



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 28th April 2022

To the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business

Acceptance of Homelessness Funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Glyn Jones	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Government is committed to ending rough sleeping in this parliament and to fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act. Two critical elements to support local authorities in achieving the Government's manifesto commitment are the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) funding streams.
2. The Council has submitted a funding application to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for a three-year award for RSI funding (2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25). The funding award (once confirmed by DLUHC) will enable the continuation of a range of interventions as well as the implementation of new initiatives to support rough sleepers and those at risk of sleeping rough in Doncaster.
3. Like other local authorities, the Council has also been allocated HPG funding, which ensures local authorities are fully resourced to take action to prevent and tackle homelessness and continue to embed the changes required through implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
4. In addition, Doncaster has submitted an application to DLUHC's Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP). The objective of RSAP is to provide 'move on' homes and accompanying support services to rough sleepers or those with a history of rough sleeping to achieve a sustainable reduction in rough sleeping. The programme includes funding for both capital and revenue-based accommodation schemes as well as funding for support services to enable individuals accommodated in these units to move on from rough sleeping. Local authorities are expected to work closely with delivery

partners to demonstrate how RSAP schemes will contribute to local plans to end rough sleeping, complementing other rough sleeping programmes, such as initiatives funded through the RSI.

5. If successful, RSAP will deliver additional units of accommodation towards the expansion of Doncaster's Housing First offer along with an enhanced wraparound support offer (provided by Doncaster's Complex Lives Alliance) to support individuals to sustain their Housing First accommodation.

EXEMPT REPORT

6. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business:
 - a) Approves receipt of a maximum award of £2,671,099 RSI funding from DLUHC to cover the three-year period 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 and spending plan in accordance with the bid.
 - b) Approves receipt of the Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation for 2022/23 of £739,351 and £24,864 domestic abuse new burdens funding from DLUHC and delegates the approval of the spending plan to the Director of Public Health and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business.
 - c) Approve receipt of a maximum revenue award of £598,230 RSAP funding from DLUHC to cover the three-year period 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 and spending plan in accordance with the bid.
 - d) Approves the delegation to the Director of Public Health and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151) to finalise the terms and conditions and final allocation of the RSI and RSAP grants.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

8. The funding will enable those affected by homelessness and rough sleeping to be supported through a range of interventions in line with their individual needs.

BACKGROUND

9. Rough Sleeping Initiative Funding
10. The Government has committed to ending rough sleeping by the end of the current Parliament and RSI funding is crucial to meeting that commitment. The funding is designed to support local authorities to build on the successes already established through the RSI programme to date, continuing the work to reduce the number of people sleeping rough and enhance services for them and those at risk of sleeping rough.
11. A key aim of RSI 2022-2025 is to provide local authorities the funding certainty they need to think longer-term about their response to rough sleeping and the interventions they need to end it.
12. Doncaster's RSI application includes the following interventions:

- Assessment hub provision within Wharf House hostel - additional staffing to support delivery of an 'off the street offer' for rough sleepers
 - Additional emergency accommodation requirements including to support winter planning reducing over the three year allocation
 - Housing First - additional staffing to support expansion plans in line with the strategic direction of travel
 - Complex Lives Alliance - funding of key posts within the Complex Lives team including MEAM workers and navigators
 - Private rented sector (PRS) initiatives including funding for PRS officers as well as a resettlement fund to support access into the PRS
 - Housing Solutions Team - funding of a number of posts within St Leger Homes to enhance the current homelessness preventative offer and seek accommodation solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness
 - Tenancy sustainment - staffing to support individuals in both supported and PRS accommodation
13. To deliver these interventions, Doncaster has bid for and may receive a maximum award of £2,671,099 over a three-year funding period.
14. Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) Funding
15. The purpose of the ringfenced HPG is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness. DLUHC expect local authorities to use it to deliver the following priorities:
- to fully embed the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness
 - to reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation by maximising family homelessness prevention
 - to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and eliminate family bed and breakfast placements beyond the statutory six-week limit.
16. Funding for 2022/23 has been allocated on the same basis as funding allocated in 2021/22 using a formula which focuses on local homelessness pressures. In 2022/23 there is an additional allocation to meet the new burdens following expansion of priority need to include those who are homeless as a result of domestic abuse.
17. Doncaster has been allocated £739,351 along with £24,864 domestic abuse new burdens funding.
18. Development of the spending plan for 2022/23 will be informed by a review of previous expenditure (some posts within Complex Lives and St Leger Homes together with emergency accommodation costs) along with discussions and agreement with DLUHC Advisers to determine how spend will support homelessness prevention and align with ending rough sleeping plans. Those discussions will be informed by advice received from the regional HAST adviser, which highlighted interventions that HPG could support following a visit to Doncaster in November 2021.

19. Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)
20. Doncaster has worked in partnership with South Yorkshire Housing Association and Target Housing (existing Housing First accommodation providers) to develop and submit an RSAP proposal for capital and revenue in order to expand Doncaster's Housing First offer in line with the borough's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
21. Housing First gives people who have experienced homelessness and have multiple and complex needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. Intensive, person-centred, holistic support is provided by Doncaster's Complex Lives Alliance, focusing on individual strengths and potential.
22. Doncaster's RSAP proposal is subject to moderation and agreement by DLUHC and will provide up to a further 10 units of Housing First accommodation (maximum capital award of £409,925 paid directly to South Yorkshire Housing Association and £366,825 either paid directly to Target Housing or Doncaster Council) plus additional staffing capacity within Doncaster's Complex Lives Alliance (maximum revenue award of £598,230 to cover the three-year period 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 paid directly to the Council) to provide the intensive, wraparound support.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

23. Not to accept the funding allocations, which would negatively impact on homelessness and rough sleeping in Doncaster.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

24. Accepting the funding allocations will enable the Council to continue interventions and implement new initiatives to support those affected by homelessness, rough sleeping and those at risk of rough sleeping.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

25.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>The recommendation will enable vulnerable people affected by homelessness and rough sleeping to be supported through a range of interventions.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

26. There is a risk that following moderation by DLUHC, the RSI award does not fully meet Doncaster's submission, which would impact on the range of interventions that could be funded. This risk is deemed to be low given the submission was co-produced with the regional DLUHC RSI adviser.
27. There is a risk that the RSAP award is not supported and funded in full, which would impact on the expansion of Doncaster's Housing First offer. This risk is deemed to be low given the submission was co-produced with the regional DLUHC Homelessness, Advice and Support Team (HAST) adviser.
28. There is a risk linked to recruitment where interventions require additional staff however, the longer-term nature of the funding should reduce the risk of being able to recruit and retain staff.
29. There is a risk that agreement on the HPG spend plan cannot be reached with DLUHC. This risk is deemed to be low given the regional HAST adviser visited Doncaster in November 2021 and provided advice on preventative interventions that HPG could support, which the spend plan will be based on.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials NJD Date 20th April 2022.]

30. Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places an obligation on the Council to take action to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to people threatened with or actually homeless and places a duty on the Council to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their area.
31. As set out in the report, the Council will receive £0.766m of Homelessness Prevention Grant, up to £2.67m of Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant and up to £1.37m of Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme Grant from DLUHC.
32. The Council will be required to enter into funding agreements with DLUHC. It is likely that the funding agreements will contain details of project outputs, project outcomes and milestones that must be achieved and the terms and conditions of the funding agreement must be adhered to avoid the risk of clawback. Legal advice should be sought once the funding agreement has been received.
33. S112 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a local authority to appoint such officers as are necessary for the proper discharge of its functions, on such reasonable terms and conditions as it thinks fit. Salary grade should be determined by job evaluation. If the posts are only temporary, it is advisable to set up a temporary contract for a fixed term. In order for liability in relation to unfair dismissal to be limited there must be a legitimate reason for a fixed term contract and the employee must be made aware of this reason and of the anticipated length of the contract at the commencement of the contract. After the 4th year of renewal the employee may be entitled to the position on a permanent basis. If the length of the contract exceeds 1 year upon termination the employee may be entitled to be placed on the redeployment register and after 2 years may be entitled to a redundancy payment. It is important that sight is not lost of the Council's recruitment, retention, and vacancy management policies, which should be followed

