

Direct Hostel Provision, Move-on Accommodation and Support

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Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to secure future funding arrangements towards the cost of provision of services to assist single adults who are in need of accommodation and prevent homelessness

Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan for October 2018.

Public Interest

3. This report covers the provision of services to vulnerable individuals who might otherwise be homeless by supporting the provision of a direct access hostel and related support 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 District Executive:-
 - a. approve an increase to the base budget of up to £160,000 per year from 2019/20 as an unavoidable budget pressure to provide funding for services to assist single adults who are in need of accommodation and to prevent homelessness.
 - b. award funding of £160,000 to Home Group, the current provider, for 2019/20 through extension of our existing Service Level Agreement for one year.
 - c. authorise officers to assess, develop and procure a longer term arrangement for 2020/21, and delegate the final decision on the route to procurement to the Director – Service Delivery, in consultation with the Specialist - Procurement and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture.
 - d. note the outcomes achieved as a result of SSDC funding in 2017/18, and funding awarded from Somerset Positive Lives partnership.

- e. support the use of £100,000 of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FSHG) as a one-off contribution towards the £160,000 cost in 2019/20, and note that contributions may be considered against any subsequent FSHG received in later years.

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 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, SSDC District Executive approved initially one year funding 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. In January 2017, having worked with Home Group to avert an immediate crisis and build on the success of the initial funding, SSDC approved a further two year funding package (2017-19). This enabled Home Group to progress with their new model of support for homeless people, build up their team and develop a more sustainable future for their service, including securing other funding for project work beyond their 'core' funding from SSDC.
11. 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 be brought back to District Executive on proposals for the future ongoing delivery of the service.
12. SSDC has statutory duties under the 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and now the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) to prevent homelessness, provide suitable advice and assistance to those threatened with homelessness and help secure suitable accommodation for those in need. In particular, the Homelessness Reduction Act strengthens the Council's advice and prevention duties to all households threatened with homelessness, resulting in the need for closer partnership working with providers of emergency and temporary accommodation, and associated client support.
13. Minimising homelessness and rough sleeping is in the Council Plan 2016-21, and the Council Plan Action Plan 2018-19 lists meeting the new duties of the Homeless Reduction Act as a priority project.
14. In May 2018 SSDC, together with the other District Councils in Somerset, adopted the Somerset Homelessness Strategy 2017-19. The Strategy has 4 aims:
 - Support the transition in services required by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to reduce and prevent homelessness
 - Support clients to remain in their existing accommodation where appropriate
 - Support clients to access suitable and affordable accommodation where appropriate

- Build and maintain strong working relationships across partnerships
15. Over the past year, we have seen increased pressure on the need for temporary accommodation. The demands of the Homeless Reduction Act have already increased our need for temporary accommodation due to us accommodating applicants for up to 56 days in the relief stage. Registered providers are also increasingly skipping bids from applicants who have any history of rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, which often means people find it more difficult to secure housing and remain in temporary accommodation for a longer time.
 16. We are now working with Home Group to link into their Home Achievement Programme which helps people become tenancy-ready, to try and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation.
 17. There is extensive evidence (both national and international) to show that investing in emergency and prevention services for homeless people saves public money. Homeless charity Shelter recommends that public agencies 'spend to save' through a range of short term interventions
 - a) to help prevent the loss of someone's home (which can have a direct impact on the cost to the local authority) and;
 - b) in longer term prevention services, to avoid the escalating costs of homelessness which incur both direct and indirect costs to the public sector (health, the economy, criminal justice) and to wider society.
 18. In 2015 Crisis published research which detailed the costs to the public sector of 'single homelessness' in the UK, illustrating that for every £1,500 spent on interventions, between £11,700 - £12,700 was saved in costs to the local authority. The additional costs of allowing homelessness to persist can escalate quickly – 30 people sleeping rough for 12 months can cost over £600,000 in public spending, rising to £1.2m if the situation persists for 2 years. Breaking the pattern of sustained or repeated homelessness is crucial both in terms of costs to the public purse and the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Update

