

Housing Related Support Strategy

To: Adults Committee

Meeting Date: 10 December 2020

From: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: For key decisions Democratic Services can provide this reference

Key decision: No

Outcome: Committee is being asked to endorse the new Housing Related Support Strategy to enable us to provide a clear strategic direction for commissioning of Housing Related Support services.

Committee is being asked to reconsider the current savings requirements for Housing Related Support Services, and determine whether these savings should still be pursued.

Recommendation: Committee is being asked to;

a) Adopt the new Housing Related Support Strategy

b) Note that the draft budget tables which they are being asked to endorse include a removal of the remaining HRS saving.

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1. Background

- 1.1 Housing Related Support (HRS) services provide dedicated support staff who are able to deliver specialist support to individuals to enable them to develop independent living skills and maintain their accommodation. The support provided is tailored to meet the specific needs of each person with key examples including support to access benefit and/or manage issues such as addiction, mental health issues and emotional wellbeing.
- 1.2 Costs relating to accommodation, such as rent and service charges, are not covered by this funding.
- 1.3 The services do not deliver any statutory homelessness function. The statutory duty for homelessness sits with the District Councils.
- 1.4 A review of Housing Related Support (HRS) services was completed in 2018. One of the key recommendations from this was the development of a new Housing Related Support Strategy.
- 1.5 A draft strategy was completed in early June and has been through an extensive consultation process with a wide range of providers, partners and stakeholders. This included existing HRS providers, local Housing Authorities, statutory services and local voluntary and charitable organisations. The consultation period ran from 23rd July until 28th August.
- 1.6 Consultation feedback has been incorporated into the final draft of the Strategy, which is appended at Appendix A. A summary of the consultation feedback can also be found at Appendix B.
- 1.7 The County had also aligned £680k worth of savings against Housing Related Support services.
- 1.8 Since the HRS Review in 2018, £456k of these savings have been delivered to date, with the remaining balance expected to be realised through redesign of the services commissioned to support homeless adults and young people.
- 1.9 However, since that decision was made, the social, political and financial climate has altered drastically and in the wake of Covid 19, homelessness, particularly street homelessness, has become an even more prominent issue both locally and nationally. This is in part due to the heightened public health risk linked to homelessness.

2. Main Issues

HRS Strategy:

- 2.1 The draft strategy for HRS sets out our vision for HRS services, identifies the commissioning priorities for 2020 – 2022 and outlines the commissioning approach and principles that will underpin delivery.

- 2.2 The Strategy takes account of the national and local strategic context and has been informed by the findings of the 2018 Review of HRS services and research undertaken by arc4 in 2019/20.
- 2.3 The overarching vision of the strategy is *‘To provide accessible, good quality and cost effective housing-related support for people that promotes independence, social inclusion, complements other services and reduces or prevents the need for access to crisis and high cost statutory services.*
- 2.4 The key HRS commissioning priorities identified for 2020 to 2022 are focussed on ensuring that services commissioned to support homeless adults, rough sleepers, offenders and young people at risk of homelessness are able to evolve to enable them to continue to effectively meet the needs of current and future customers.
- 2.5 The Strategy also acknowledges the need to use service redesign as an opportunity to realise efficiencies to the HRS budget.
- 2.6 The intention is to move away from a model of support which is predominantly hostel focussed approach, towards more flexible commissioning of a mix of provision that is better able to meet a range of support needs, is reflective of other established models of good practice and will enable us to meet some of the gaps in provision that have been identified.
- 2.7 In delivering the strategy our commissioning approach will be;
- Transparent – *evidence based decisions, shared and consistent processes*
 - Collaborative – *partnership working, joint commissioning, strong communication*
 - Outcomes focussed – *service effectiveness based on outcomes achieved*
 - Innovative – *incorporating best practice, open to new ideas, adaptable services*
 - Strategically aligned – *contributing to local strategies, priorities and approaches*
- 2.8 The Strategy makes a commitment to commissioning services that are;
- client led and allow individuals to have choice and control over the support they receive
 - focussed on an individual’s strengths and the goals that are important to them
 - providing people with the tools and confidence they need to live independently and manage in their own accommodation
 - helping people to avoid access to crisis or higher need statutory services for as long as possible
 - innovative and responsive to changing needs and demands
 - delivered in partnership with providers to ensure that the best outcomes can be achieved for vulnerable people in our communities
 - contributing positively to the priorities of Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council and their partners
 - providing value for money and delivering added social value
- 2.9 The feedback received on the Draft Strategy was generally positive and the identified priorities and approach were supported by all respondents. The main themes that came out of the consultation were around;

- collaborative working and joint commissioning / delivery
- increase in needs, complex needs & dual diagnosis
- impact of savings being sought
- increased focus on prevention
- assurance that the Housing First is developed and implemented properly
- meeting the specific needs of protected groups (LGBTQ+, females) and those with no Recourse to Public Funds
- Impact of Covid 19 on homelessness, including people new to homelessness
- innovation/ learning from Covid-19 and working differently e.g. use of technology
- need greater reference to Domestic Abuse and the new Domestic Abuse Bill

The Strategy aims to address all of these themes, many of which will be considered through the service redesign work.