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials MS Date 12 April 2022]

34. As stated above the Council has been allocated a total £0.76m of Homelessness Prevention grant for 2022/23. The detailed grant terms and conditions have yet to be issued by DLUHC and though they are likely to be similar to previous years, they will need review to ensure the council's spending plans are aligned. In previous years the terms and conditions have included reference to clawback of grant.
35. Similarly, the Rough Sleeping Initiative bid (up to £2.67m over three years) and the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme bid (up to £1.37m) will have terms and conditions attached, so will need review and formal acceptance. The capital element of the RSAP may need to be added to the capital programme dependent on the terms and conditions; assuming that element remains under £1m, the decision to add to the capital programme, if necessary, can be taken by an officer.
36. A review of previous expenditure (including funding of posts within the Complex Lives team and St Leger Homes together with emergency accommodation costs) is referred to above. The review will need to take into consideration of existing commitments to ensure they are all funded.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials EL Date 19/4/2022]

37. This report refers to some of the funding being used for additional staffing. This will be to fund a number of existing posts, however any new roles created within the Council must be created in consultation with Human Resources and go through the Council's GLPC Job Evaluation system unless they are already established roles, which have already been through this process.
38. Any new posts should be recruited to in line with DMBC's Safer Recruitment policy, initially open to Redeployees, prior to any internal / external recruitment and advertising.
39. Employees who were employed before 6 April 2012 and have 1 year's continuous service, or after 6 April 2012 and have at least two years continuous service, accrue employment rights. Employees who complete 2 years continuous service accrue rights to a redundancy payment.
40. Fixed-term employees have the right not to be treated less favourably than comparable permanent employees because they are on a fixed-term contract. This means you must treat fixed-term employees the same as comparable permanent employees unless there are 'objectively justifiable' circumstances for not doing so (i.e. there is a genuine, necessary and appropriate business reason). This means the same or equivalent (pro-rata) pay and conditions, benefits, pension rights and opportunity to apply for permanent positions within the business.
41. Under the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, employees who have been on a fixed-term contract for four years or longer will usually be legally classed as permanent if their contract is renewed or if they are re-engaged on a new fixed-term contract.

42. The only exemptions are when employment on a further fixed-term contract is objectively justified to achieve a legitimate business aim or when the period of four years has been lengthened under a collective or workplace agreement.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...PW Date...13/04/2022]

43. There are no technology implications in relation to this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials MW Date 12/4/22]

44. Poor health can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness and there is evidence to show that the health and wellbeing of those who are homeless is significantly worse than the general population. Living on the streets, in temporary accommodation or in an insecure tenure can have an impact on physical and mental health, drug and alcohol use and the ability to utilise the health systems. This means that, as a group, those whom experience homelessness also experience high levels of health inequality, exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19. Homelessness is more likely to affect those in society who are most at risk of experiencing poor health than the general population. It is important to consider the longer term consequences if services/support are not provided, for example, if a "reasonable" first offer of accommodation is refused or a client's behaviour/inability to engage leads to them not being housed.
45. Having a secure, healthy and appropriate home will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and improves our ability to contribute to society. By reducing the number of people sleeping rough, homeless or at risk of homelessness it can be expected that there will be a positive health impact on this vulnerable population. Although short term placements are essential to get people off the streets and into a safe, healthier environment and can be necessary to reduce immediate risk, it is important that there is an adequate supply of and access to affordable settled housing to both prevent homelessness and enable progression out of the temporary supported housing pathway.
46. It is recommended that prevention continues to be the approach of choice wherever possible to prevent our vulnerable communities developing more complex needs and experiencing further negative health impacts of homelessness and rough sleeping.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Office initials MW Date 12/4/22]

47. Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.

CONSULTATION

48. Not applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS

49. Not applicable

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DLUHC - The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

HPG – Homelessness Prevention Grant

RSI – Rough Sleeping Initiative

RSAP – Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme

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