortage in mental health services.
24. Stonham provide an outreach service for rough sleepers including a twice weekly drop-in service for advice, support and a hot drink, as well as 4 emergency beds which are set up in the dining room/communal area for emergency use to meet our 'no second night out' commitment.
25. 41 new clients have been supported through the Outreach Team in Q2
26. In recent months rough sleeping has increased in Yeovil and we are working closely with the outreach team to engage with all the individuals to assess their circumstances and help them find solutions.

Rough sleepers identified by Pathways Outreach team 2016:

May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
7	6	0	14	14	12	8

27. Demand on the service has increased significantly over the past few months and there are currently people on the waiting list for the hostel accommodation. In November we implemented SWEP (Sever Cold Weather Provision) for 3 nights as temperatures dropped below zero, meaning rough sleepers could access Pathways emergency beds; additional beds and bedding were purchased and extra staff were scheduled to cope with the demand.

2. Move-on and Pro-active support for individuals - Stonham (HomeGroup) - £88,000 funded by SCC via Positive Lives Partnership:

28. Since the end of the P4A contract, Homegroup worked to develop a new model of more effective, sustainable and client-focussed support, to enable people to move on to more

independent living. Homegroup acknowledged that the closure of the P4A contract has created challenges, but has also given the opportunity to develop new, innovative ways of working. The aims fit with the Somerset Homeless Strategy and complement the provision of crisis accommodation outlined earlier.

29. These support services focus on:

- Client-centred services
- Building on an individual's resilience to managing their own housing effectively
- Helping people sustain accommodation in the longer term
- Creating a more holistic, integrated service to encourage positive step changes in the clients lives

30. Key elements of this new service include:

- Health Coach – this 30 hour per week post works with people's ability to better self-manage their lifestyle, health, choices and unlocking their potential. They provide 1-1 support and group work.
- Peer support group and volunteering group for clients once a week. Working with SSVCA to promote volunteering opportunities at the hostel, including creative arts, writing, film, gardening and cookery. Plans ahead to explore opportunities for clients to volunteer in the community.
- Home Achievement Programme twice a week to help clients with the tools required to sustain tenancies in the future. 18 clients to date have completed registration forms; 29 clients are actively involved
- Reform training and Learn Direct. 1 x NVQ has been completed
- Health and wellbeing assessment with every client – help identify primary health and wellbeing support. Reviewed every 3 months.
- Breakfast club and Sunday lunch where clients who have completed their food hygiene certificate are encouraged to help.
- Health & wellbeing workshops/group with local partners – workshops include diet, sexual health, mental health, physical and oral health.
- Support groups including self-esteem, chi-kung, boxercise and healthy walking.

3. Floating Support Service – Yeovil4Family - £35,000 funded by SSDC (Housing & Welfare budget):

31. This additional service was commissioned by SSDC in June 2016 as a pilot project to support vulnerable individuals age 25+ who struggle to maintain accommodation and are at risk of homelessness.

32. The project is based on the model built up by Yeovil4Family, who delivered a highly successful 3 year family support programme under Family Focus between 2012-2015, and continue to operate in South Somerset to support families and individuals.

33. Through this project, individuals are referred from a wide range of agencies and their needs are evaluated before they are allocated a Link Worker and, if appropriate, a 1-1 Mentor, for up to a year. Intensive support is offered; it is flexible and tailored in response to individual needs.
34. Funding has been awarded to support up to 20 individuals at any one time through a team of 2.4 FTE Link Workers and 10 trained volunteer mentors.
35. In the first 6 months of the pilot:
 - **23** referrals have been received from a range of agencies including SSDC Environmental Health, SSDC Housing, Health Visitors, Yarlinton, Police, GetSet, Stonham
 - **12** individuals have signed up to the programme and are being supported by a Link Worker and in some cases a mentor
 - Issues they have presented with include drug and alcohol, risk of losing tenancy, disability, mental health issues, relationship breakdown, debt, victims of abuse, isolation/loneliness
 - Progress has already been made with a number of individuals including management of debts, securing tenancies, engaging with support from drug programmes, accessing counselling, health coaches, joining community groups and practical improvements to homes
 - The project is being monitored by the Positive Lives Partnership as a prototype with a view to rolling out the model County-wide if results continue to be successful
36. £35,000 will enable the service to continue throughout 2017/18, subject to evaluation of the initial 12 month pilot.

Financial Implications

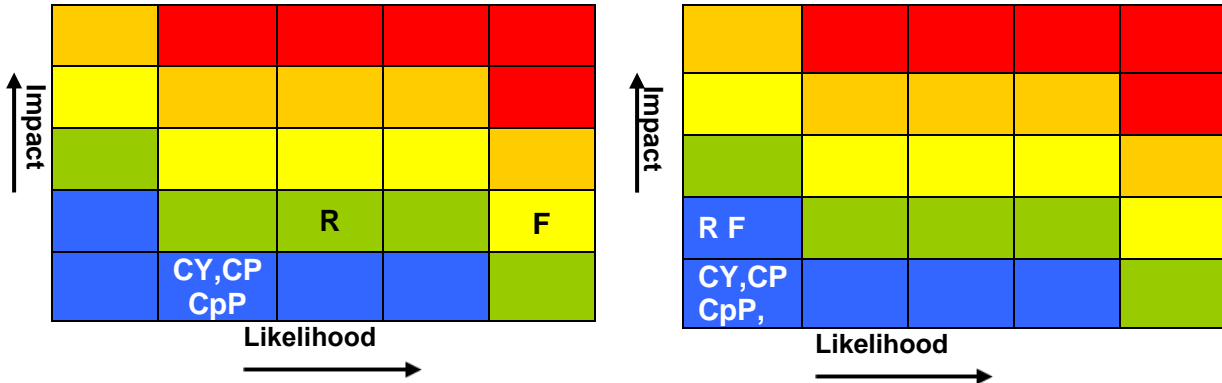
37. It costs £240,000pa to deliver the accommodation and associated housing support services with £80,000 being contributed from housing benefits.
38. If members approve the recommendations then £160,000 will be built into the Housing & Welfare budget for 2017/18 and 2018/19 to enable the continuation of accommodation and associated housing support services to be provided by Stonham at Pathways Direct Access Hostel and Sherborne Road, Yeovil.
39. The government has confirmed that the housing benefit cap for people living in supported accommodation has been deferred until 2019/2020, meaning that we are optimistic the current arrangements for funding this area of work £80,000 per annum can continue until March 2019. However, there is still a risk that this full amount will not be achieved, therefore a regular assessment will be carried out as part of monitoring the Council's balances to ensure this can be funded if necessary. A consultation paper on the proposed funding mechanism from 2019 onwards (and transitional arrangements over the next 2 years) has recently been published and SSDC will be preparing a response.

40. A further carry forward from 2016/17 will also be requested to support the £35,000 for the Floating Support service provided by Y4F in 2017/18.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations

Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

Homes: Minimise homelessness and rough sleeping
 Enable people to live independently
 Work with partners to secure supported hostel and move on accommodation for vulnerable individuals.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

No implications

Equality and Diversity Implications

This proposal seeks to ensure continued provision for some of the most vulnerable and hard to reach people in our district. Stonham operate an effective Equal Opportunities Policy which is specified in our SLA.

Privacy Impact Assessment

Our SLA with Stonham (Homegroup) specifies procedures for the handling of personal and confidential information and our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Background Papers

District Executive Agenda and Minutes, April 2016
 DCLG/DWP Funding for Supported Housing Consultation Paper, November 2016