

ROUGH SLEEPER INITIATIVE UPDATE

Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 7 June 2022

Report of: Sarah Robson Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, People and Places

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary To update the Housing and Health Advisory Committee on the recent and latest rounds of funding announced by the Government for the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI).

This report supports the Key Aim of: the Housing Strategy and West Kent Homelessness Strategy.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kevin Maskell

Contact Officer: Rav Kensrey, Homelessness Prevention Manager

Recommendation to Housing & Health Advisory Committee:

- a) To note the key achievements in supporting rough sleepers in the Sevenoaks District as a result of receiving Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding in 2021-22;
- b) To note the latest round of funding announced by the Government for the RSI and to outline the Council's submission bid for 2022-2025.

Introduction and Background

- 1 As a Local Housing Authority, the Council has a duty to provide advice and assistance to homeless households and in certain circumstances, has a duty to secure suitable accommodation. These duties are set out in part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).
- 2 Single homelessness continues to see an increase due to welfare benefit changes, universal credit and the changes to homelessness legislation setting out which people are classed as vulnerable. This increase has also been recognised across Kent and nationally.
- 3 The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) is a grant programme provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC) to local authorities to provide local support for people living on the streets.
- 4 In 2019/2020 the scheme was called the Rapid Rehousing Pathway programme and 2020/21 and 2021/22 the scheme was called the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI). This was a step in the Government's plan to halve

rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027, To date Sevenoaks District Council has received funding in 2019/20 and 2021/22.

- 5 This report provides an update on the how the funding has benefitted the Sevenoaks District in the past 12 months and provides an update on DLUHC's announcement of a fifth phase (RSI 5), which will cover the period 2022 - 2025. The deadline for bid submission was late February 2022 and a decision on the council's allocation is expected in April/May 2022.
- 6 RSI is one of a number of funding streams, which contribute to the council's actions to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. Others include Housing First, Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) and the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP), each of which is ring fenced for its specific programme aims. In addition to these funding streams, the council also allocates core funding in order to discharge its legal obligations concerning homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 7 The information below details the interventions funded by the RSI 4 grant over the past 12 months and demonstrates a continuation of the work in the previous years to support the rough sleeping population.

RSI 4 update

- 8 **The key objectives of the current RSI 4 funding for 2021-22 have been to:**
 - Ensure that as few people as possible return to streets from emergency accommodation put in place during COVID-19;
 - Continue to ensure a response to those who remain or arrive on the streets who are at risk of COVID-19;
 - Ensure longer-term accommodation and support solutions for those already in a rough sleeping pathway - enabling them to move on to independent living; and
 - Ensure supported accommodation is available for those that need it.
- 9 A range of initiatives have been successfully delivered under RSI 4. The Council secured approximately £275,760 in funding for 2021/22. The following interventions are having the desired effect, minimising rough sleeping and preventing homelessness:
 - **Housing Pathway Co-ordinator post** - Officer for rough sleeping, overseeing service provision, supporting outreach and engagement work and working collaboratively with public, voluntary and community sector stakeholders.
 - **Personalisation Funding** - to support targeted and flexible interventions for rough sleepers - this readily accessible pot of money enables barriers to be removed when supporting individuals to exit rough sleeping and secure accommodation. Interventions have included funding travel costs and providing furnishing for new homes.

- **Housing Led Complex Needs Worker** - The Council commissioned Porchlight, a Kent-based charity supporting homeless and people, to appoint a Housing Led Complex Needs Worker, enabling enhanced working with individuals rough sleeping or exiting rough sleeping, ensuring tenancies and accommodation secured are sustainable in the long run.
- **Outreach Worker** - The Council commissioned Porchlight to deliver an outreach service to provide timely and responsive interventions. The outreach sessions enable focused work at times when individuals are more likely to be rough sleeping, enabling prompt identification and engagement. Intensive outreach work is undertaken, providing for the necessary time and repeated engagement to build relationships with entrenched rough sleepers who require additional support and may be hard to reach.
- **Emergency Accommodation ‘off the street offer’** - Enabled flexible approaches to temporary accommodation aligned to the principles of Government’s ‘Everyone In’ policy. Provision of temporary accommodation ensuring individuals who face or pose a risk in shared or supported accommodation are able to be housed in emergency situations.

10 Key achievements resulting from RSI 4 include:

- Building trust with people who have been entrenched rough sleepers is not easy. We believe the main achievement is that we are engaging in a meaningful way with a large number of people who were socially excluded and in some cases were completely unknown to us. Officers have stated that there is a sense of optimism about the future for many of them, which was just absent before we started this work.
- 20 are now engaging well with local commissioned addiction and other support services, with a further 10 continuing to be helped with complex addictions and mental health.
- 5 have been accepted into supported accommodation, with a further two being assessed for supported accommodation.
- 1 has been accepted into residential rehabilitation services.
- 15 are being supported into employment or training.
- One of the key outputs of the Outreach Worker is to dedicate a high proportion of their time to engaging with people who are either not engaging/ accessing services or use them in a sporadic manner. This enables them to identify new vulnerable rough sleepers quickly before they adopt a more established street lifestyle. The outreach work is also able to accompany clients to assist them to access other services such as mental health provision through the Community Mental Health Team.

11 The current approach has been successful at delivering interventions and delivering against the Housing Strategy priorities. Sustaining these interventions will enable continued delivery against these ambitions.

RSI 5 funding submission

12 The Government's objectives for RSI 5 are:

- **Prevention** - Activities to stop people sleeping rough for the first time;
- **Intervention** - Support for those currently sleeping rough to move off the streets;
- **Recovery** - Support for those who have slept rough to ensure they do not return to the streets.