19. In May 2016, SSDC signed a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Home Group 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.
20. The new arrangements also modified 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.
21. Through these new arrangements, Home Group now provide as their core service:
 - High support – 24hr double cover – at Pathways Direct Access Hostel in Yeovil
 - 'Move on' medium and low support accommodation in Yeovil
 - Intensive Housing Management Support
 - Street Rough Sleeper Team and Client Safe Sleep Provision

22. Most referrals for the service come from SSDC's Housing & Welfare Team and we work closely with Home Group's management, support workers and clients to find the best possible solutions for each individual.
23. In addition, we worked with Home Group to secure an additional £88,000 in 2017/18 and 2018/19 from the Somerset Positive Lives Board. These funds were provided by Somerset County Council (SCC) and the decision was made locally to award this to Home Group to provide a support service to complement their work at the hostel accommodation. Through this, Home Group 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. Through this funding over the past two years Home Group has established:
 - Health & Wellbeing programme
 - Peer support
 - Volunteering
 - Home Achievement Programme
24. Despite the initial uncertainties, restructuring the funding arrangements has had some very positive outcomes. Each District Council in Somerset has worked closely with partners to develop local services suitable for local needs whilst learning from good practice as these develop differently around the county. 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. In South Somerset this has not only freed up Home Group 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.
25. Crucially, through channelling SSDC core 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.
26. Naturally there is some uncertainty about the future of the Positive Lives funding which is currently awarded to Home Group by Somerset County Council through an annual discretionary grant.
27. In August 2018, agencies in the supported housing sector welcomed the news that the government has decided not to proceed with their proposed changes in funding for people living in supported accommodation. This means that clients should continue to be able to claim enhanced Housing Benefit to cover the costs of accommodation and associated support. The decision followed extensive consultation and the government recognised that vulnerable people and the organisations that support them needed access to sustainable forms of financial assistance rather than short term discretionary grants. This decision is significant in that it now enables providers to plan longer-term for investing in services and accommodation for the benefit of their clients.

Outcomes for 2017/18

1. £160k funded by SSDC - Direct Hostel Provision and Related support

28. The SLA we have with Home Group for this work runs from April 2017 to March 2019. Accommodation is provided at Pathways (Newton Road, Yeovil) and 165-167 Sherborne

Road (Yeovil). Our SLA is for the provision of support and intensive housing management for homeless single people and childless couples. As well as running the direct access hostel, Home Group 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.

29. SSDC funding enables the following positions:

Senior Client Services Manager (37.5hrs), Support Co-ordinator x 2 (37.5 hrs), Support Co-ordinator (30hrs), Support Worker (30hrs), Outreach Co-ordinator (32hrs), Waking Night Support Worker x 2 (35hrs)

Outcomes and achievements for 17/18:

- 240 referrals to the service; 236 referrals were accepted
- Provision of accommodation for 38 adults at any one time
- 53 clients exited the service

Age range and gender of customers accessing the service

Age	%	Male	76%
18-25	15	Female	24%
26-30	23		
31-40	36		
41-50	13		
51-60	7		
61-70	3		
Not	3		

Average length of stay

	%
Under 3 months	39
3-6 months	22
6-12 months	22
Over 12 months	17

- 47% of clients achieved a positive move-on. Reasons for positive exits/planned move-on included General Needs Housing through Homefinder, lower/medium support, own accommodation, return to family, safety reasons
- 100% of the positive move-ons were still sustaining their accommodation at the end of each quarter

- 42% achieved a negative move-on. Reasons for negative exits included death, prison, behaviour, violence, rent arrears, drugs
 - 11% of move-ons were abandoned
30. 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 alternative accommodation with Home Group (with low/to medium support) or they are gold/silver banded and move on to live independently.
 31. Home Group 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.
 32. Additional activities include Coffee and Chat hour every day to promote communal space and engage closely with clients, health assessments with every client, Sunday lunch and breakfast clubs to practice communal living and food preparation.

