

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE  
11th June 2020

Report of the Director of Housing

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## **DERBYSHIRE HOMELESSNESS COVID-19 RESPONSE**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

Derbyshire authorities have been working in partnership to support the 'Everyone in' approach to street homelessness during the Covid-19 crisis. As lockdown measures are slowly lifted, Councils now need to consider moving people in to settled accommodation to prevent a return to sleeping on the streets. Such a move will require the provision of a new dedicated floating support service. This report sets out a proposed new service led by Chesterfield Borough Council and financed by a wide partnership of Derbyshire authorities and other agencies.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Members note the work to date to support people who had been sleeping rough and
2. Approve the allocation of £15,000 as a contribution to the 'Derbyshire Keeping Everyone' in service.

### **WARDS AFFECTED**

All

### **STRATEGIC LINK**

Preventing homelessness is a priority for the Council's Housing Strategy and supports the Council's Corporate goals of People, Place and Prosperity.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 On March 23<sup>rd</sup> all Councils in England were ordered to bring in everyone who was rough sleeping, and subsequently everyone who became homeless during the lock down. Based on Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) figures, local authorities have since moved an estimated 90% of rough sleepers known at the start of the lockdown into hotels, bed and breakfasts and other temporary accommodation, and accommodated up to 15,000 individuals. In Derbyshire, councils have brought in 80 people so far, and, like the rest of the country, the majority have been placed in hotel accommodation. At the start of the crisis a combination of local councils and Derbyshire County Council came together to collaborate on the temporary block booking of Hotels to create much needed extra housing capacity to shield a large portion of the homeless and rough sleeping cohort.

- 1.2 This jointly funded initiative, despite its challenges has proven to be a major success and several agencies and organisations including homeless and rough sleeping outreach services, drug and alcohol teams, NHS teams, Police and council housing staff have worked together to support some of the most vulnerable people in society through the worst times of the Covid-19 crisis.
- 1.3 However the existing provision will end on the 26<sup>th</sup> June. The hotel provision, although effective, cannot be retained. In addition, we do not expect the 'everyone in' initiative to continue much further. The people bought in, need an offer of support to help them through the next phase. Partner agencies have been working on a plan to put the necessary resources in place to support and re-home as many people as possible into longer term accommodation.
- 1.4 Without a boost in support services and an increased supply in accommodation, most of the people accommodated in hotels, guest houses and B&B's will have nowhere to go, and current support services will be unable to provide the care and expertise required for the amount of people being released onto the streets. There is therefore an opportunity to build on the collaborative approach nurtured over the last few months.
- 1.5 Through the experience and current service delivery of key partners including P3 and Pathways of Chesterfield it is proposed to deliver an intensive and wrap-around support service to a cohort of approximately **60** (to be confirmed) individuals in Derbyshire who have been placed in temporary accommodation by the Local Authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. These individuals are experiencing overlapping and challenging issues such as offending, drug and alcohol misuse and poor mental health. Due to their challenging needs the Derbyshire Dales has accommodated 8 clients who would not normally have been accommodated in one hotel and other B&Bs.
- 1.6 If established, Pathways will focus support in Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bolsover with P3 covering the rest of the county. Currently P3 deliver the Derbyshire Rough Sleeper service. This service will work closely with the Derbyshire Rough Sleeping Outreach Team (DOT) as they are currently engaged with this group of people, learning from their involvement, experience and local knowledge and ensuring a smooth transition for the individual from service to service. Data, knowledge and experience from the DOT will be used to undertake an audit of need, the level of support required and to help identify gaps in current service provision. This will in turn inform delivery using the Link-worker model.
- 1.7 The cohort for this service is a complex group for whom existing provision will not sufficiently meet their needs. The existing services are unsuitable for their level of need and/or circumstances. There is also the acknowledgement that existing services that may be able to meet the needs of this group are already at capacity and, in many cases, operating waiting lists, thus creating a barrier to timely access.
- 1.8 Derbyshire councils, P3 and Pathways of Chesterfield have developed a partnership model, drawing on the vast experience of supporting people who are experiencing homelessness, utilising current infrastructure across Derbyshire and building on the

successful track record, working in partnership to support the people who need housing and support.

