

OFFICER DECISION RECORD 1 FORM

This form should be used to record Officer Decisions in Excess of £100k (but below the key decision threshold), or where required by Financial, Contract or other Procedure Rules or following formal delegation from Cabinet or a Cabinet Member or a Council Committee.

Decision Reference No: 2022/24/PHRoughSleepergrant

BOX 1

DIRECTORATE: Public Health

DATE: 01/07/2022

Contact Name: Sarah Sansoa

Tel. No.: 737048

Subject Matter: Allocation of Rough Sleepers Initiative grant, Homelessness Prevention grant and COVID-19 emergency grant to support homelessness related activities across the Council and partners

BOX 2**DECISION TAKEN**

To allocate Rough Sleepers Initiative grant, Homelessness Prevention grant and COVID-19 emergency grant to support homelessness related activities across the Council and partners as detailed below.

To accept the terms and conditions associated with the Rough Sleepers Initiative funding.

To approve the payment of £1,001,457 to SLHD for the Home Options and Homelessness Services.

BOX 3**REASON FOR THE DECISION****Background**

The changing landscape of the housing market is a national issue. House prices are on the rise, private sector rent levels are increasing and the gap between Local Housing Allowance rates at their frozen levels is forcing non-working tenants and households on low incomes out of the market. This is placing increasing demand on council housing, which is fast becoming the tenure of choice for many but with less than a fifth of housing stock in the borough being council housing demand far outweighs supply. All this with the cost of living crisis and the post COVID challenges is putting immense pressure on the home options service and homelessness approaches have steadily increased over the last two years and reached unprecedented and unmanageable levels. The service needs a full review to respond to the challenges, upstream prevention activity, engage and improve access into the private rented sector, achieve the

Government rough sleeper targets and deliver the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This work needs to dovetail into other important agendas for the borough such as Anti-Poverty, Health and Wellbeing and Domestic Abuse.

A key decision was taken on 28th April 2022 by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business to delegate allocation of the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) to the to the Director of Public Health and Assistant Director of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business; and, to delegate acceptance of the terms and conditions of the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) funding to the Director of Public Health and Assistant Director of Finance. The key decision report outlined the background as follows:-

- 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.
- 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.
- Like other local authorities, the Council has also been allocated HPG funding (of £764,215), 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.

Rough Sleepers Initiative

Doncaster's RSI application was successful and a total of £2,482,538 has been awarded for 2022/23 – 2024/25. The funding includes the following interventions:

- a) Assessment hub provision within Wharf House hostel - additional staffing to support delivery of an 'off the street offer' for rough sleepers
- b) Additional emergency accommodation requirements including to support winter planning reducing over the three year allocation
- c) Housing First - additional staffing to support expansion plans in line with the strategic direction of travel
- d) Complex Lives Alliance - funding of key posts within the Complex Lives team including MEAM workers and navigators
- e) Private rented sector (PRS) initiatives including funding for PRS officers as well as a resettlement fund to support access into the PRS
- f) 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
- g) Tenancy sustainment - staffing to support individuals in both supported and PRS accommodation

The table below shows a breakdown of the RSI awarded:-

	Year 1 - Final	Year 2 - Final	Year 3 - Final	Total - Final	Staff Funded 22/23	Staff Funded 23/24	Staff Funded 24/25
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	£789,814	£864,623	£828,101	£2,482,538	21.00	21.00	20.00
Assessment Hub	£124,532	£128,624	£111,283	£364,439	3.00	3.00	3.00
Complex Lives Alliance	£196,272	£251,941	£258,136	£706,349	6.00	6.00	6.00
Housing First	£112,779	£154,883	£199,412	£467,074	3.00	4.00	5.00
Housing Solutions Team	£147,532	£115,303	£40,069	£302,904	4.00	3.00	1.00
Private Rented Sector	£110,016	£112,229	£114,508	£336,753	2.00	2.00	2.00
Tenancy Sustainment	£98,683	£101,643	£104,693	£305,019	3.00	3.00	3.00

The funding needs to be spent in line with the bid, otherwise DLUHC have the right to clawback grant.

The 2022/23 allocation (year 1 in the table above) includes £294,431 to be spent by St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD). This is made up of the Housing Solutions (£147,532) and Private Rented Sector (£110,016) allocations plus £36,883 of the Tenancy Sustainment allocation. See below for further detail as to how SLHD will spend this funding. The remainder of the 2022/23 allocation will contribute to the overall funding for Complex Lives (£309,051) along with commissioned provider funding (£126,331). In addition, there is a contribution towards winter planning (£60,000).