Rough Sleeper Outreach Service

33. 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.
34. Home Group operates an outreach service for rough sleepers including a twice weekly Drop-In 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.

91 clients have been supported through the Outreach Team in 2017/18 (up from 41 in 2016/17), as below:

May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April
7	6	0	14	14	12	8	5	5	8	6	6

35. Demand on the service has increased significantly over the past year and there are currently people on the waiting list for the hostel accommodation. In the winter 2017/18 we implemented SWEP (Severe Cold Weather Provision) for 28 nights between Nov-March, as temperatures dropped below zero, meaning all rough sleepers could access Pathways hostel. Additional beds and bedding were donated/purchased and extra staff were scheduled to cope with the demand.

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

36. Since the end of the P4A contract, Home Group worked to develop a new model of more effective, sustainable and client-focussed support, to enable people to move on to more independent living. The closure of the P4A contract has created challenges, but has also provided the opportunity to develop new, innovative ways of working.
37. The aims fit with the Somerset Homelessness Strategy and the Somerset Health & Wellbeing Strategy. These client-centred support services focus on creating a more

holistic, integrated service to encourage positive step changes in the customer's lives, building on an individual's resilience to managing their own housing effectively and helping people sustain accommodation in the longer term.

38. Key elements of these services include:

- **Volunteering** – the concept of volunteering is now fully embedded into the service with both staff and customers. Home Group's team work with SPARK to support and encourage volunteering both from the community within the service and for customers to volunteer out in the community. Volunteering at Pathways includes music, gardening, e-Bed support, PCSOs running coffee mornings, provision of soup/hot drinks, CAP Money Matters advice, food preparation (with Julian House), food hygiene and volunteer training. Home Group are also developing roles for customers in running the service eg. Handyman, committee and Housemate roles.

Home Group are currently working with 10 agencies providing volunteering opportunities, supporting 17 placements (internal and external) with 90% of customers still engaged in volunteering after 6 weeks. Volunteering amongst customers include placements at PDSA, Oxfam, British Heart Foundation, YMCA, Yeovil Town Football Club and the Lords Larder.

- **Home Achievement Programme** - The Home Achievement Programme promotes mental and physical health and supports people to sustain their own tenancy. New modules are continually developed and include Managing Finances, Training and Education, Preparing for Work, Health & Safety at home.

To gain a recognised qualification NVQ1, customers must complete nine credits (and can then complete a further optional nine). The Home Achievement Programme is accredited by One Awards. It is delivered by workers trained in course delivery and assessment. If customers wish to move through Home Group's pathway of accommodation they must complete the Acquiring and Maintaining a Tenancy module (AMT). During 2017/18, 45 customers registered for the HAP and 55% completed the AMT.

- **Counselling** – this is offered to clients who are finding it difficult to access counselling services through their GP due to dual diagnoses or long waiting lists. A referral pathway was designed and up to 3 customers per quarter are now able to access 1:1 counselling for 6 sessions at NineSprings Natural Health Centre.
- **Peer support** – a range of initiatives including the Housemates role (welcoming newcomers, dealing with fire alarms etc), customer run residents meetings, customer experience videos, and creating a directory of peer support agencies which customers can access. Further peer support work will be developing through the PeerPoint project launched in April 2018.
- **Training** – Food Hygiene training, CAP budgeting, DWP guidance on managing Universal Credit. Intuitive Recovery Course – this highly successful course was run over 2 lots of 4 days. The emphasis is on changing people's belief that they can make positive changes in their own lives and behaviour, and find their own solutions. It is

particularly successful with people trapped in a cycle of drug and alcohol addiction. 23 customers registered and 15 completed this excellent course with very positive feedback

- **Health & Wellbeing** – every customer participates in a health and wellbeing assessment to help identify primary health and wellbeing support; this is reviewed every 3 months. Over 50 health coaching sessions and 144 groups were provided over the year. Groups included self-esteem and anger management, sexual health, well-women's group. Keeping Well, You are what you Eat, drug & alcohol awareness, oral health, physical activity (Goldenstones), boxing.