- 1.9 The proposal is that P3 will be the lead contractor for this project and will subcontract to Pathways of Chesterfield. P3 currently fulfil the country-wide Rough Sleeper Initiative contract which is funded by MHCLG and in partnership with Pathways of Chesterfield they have provided an exceptional level of commitment through the crisis. They have supported the most vulnerable and challenging clients placed in the Hotels across the county to make sure people are safe. They have found accommodation during the difficult period of the lock down for people made homeless and they have established key partnerships with public health, NHS and drug and alcohol services.
- 1.10 The partnership and services will be managed and monitored via DHOG (Derbyshire Homeless Officers Group) together with key personnel from across the sector.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 The proposal seeks to operate a new 12month wrap around service at a cost of £260,000, funded from contributions from partner councils, other public bodies and existing grants already received. Working in partnership will ensure that each council can secure support for the numbers of people from their area. The Derbyshire Dales has 7 people in the current hotel and B&B provision and so it is proposed that a contribution of £15,000 is made available by DDDC to support the scheme. This contribution can be met from the Council's existing Homelessness Grant provision.
- 2.2 Each person will be allocated a Link Worker who will provide consistent support for as long as required (over the next 12 months) and will act as a trusted individual and single point of contact for both the person and any other individuals or services involved with them, coordinating support across multiple services. Appendix 1 includes a model showing the pathway into the service.
- 2.4 To facilitate intensive levels of support/time for this complex cohort, Link Workers operate at a low caseload, averaging between 8-10 people at any one time (compared to traditional caseloads of 15-20 for lower-needs cohorts), allowing them to focus more time and resources where needed. Link Working involves intensive, personalised, practical and psycho-social support that is "unboundaried" from specific areas of work such as housing, health or addiction, it does not exclude due to pre-empted criteria.
- 2.5 All interventions are driven by ideas expressed by clients, recognising that it is far more likely to achieve positive outcomes if the client is involved in the design of their support. Experience tells us that the best way to do this is through active listening to what our clients themselves are saying, and then responding to those issues that clients themselves perceive as barriers to their recovery. Staff then work with them to devise structured action plans that they understand, generating 'buy in', looking at all aspects of their life with agreed solutions to any issues.
- 2.6 Link workers will work with the existing DOT service to take handover during a transitional period, ideally in advance of people needing to leave the hotel and B&B

provision. This will give strength to the support package offered, ensure consistency and allow for more robust exit planning.

- 2.7 P3 have previously been awarded a grant of £60,000 through Derbyshire Dales District Council on behalf of all of the Districts to develop a volunteering offer to enhance current support to people sleeping rough. This work has been put on hold whilst Covid restrictions are in place and it is our aim to re-purpose this funding to offset the cost of this new recovery service model. The funding body for this grant has approved the proposed change in delivery.
- 2.8 The cost of 6 Linkworkers and a Senior Linkworker is £284,000 for 12 months (Including the re purposing of £60,000 grant funding). The total cost is inclusive of all on-costs such as pension, national insurance, management, corporate support (IT, finance, HR) Training, IT equipment and travel. This cost will be shared across Derbyshire authorities on the basis of the forecast number of cases for each local authority.
- 2.9 Advice from the Local Government Association (LGA) in the recently published 'Local Authority Rough Sleeper Accommodation Guidance' has highlighted the need for councils to act quickly to source services during the Covid19 crisis. In recognition of the urgent need to move quickly to deal with the Covid-19 crisis, the government has issued Procurement Policy Notes PPN01/20 and PPN 02/20 in response. Chesterfield Borough Council are leading the project with support from colleagues across Derbyshire and will manage the procurement arrangements.
- 2.10 The LGA report has also highlighted the long established partnership work within Derbyshire and the 'Everyone In – Derbyshire Response', "Collective action has been rapid and the multiagency collaboration very strong, something achieved by working together over many years."
- 2.11 If approved, officers from the Community Housing Team will continue working with colleagues across the county to bring the new support service on line.

### **3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

#### **Legal**

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to provide advice and assistance in order to prevent homelessness. This report provides support services in conjunction with other local authorities in order to meet this duty. The risk is therefore low if adopted. If not adopted this would put a greater burden on the Council Housing Officers to provide advice.

#### **Financial**

- 3.2 The proposed partnership approach is more efficient and cost effective than each local authority making its own arrangements. The recommended contribution of £15,000 from DDDC to support the scheme can be met from the Council's existing Homelessness Grant provision. The financial risk is, therefore, assessed as low.

#### **4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder; equalities; environmental; climate change; health; human rights; personnel and property.

#### **5. CONTACT INFORMATION**

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#### **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

#### **7 ATTACHMENTS**

None.

**The diagram below demonstrates the pathway into the service**