Homelessness Prevention grant

Doncaster's 2022/23 allocation is £764,215. The grant is ring-fenced to the following principles:-

- a) To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
- b) Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention and reduce the use of unsuitable B&Bs for families.
- c) Ensure service financial viability of services by contributing to the costs of statutory duties, including implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act and supporting with the costs of temporary accommodation.

The Council is required to produce a B&B elimination plan and work with DLUHC to reduce use of B&B accommodation.

The full grant determination should be reviewed to ensure all conditions are complied with to avoid clawback.

SLHD will be given £456,550 of the grant (including £24,864 of domestic abuse new burdens funding). See below for further detail as to how SLHD will spend this funding. The remainder of the grant (£307,665) will be utilised as detailed in the budget towards the costs of the complex lives team for 2022/23 (subject to confirmation by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) representative.)

St Leger Homes of Doncaster additional funding

The number of people/families that are requiring accommodation and/or help and advice with their housing options has been at unprecedented levels since March 2020 and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are backlogs at all stages of the process and as cases are not being addressed at the relief stage, then they are becoming homeless and this has placed excessive pressure on the staff working within all areas of this service and is incurring significant additional financial pressure as the cost of Bed & Breakfast, Temporary Accommodation and the

unrecoverable housing benefit implications are far in excess of the allocated budgets and have been for over two years.

A cross departmental working group of senior officers has been working together to identify a solution to these issues and fully support the proposals from SLHD to resolve these current problems and get the service into a new normal and manageable position.

Overall key objectives of the service development

- First class customer service – whole process
- Keeping promises
- Delivering outcomes
- Value for Money
- Great reputation with partners
- Great reputation with Government and peers
- Excellent performance
- Highly motivated workforce and a great place to work

Current pressures on the service

- Demand
- Complex Customers / Households
- Lack of accommodation / affordability
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Private Rented Sector – Local Housing Allowance cap, rents, market stability
- Short term funding

Transformational Goals

Build an excellent, resilient and happy workforce

- ✓ First point of contact advice, assistance and triage via telephony and civic building
- ✓ Increase the staff numbers to reduce the workloads
- ✓ Implement staff training and awareness to increase confidence and knowledge
- ✓ Regular team meetings and briefings to keep informed
- ✓ Performance Management – praise and support
- ✓ Celebrate our successes

Housing Solutions – focused on prevention and Private Rented Sector (PRS)

- ✓ Funded by Homeless Prevention Grant to increase accessibility into PRS
- ✓ Landlord Engagement
- ✓ Landlord Prevention Package – link with St Leger Lettings
- ✓ Transfer St Leger Lettings to work alongside and expand
- ✓ 25 new PRS tenancies a month (300 annually) with up to £1500 incentives per tenancy
- ✓ Recover incentives paid out in previous years
- ✓ Change the culture of overreliance on social housing
- ✓ Offer PRS in discharge of homeless duties

Housing Options Front End Access

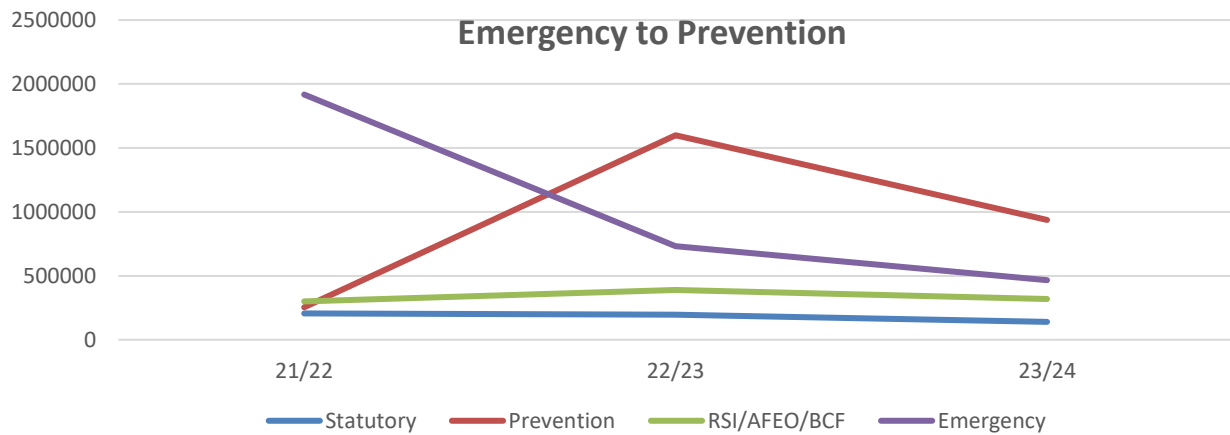
- ✓ First point of contact advice, assistance and triage via telephony and civic building
- ✓ Response within 24 hours for cases requiring further assistance – currently 3-4 weeks
- ✓ Development of Duty to Refer with all agencies
- ✓ Out of Hours Home Options service