Developments during 2018

39. During 2018 Home Group has further developed ambitious but tailored plans for providing services across South Somerset to meet the specific needs of local people (not just their own tenants) at risk of homelessness, and are working in partnership with us on a number of projects to help us meet our duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act.

- **The Link** – In July 2018, Home Group launched The Link – a new community Health & Wellbeing Hub operating from The Foyer in Yeovil. The Link offers a series of weekly workshops for customers experiencing, or at risk of homelessness. Workshops include budgeting, drug & alcohol awareness, emotional resilience, healthy eating and personal development
- **Tenancy Accreditation Scheme** – further development of the Home Achievement Programme (HAP) delivered by Home Group, but rolled out to customers across South Somerset in a range of different accommodation.

Due to the success of the HAP we are working with the other Local Authorities in Somerset to develop the longer term sustainability of tenancy accreditation schemes across the County. This will ensure all customers have access to a good quality scheme, which is accredited and recognised by landlords.

- **Health and Wellbeing** - One-to-one coaching sessions and social prescribing are offered to support people to change patterns of behaviour and enable people to make positive lifestyle choices. Key focus areas are:
 - Diet and healthy eating
 - Mental Wellbeing
 - Physical Health
 - Reducing or stopping alcohol misuse
 - Reducing or stopping substance misuse
 - Sexual health
 - Smoking cessation

Health and Wellbeing coaching is a goal-based process where the individual is supported by a coach to develop positive changes in behaviour.

- **PeerPoint** - PeerPoint is specifically tailored to social inclusion with particular relevance to those who have experienced homelessness. The opportunity to spend some time talking to others who have shared similar life experiences has clear and proven benefits to confidence and wellbeing. PeerPoint offers a safe environment

where people can come together on a weekly basis to develop these mutually supportive peer group relationships.

Partnership Working

40. Home Group engages with a number of partnerships including the County-wide Positive Lives Operational and Strategic Boards. They co-ordinate the South Somerset Socially Excluded Panel and attend a number of other multi-agency partnerships (eg. Somerset Supported Housing Forum, One Team) where relevant. During 2017/18 they have developed good partnership working with Julian House to help find accommodation solutions for people leaving prison. The police give positive feedback about the team's outreach work and direct engagement with clients.

Multi Agency Working to Deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA)

41. With the roll out of the HRA and the new responsibilities this places on SSDC, we will be working closer with a range of partners to reduce homelessness and help individuals and families find longer term solutions to accommodation and other issues they face. We are using our ringfenced Homeless Reduction Act funding (provided by central Government) to deliver a number of specific projects, including:

- Debt Advice – partnership with Citizens Advice South Somerset supporting clients at risk of homelessness to address debt issues and negotiate payment plans with creditors and landlords to prevent evictions
- Support for young people – working with Mendip YMCA to operate an advice hub for young people to prevent homelessness
- Hospital Resettlement – this project in partnership with Home Group will employ a part time worker to liaise closely with Yeovil District Hospital and Holly Court to help people find sustainable accommodation and associated support when they are discharged from hospital
- Floating support – two projects through Yeovil 4 Family and Bournemouth Churches Housing Association to offer longer term 1-1 support for vulnerable individuals and families in temporary accommodation and elsewhere to help them maintain their tenancies and find longer term solutions

Financial Implications

42. It currently costs £240,000 per year to deliver the accommodation and associated housing support services (with £80,000 being contributed from Housing Benefit). The Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) currently includes funding for the net difference of £160,000 per year up to March 2019 in line with previous Executive decision, with the cost removed from April 2019.