13 The Government has committed to ending rough sleeping by the end of the current Parliament. The Spending Review demonstrates the Government's commitment to deliver on this by preventing rough sleeping as well as supporting those on the streets to rebuild their lives. This means the Government is committing over £2bn to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next 3 years, with multi-year funding enabling local partners to better plan services and maximise efficiencies.

14 A 3-year spending review is the opportunity to put in place an ambitious plan for ending rough sleeping and think longer-term and innovatively about different approaches to rough sleeping

15 The Council has submitted a funding bid to Government to support the following:

16 **Proposed staffing structure relating to RSI 5 2022 - 2025 and additional funding request**

Current posts	Proposed Year 1 - April 22/23	Year 2 - April 23/24	Year 3 - April 24/25
1 x full time Pathway Coordinator Coordinates rough sleeping response across the Council and ensures delivery of RSI programme. Coordinates multi-agency response to long term and intermittent rough sleeping resulting from complex need	Pathway Coordinator x 1 full time = £67,749	Pathway Coordinator x 1 full time	Tenancy Sustainment Officer x 1 full time

1 x full time Complex Worker Housing Led Enhanced working with individuals rough sleeping or exiting rough sleeping, ensuring tenancies and accommodation secured are sustainable in the long run.	Assessment & Resettlement Worker x 1 full time £56,371	Floating Support Worker x 1 full time £56,371	Floating Support Worker x 1 full time £56,371
1 x full time Outreach worker Outreach service to provide timely and responsive interventions	1 x full time Outreach worker £56,371	Assessment & Resettlement Worker x 1 full time £56,371	Assessment & Resettlement Worker x 1 full time £56,371
Additional funding Requests	Proposed Year 1 - April 22/23	Year 2 - April 23/24	Year 3 - April 24/25
Personalised budget Enables services to find individualised solutions to rough sleeping. Funds reconnections, clothes, furnishings, access to ID etc	70 cases per annum x £500.00 cost per case = £35,000.00	50 cases per annum x £500.00 cost per case = £25,000.00	40 cases per annum x £500.00 cost per case = £20,000.00
Private rented sector funding To fund interventions to increase Private Rented Sector (PRS) access for low needs rough sleepers, and for rough sleepers moving on from supported accommodation.	70 cases per annum x £1400.00 cost per case for 1 bed LHA £98,000.00	50 cases per annum x £1400.00 cost per case for 1 bed LHA £70,000.00	40 cases per annum x £1400.00 cost per case for 1 bed LHA £56,000.00

Emergency Accommodation Additional funding for 'off the street' offer Direct access to short-stay accommodation to enable assessment and engagement ensuring individuals who face or pose a risk in shared or supported accommodation are able to be housed in emergency situations	The costings to support 45 cases £54, 675.00	The costings to support 35 cases £47,250.00	The costings to support 25 cases £33,750.00
Imago Social Prescriber Service x 1 full time worker To mobilise resources from the NHS, local government, charitable trusts and the private sector to deliver care navigation and social prescribing services.	£37,800	£40,800	£45,800
CAB x 1 full time Single Homelessness Specialist To provide training, education, employment and financial support services to singles cohort case load with completing job applications, creating CV's, assistance with accessing applying for training & education.	1 x full time Singles Specialist £52799	1 x full time Singles Specialist £57799	1 x full time Singles Specialist £62799

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 11 No other options considered. Any interventions funded will be contained within the RSI funding envelope and no match funding or additional administration costs are required to accept and manage the funding. Successful outcomes will reduce future costs arising from repeat homelessness, and associated costs to the public purse from rough sleeping.

Key Implications

Resource (Non-Financial)

There are no additional resource requirements arising from this report.

Financial

The RSI funding is external Government funding, which the Council bids for. There is no additional financial impact arising from this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The Council has a number of statutory obligations in relation to homelessness as set out in the Housing Act 1996 and amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which extended existing and introduced new duties.

The Council is required to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy in line with its obligations under the Homelessness Act 2002 and national Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018).

This funding will support the council to deliver against its legal duties and achieve the objectives of the Strategy.

Risks to individuals who sleep rough are high. Individuals who experience rough sleeping over a long period are:

- (a) More likely to die young than the general population. The average age at death for people who experience homelessness was 42 for women and 44 for men;
- (b) More likely to die from injury, poisoning or suicide. 35% of people who die whilst sleeping rough die due to alcohol or drugs, compared to 2% in the general population;
- (c) Likely to have poorer health due to a combination of factors including exposure to poor living conditions, poor diet, difficulty maintaining personal hygiene, high levels of stress, substance dependency and lack of access to primary care;
- (d) Likely to face risks related to exposure to the elements in extreme conditions, including low and high temperatures.

The interventions provided by RSI funding minimise or remove the risk of harm through providing timely, effective interventions to individuals who are, or at risk of, rough sleeping.

Funding under this initiative ensures there is not an additional strain on other Council resources, including but not limited to the core homelessness budget.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups.

The measures outlined as part of the funding seek to ensure accessibility of the interventions to all individuals who are, or at risk of, rough sleeping. These individuals are often from disadvantaged backgrounds with multiple, complex needs which require an inclusive approach bespoke to their needs.

Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

Conclusions

Rough sleepers and those at risk of sleeping rough are the most vulnerable as they lack any accommodation, but anyone who is threatened with homelessness, actually homeless or is recovering from being homeless may have a degree of vulnerability due to their housing situation, or have an existing vulnerability made worse by the situation. Any interventions funded will be contained within the RSI funding envelope and no match funding or additional administration costs are required to accept and manage the funding. Successful outcomes will reduce future costs arising from repeat homelessness, and associated costs to the public purse from rough sleeping.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Sarah Robson

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People & Places