Home Options Case / Performance Management

- ✓ Performance Management Framework from individual officer level to strategic KPI's and governance level
- ✓ Cases allocated at first point of contact
- ✓ Manageable case levels
- ✓ Proactive outreach work by officers

- ✓ Themed deployment around priority homeless reasons; relationship breakdown, young people, domestic abuse
- ✓ Deliver and celebrate outcomes

Emergency / Crisis ----- Prevention / Resolution



Key measures of success

- ✓ 80% cases opened at prevention
- ✓ 50% cases positive prevention outcome
- ✓ 30% cases positive relief outcome
- ✓ 40 households in TA
will increase in transition year
- ✓ 30 households in B&B and length of stay minimal
- ✓ All singles & rough sleepers requiring support through the commissioned pathway

Key steps

- ✓ Realign services
- ✓ Bid for additional resources
- ✓ Develop Transformation Project Programme
- ✓ Recruit to additional posts
- ✓ Induction / Training / Embed new staff
- ✓ Implement changes and new services
- ✓ Evaluate, Monitor, Review, Listen
- ✓ Create an award winning, happy and successful team

It is estimated that the proposed solution will take 12 months from the date of implementation to address the backlog of cases. Additional funding will cover two main areas;

- 20.5 FTE additional temporary staff members for a period of 12 months (seven of these posts are funded from RSI grant funding and will continue to be funded for a further two years from that approved grant allocation) at a cost of £845,967 these staff will primarily focus on prevention work and dealing with cases before they become homeless or at the relief stage and
- Additional funding, £253,610, to support initiatives to work with the private rented sector which will facilitate access to the much needed additional accommodation units and be used as prevention to people becoming homeless.

The additional cost of these proposals for the financial year 2022/23 is £1,001,457.

- £845,967 for additional staffing
- £253,610 for private sector housing initiatives

- £19,770 correction to the 2022/23 management fee for SLHD and
- A reduction of £117,890 on the use of temporary accommodation (including bed & breakfast and security) due to the anticipated success of the other measures.

This additional funding will be financed by the allocation of:-

- £456,550 of Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG)
- £294,431 of Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) grant Funding and
- £26,000 of Ex-offenders grant funding.

Following feedback from DLUHC, it is essential that we demonstrate a shift in the usage of Homelessness Prevention Grant away from reactive expenditure and into prevention measures and this proposal will achieve that once sufficient staff have been recruited.

There will also be implications for 2023/24 budget as these proposals cover two financial years and these will be addressed as part of the budget setting process.

The Ex-offenders funding has previously been accepted and allocated to SLHD.

The balance of £224,476 will be funded from unallocated emergency COVID grant, this is un-ringfenced grant provided to meet the council's costs of dealing with the pandemic, sufficient funding is available to enable this amount to be allocated to homelessness activities

The impact of the changes to the staff structure and private sector housing initiatives will be reviewed after 6 months and feed into the 23/24 budget setting process.

BOX 4

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Continue with the current approach and staffing levels with is resulting in high cases numbers, a significant backlog of cases, people and families in unsuitable accommodation, considerable unbudgeted expenditure, customer dissatisfaction, large numbers of complaints and no solution to resolve these issues.

BOX 5

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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.

Advice should be sought from legal services on the terms and conditions associated with the grant and the report author should assure themselves that the proposed use of the monies are in line with the grant conditions.

Any employment of staff or external spend using the grant monies should be in accordance with Council Contract Procedure Rules and Employment policies (as appropriate).

