

The City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Thursday, 13 December 2018

Scottish Government Funding Offer for Rapid Access Accommodation

Item number	8.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards All	
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

Following a proposal by Streetwork to deliver additional rapid access accommodation in Edinburgh for a period of a year, as part of the winter initiative programme, the Scottish Government have offered to fund 50% of the costs of this programme, around £156,000 on the condition that the Council funds the remainder.

It is estimated that up to £56,000 of housing benefit may be available to reduce the Council's financial commitment.

Scottish Government Funding Offer for Rapid Access Accommodation

1. Recommendations

To agree in principle to support the initiative and consider the Council's financial contribution through the 2019/20 budget process.

2. Background

- 2.1 As part of the Scottish Government's winter initiatives programme, third sector providers and local authorities were invited to make proposals of potential service provision that would contribute to reducing homelessness, particularly rough sleeping.
- 2.2 In October 2018, Streetwork made an application to create enhanced direct access shelter accommodation, by using a hostel currently named "Bobby's Bunkhouse".
- 2.3 The total cost of this service provision is £312,000 to operate as a pilot for one year. Given the multiple benefits of this offer, officers stated their support in principle for this proposal in discussion with Scottish Government colleagues.
- 2.4 The Scottish Government assessed proposals through their Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group and following recommendations agreed to fund half of the proposal on 24 November 2018.
- 2.5 The Scottish Government and Streetwork have agreed to progress the first six months of this service with a proposed start date of 18 December 2018 with the expectation that the Council will fund the remaining six months from the 19/20 budget.

3. Main report

- 3.1 The potential proposal to block purchase 20 beds at Bobby's Bunkhouse, 9 Merchant Street for the period of one year at a cost of £24 per night.
- 3.2 The funding from both the Scottish Government and the Council would go to Streetwork to fund the accommodation, support, and provision of staff. Streetwork would then pay the accommodation owner.
- 3.3 This proposal would be a pilot for one year to provide additional direct access accommodation, deliver a valuable alternative to traditional care shelters and to obtain learning to further develop services to best meet the needs of rough sleepers.

- 3.4 Given the specific and urgent nature of this proposed pilot and the absence of any other proposals from other third sector providers in Edinburgh, there is unlikely to be an alternative available in the market which offers better value. The provision is a health and social care contract, which requires as a minimum the publication of a contract award notice and contract register entry to satisfy procurement regulations. Following the learning from this pilot, should the Council wish to mainstream the service a formal procurement process would be required.
- 3.5 The Council agreed to provide additional funding of £1.9 million for homelessness initiatives in the 2018-19 budget setting process. This proposal would require a further gross investment of £156,000 in 2019-20 to fund this pilot although it is estimated that up to £56,000 could be recovered through housing benefit. Further negotiations with the Scottish Government and Streetwork are required to establish how much housing benefit could be recovered against the Council's contribution.
- 3.7 During last year's winter period, the Scottish Government provided around £160,000 of funding for the Council to deliver rapid access accommodation through the reshaping of a bed and breakfast service at the Hopetoun Guest House. This proved to be very successful as detailed in the following report <file:///H:/Item 7.8 RAA Accommodation with Support.pdf> Following a co-production procurement exercise, the Council is now attempting to secure the mainstreaming of rapid access accommodation. This procurement exercise is in the evaluation stage and new services are anticipated to begin in April 2019.
- 3.8 This service would provide similar support to the rapid access accommodation described above and would provide an opportunity to deliver enhanced support and shelter provision for some of the most vulnerable people in the city. As detailed in the rapid access report from the link included, the provision of this type of accommodation allowed the Council to engage with service users, who were not accessing our services, and move the majority of them on to positive outcomes.
- 3.9 Over the winter period rapid access accommodation will be provided through both the Hopetoun Guest House (12 spaces) and the Salvation Army (around 15 spaces). During this period the Bethany Care Shelters (around 35-40 bed spaces) are in operation. However, following a series of rough sleeper counts and data taken from 3rd sector partners, it is estimated that around 80-120 people sleep rough in Edinburgh. This accommodation would provide further capacity to significantly reduce rough sleeping.
- 3.10 The Scottish Government has also agreed to fully fund the provision of a link worker (around £30,000) to support the development of this service. The worker would be employed by the Council for a period of a year using this funding, and would ensure that the Council carry out homeless assessments and support, where people are, which is key when building and maintaining relationships with vulnerable service users. They would also ensure the co-ordination of support and advocacy for service users

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 A reduction in rough sleeping.
- 4.2 An increase in positive outcomes for rough sleepers.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The Council is required to fund 50% of the costs of this proposal, around £156,000 from the 19/20 budget, in order to continue this project for the remaining six months of the years pilot.
- 5.2 There is no requirement to provide any funding to this service from the 18/19 budget.
- 5.3 There is a potential to recover part of the costs through housing benefits claims, this will require further negotiations with Streetwork and the Scottish Government. This is estimated to be approximately £56,000 which may reduce the Council's net contribution.

6. Risk, policy, compliance, and governance impact

- 6.1 None

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no negative equality or human rights impacts arising from this report.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no impacts on carbon, adaptation to climate change or sustainable development arising from this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 N/A

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Details of HARSAG's final recommendations can be found here:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report>.

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11. Appendices

11.1 None