HRS Savings:

- 2.10 Much of the HRS review work undertaken has focussed on the services commissioned for homeless adults and young people. A need to redesign these services was identified, and through this redesign it was anticipated that the majority of the savings would be delivered as we moved away from a reliance on predominantly hostel provision.
- 2.11 However, in the wake of Covid 19, homelessness has become an even more prominent issue both locally and nationally. As the pandemic took hold, it became clear that homelessness, particularly street homelessness, also presented a very stark public health risk.
- 2.12 The crisis prompted an unprecedented response from central government, resulting in all rough sleepers being given the opportunity to access 'emergency Covid accommodation to safeguard both them and reduce the risk to the public.
- 2.13 We saw a peak in Cambridgeshire in May with 223 people being accommodated by District Councils. As at 9th September, this figure had reduced to 133, with work continuing to try and identify alternative accommodation for those remaining, including some people with no recourse to public funds.
- 2.14 Central government have clearly indicated that this is a national priority. They have invested millions in the delivery of the emergency accommodation and have made a further £266m available through their 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' to support sustainable move-on options for these individuals.
- 2.15 Whilst the responsibility to accommodate rough sleepers fell to the District Councils, the vast majority of those accommodated were also presenting with enduring and frequently complex support needs. Substance misuse and mental health needs were particularly prevalent, but a substantial number were also identified as having physical health needs as well.
- 2.16 The complexity of these individuals has meant that many have been identified as needing HRS in order to support them to move on and address and manage their needs. Effective

support will prevent escalating needs and subsequent access to crisis support and social care services. This has led to an increased demand for HRS services as district partners try to support people's move-on to more stable accommodation.

- 2.17 There is still a clear need to reshape and re-design services for homeless adults and young people, and Covid 19 has highlighted some real opportunities to deliver services differently going forward. However, given the current climate, and the impact that Covid 19 has had on the homelessness sector, we need to reconsider whether this is also the right time to pursue the savings linked to this redesign work.
- 2.18 Whilst not pursuing the planned savings will generate a cost pressure for the Council, there are number of factors that have also been taken into consideration at this time;
- Move-on planning for the emergency Covid accommodation has identified significant numbers of people with complex needs who would need the sort of intensive long terms support which can be delivered by Housing First. This has increased demand for the Housing First service which the County Council delivers alongside partners.
 - The fact that people have moved off the streets and begun to engage with services is a real positive. However there is also potential for a significant number of people with moderate to high needs who are currently in the Covid emergency accommodation to become a social care pressure if they don't have ongoing access to the right support, which can be delivered through Housing Related Support, to help them move-on successfully and help them manage their ongoing needs.
 - Nationally there is an expectation that there will be a steep increase in homelessness following Covid due to things such as job losses, eviction protection ending, impact on health & wellbeing, and relationship breakdowns. This is expected to significantly affect families, young people and single people.
 - The countywide Homelessness Transformation Work has the potential to generate some large-scale changes to how we support people with complex needs and homeless young people, and it will be important to ensure there are sufficient resources to support the implementation and embedding of these changes
 - A significant volume of people from Covid Emergency accommodation are in need of the early intervention support which HRS services can effectively help to provide – provision of any support intervention at an earlier stage is better for both the person and the public purse.
- 2.19 It is clear that there is still a need to reshape and re-design services for homeless adults and young people, but instead of delivering a saving, opportunities for the service redesign work to deliver an increased volume of provision could be pursued instead.
- 2.20 This approach would continue to support creative thinking around delivering services differently and provide an opportunity for more innovative solutions and encourage a greater level of collaborative working with current service providers.
- 2.21 It would also provide opportunities to provide additional resources to areas of the county that currently have fewer service options to support the needs of their communities.
- 2.22 The approach would also support the wider 'homelessness systems transformation' work which County are a part of with District Council and other partners, whilst helping to ensure

that more preventative support is available to help reduce the need for people to access higher tier or crisis services.

2.23 There could still be potential for some small savings to be realised through re-procurement.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in paragraphs 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.16, 2.19 and 2.20

3.2 Thriving places for people to live
There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children
There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050
There are no significant implications for this priority.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Service redesign will be an opportunity to deliver services that are better able to meet the changing needs of clients
- Removal of remaining savings target will create a cost pressure elsewhere
- Potential cost pressure for social care if high needs individuals are unable to access appropriate level of non-statutory support to address needs and prevent escalation

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Potential for increased demand for social care assessments and funding packages
- Services are non-statutory but Central Government have clearly indicated that delivering long term solution for rough sleeping is a national priority

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Service redesign will seek to address some of the current gaps in provision e.g. services that can support those with complex needs, step-down accommodation
- The redesign of services will include looking at current pathways and access to ensure that services are easily accessible and support a move away from a linear pathway

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Draft Strategy has been through a public consultation process
- Providers, partners and clients have been and will be involved in the redesign work

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Consultation Draft of the Strategy was shared with the Member Reference Group (MRG) and Consultation Feedback shared with them
- MRG will continue to be involved in discussions relating to service redesign
- In Cambridgeshire high levels of rough sleepers accommodated in Covid Emergency accommodation

4.7 Public Health Implications

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in paragraphs 2.6, 2.9, 2.11 – 2.16 and 2.25

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Stephen Howarth
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Gus De Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillian
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Oliver Hayward

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Matthew Hall
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Oliver Hayward
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Emily Smith

5. Source documents

5.1 Source documents – none

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix A - Final Draft HRS Commissioning Strategy

Appendix B – HRD Strategy Consultation Response