Name: Scott Fawcus Signature: S. R. Fawcus Date: 22.06.22

Signature of Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services (or representative)

BOX 6

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The financial implications are covered above. As stated above the new proposals for SLHD will cost £1,001,457 more than the budgeted management fee. This will be met from several sources of funding:-

- £456,550 Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) – this grant is ring-fenced to the following principles:-
 - a) To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
 - b) Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention and reduce the use of unsuitable B&Bs for families.
 - c) Ensure service financial viability of services by contributing to the costs of statutory duties, including implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act and supporting with the costs of temporary accommodation.

The Council is required to produce a B&B elimination plan and work with DLUHC to reduce use of B&B accommodation.

The full grant determination should be reviewed to ensure all conditions are complied with to avoid clawback.

- £294,431 Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) grant – this grant has been offered to the council following a successful bid. It is ring-fenced to activities approved in the bid. Any unspent funds will need to be returned to DLUHC.
- £26,000 Ex-offenders grant – this grant has been approved and allocated to SLHD
- £224,476 Emergency COVID grant – this is un-ringfenced grant provided to meet the council's costs of dealing with the pandemic, sufficient funding is available to enable this amount to be allocated to homelessness activities.

The balances of the RSI grant (£495,382) and HPG (£307,665) will be used within the Council as described above and will be subject to the same restrictions as the sums allocated to SLHD.

The use of the funding to support activity to prevent homelessness should reduce the amount of Housing Benefit the council pays out but is unable to reclaim from central government. This has been a cost pressure in recent years due to the increase in the number of homeless people

accommodated.

Name: Matthew Smith Signature: Date: 16 June 2022

Signature of Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director of Finance (or representative)

BOX 7

OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS

None identified

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Assistant Director (or representative)

ANY IMPLICATIONS SENT TO DEPARTMENTS SHOULD GENERALLY BE SUBMITTED AT LEAST 5 WORKING DAYS IN ADVANCE TO ENSURE THESE CAN BE GIVEN THE RELEVANT CONSIDERATION.

BOX 8

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS: (To be completed by the author).

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.

There are no specific equality considerations arising from service delivery, which will be undertaken in a fair and equitable way and the increase in resources and service improvements will increase the level of service to all customers throughout the homelessness and rough sleeping system.

BOX 9

RISK IMPLICATIONS: (To be completed by the author)

There is a risk linked to recruitment where interventions require additional staff however, the longer-term nature of RSI funding in particular should reduce the risk of being able to recruit and retain staff.

In relation to SLHD additional staffing, there is a risk of failure to recruit and effectively embed staff into the workforce – controls are in place to minimise this including a recruitment fair taking place to promote the vacancies and a full communications plan has been developed to promote as wide as possible.

There is an associated risk of failure to deliver the required outcomes, particularly around SLHD's intentions to improve access to the private rented sector - a new service manager has

been put in place to drive forward the work required to make this a success and joined up work is underway with Strategic Housing to maximise the work with the private rented sector.

**BOX 10
CONSULTATION**

Consultation has taken place widely with SLHD's partners and internal workforce to ensure the improvements and resources are appropriate. SLHD also plan to build in lived experience of the homeless pathway and process to ensure the voice of the customer is heard and listened to.

The Council's Extended Leadership Team has also been consulted with.

DLUHC Advisers were consulted with in the production of Doncaster's RSI submission and Homelessness Prevention Grant delivery plans.

**BOX 11
INFORMATION NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

None identified

Name: Claire Hewitt _____ **Signature** _____ **Date: 28/06/2022**

Signature of FOI Lead Officer for service area where ODR originates

**BOX 12
BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Please confirm if any Background Papers are included with this ODR NO

(If YES please list and submit these with this form)

**BOX 13
AUTHORISATION**

Name: Rupert Suckling Signature: _____ Date: 01/07/2022

Director of Public Health

Does this decision require authorisation by the Chief Financial Officer or other Officer

YES

If yes please authorise below:

Name: Faye Tyas Signature: _____ Date: 30/06/2022

Assistant Director of Finance

Consultation with Relevant Member(s)

Name: Councillor Glyn Jones Signature: _____ Date: 30/06/2022

Designation Cabinet Member for Housing and Business

(e.g. Mayor, Cabinet Member or Committee Chair/Vice-Chair)

Declaration of Interest YES/NO

If YES please give details below:

PLEASE NOTE THIS FORM WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE IN FULL UNLESS IT CONTAINS EXEMPT OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

Once completed a PDF copy of this form and any relevant background papers should be forwarded to Governance Services at Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk who will arrange publication.

It is the responsibility of the decision taker to clearly identify any information that is confidential or exempt and should be redacted before publication.