43. The service delivered through the current SLA makes a positive contribution towards the Council's duty to reduce homelessness. It is therefore proposed that from a budget perspective this cost is added into the base budget for homelessness prevention from 2019/20. This would provide for continuity assuming the level of demand can continue to be supported through this funding i.e. enabling the continuation of accommodation and associated housing support services to be provided in South Somerset.

44. The Council receives Government grant funding in respect of Homeless Prevention. £54,703 is incorporated within the indicative Finance Settlement for 2019/20, which helps towards the costs of our team and temporary accommodation provision. This is already reflected in our base budget ongoing.

45. In addition we have received Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FSHG) in 2017/18 and 2018/19 (£155,758 in 2017/18 and £164,042 in 2018/19). This grant replaced the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee (TAMF) that was distributed to local authorities by the Department for Work and Pensions until the end of March 2017. The total funding of £319,800 is currently held in the Revenue Grants earmarked reserve, and plans are in place to commit the majority of these funds on homelessness support and prevention actions. In addition, in March 2018 the Government published the FSHG allocation for 2019/20 which is £253,761. It is proposed to commit £100,000 from this grant, at this stage as a one-off as we only have the allocation for 2019/20 confirmed, towards the £160,000 budget requirement. If sufficient FSHG continues beyond 2019/20 it is proposed to continue to prioritise a proportion of this grant towards this area of need.

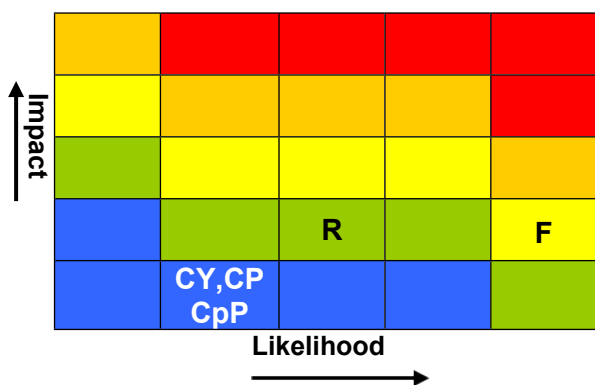
The ongoing impact on the MTFP would therefore be:

	2019/20 £	2020/21 onwards £
Budget requirement for supported temporary accommodation	160,000	160,000
Use of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	-100,000	?
Impact on Net Budget – Unavoidable Cost Pressure	60,000	160,000

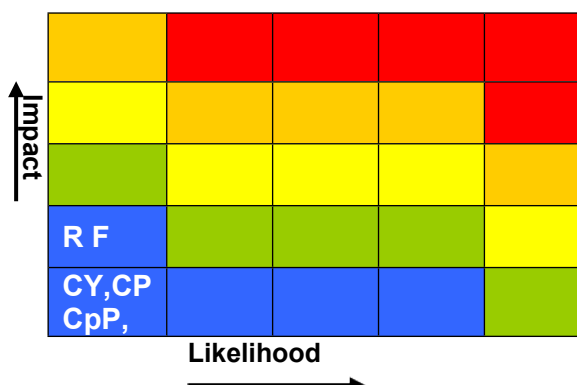
46. In order to enable continuation of service to we propose extending our existing Service Level Agreement with Home Group for a further year in 2019/20, and for officers to develop proposals for longer term arrangements, subject to procurement, from 2020/21.

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
- Work to minimise the impact of personal or household debt
- Enable people to live independently

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. Home Group operates an effective Equal Opportunities Policy, which is specified in our SLA.

Privacy Impact Assessment

Our SLA with Home Group specifies procedures for the handling of personal and confidential information and our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the GDPR 2018

Background Papers

District Executive Agenda and Minutes, April 2016 and January 2017

DCLG/DWP Funding for Supported Housing Consultation Paper, November 2016 and Outcome August 2018

Shelter: Immediate Costs to Government of Loss of Home January 2012

Crisis: At What Cost – an estimation of the financial costs of single homelessness in the UK, July 2015
