

Report of:	Head of Housing and Partnerships
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Portfolio Leader:	Housing
Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet: 18/04/19

CABINET
18 APRIL 2019
HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING HOUSING PATHWAY PROJECT

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider using up to five Council flats to provide accommodation for the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Housing Pathway Project.

2 Recommendations

That

- 2.1 The Head of Housing and Partnerships be authorised to agree Terms and Conditions to let up to 5 Council flats to the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Housing Pathway Project Pathway Provider.
- 2.2 A review is undertaken following a 12 month operational period with regard to the transition of the licensees into tenancies in the long-term and subject of a future report.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

- 3.1 A joint project has been undertaken with Lichfield District Council to develop a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Pathway. The overall aim of the project is to support individuals off the street or out of precarious housing situations and ensure any accommodation offered is sustained in the long term, thus reducing incidence of rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.
- 3.2 Through the use of the Council's Flexible Homelessness Grant and potential government funding through Rough Sleepers Initiative an initial 2-year Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Housing Pathway project is being commissioned and developed.

- 3.3 The Provider will be commissioned to procure and maintain at least five units of accommodation. It is expected that this will be from the private rented sector. However, due to the size and availability of private rented properties within the District, and whilst an approach will also be made to Registered Providers to assist in the provision of suitable accommodation, it may be necessary to make available suitable Council accommodation. Given the make up of the client group i.e. single people it is suggested that up to 5 one-bedroom flats may be let to the Provider.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.4 The Council would agree terms via either a lease or management agreement to enable a Provider to take over the management of the flat for an initial period of 2 years. The Council would receive full rental income from the Provider during this time, including during any void periods. The Provider would charge rent to the tenants occupying the flat and an additional intensive housing management cost to cover any support needs. The Council will also negotiate a monthly charge, in addition to the rent attributable to the property for the increase in maintenance costs that may occur.
- 3.5 Under the management agreement the client will be licensee of the outreach provider however, it is envisaged that at a point in time that, provided the tenant is capable of sustaining a tenancy, the management agreement may be ended and the client will become an Introductory Council Tenant. The transition will need careful planning and it is suggested that the process to be followed is determined following a period of 12-month operation.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:
- (i) Promoting Prosperity – Increase housing choices and make best use of housing stock.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 A joint project has been undertaken with Lichfield District Council to develop a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Pathway. The overall aim of the project is to support individuals off the street or out of precarious housing situations and ensure any accommodation offered is sustained in the long term, thus reducing incidence of rough sleeping and repeat homelessness.
- 5.2 The client group have complex issues, difficulty in sustaining a tenancy, and may have been excluded from the Council's Housing Waiting list. Whilst there is a number of units of supported accommodation in the district including the Council's Shared Accommodation Project this only offers low level support.
- 5.3 Through the use of the Council's Flexible Homelessness Grant and potential government funding through Rough Sleepers Initiative an initial 2-year

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Housing Pathway project is being commissioned and developed.

- 5.4 The service will be developed with the customer at its heart and the Provider will adopt a variety of creative and innovative approaches to engage with individuals and involve customers in shaping the service. It will coordinate existing multi-disciplinary services to ensure a customer's needs are met, where gaps exist, it will work tenaciously to find solutions to bridge these gaps. It will be committed to developing and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders and the local community.
- 5.5 The Provider will be commissioned to procure and maintain at least five units of accommodation. It is expected that this will be from the private rented sector. However, due to the size and availability of private rented properties within the District, and whilst an approach will also be made to Registered Providers to assist in the provision of suitable accommodation, it may be necessary to make available suitable Council accommodation. Given the make up of the client group i.e. single people it is suggested that up to 5 one-bedroom flats may be let to the Provider.
- 5.6 The Council would agree terms via either a lease or management agreement to enable a Provider to take over the management of the flat for an initial period of 2 years. The Council would receive full rental income from the Provider during this time, including during any void periods. The Provider would charge rent to the tenants occupying the flat and an additional intensive housing management cost to cover any support needs. The Council will also negotiate a monthly charge, in addition to the rent attributable to the property for the increase in maintenance costs that may occur.
- 5.7 A key principle of Housing First is that the property is made available to the client, in a suitable location for the client preferably close to existing support networks and is not dependent on engaging with or completing a support plan. In most supported housing models clients are moved on to a tenancy or other permanent accommodation when they have completed a support plan and are considered capable of sustaining a tenancy. The issue with "move on" is that support networks may be lost and impacts on the client's ability to sustain the tenancy.
- 5.8 Under the management agreement the client will be licensee of the outreach provider however, it is envisaged that at a point in time that, provided the tenant is capable of sustaining a tenancy, the management agreement may be ended and the client will become an Introductory Council Tenant. The transition will need careful planning and it is suggested that the process to be followed is determined following a period of 12-month operation.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The report is based on the Local Authority receiving the current rent attributable to the property, reflecting any rent decreases or increases in line with policy. The

Council would still be held responsible for the maintenance of the property and therefore an agreement should be considered for the Council to be reimbursed for any additional maintenance costs occurred; current report proposes an additional £20-£30 charge per month for potential increases in maintenance costs. Any potential VAT implications are currently being reviewed.

6.2 Legal

Careful consideration would need to be given as to the type of tenancy or licence which is to be granted to the client to ensure security of tenure issues do not arise. If the client is to be given exclusive occupation of the flat then their status is likely to be that of a tenant rather than licensee.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

The provision of this type of accommodation will provide a “stable” living environment and help combat crime and anti-social behaviour.

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

There are a number of risks associated with the provision of Housing First accommodation. These risks can, however, be mitigated by robust management and the flat will be managed by a Provider that has experience in providing this type of accommodation along with the associated support.

6.8 Equality & Diversity

The provision of the accommodation arrangement for rough sleepers would be subject to Equality Impact Assessments by the Provider landlord.

6.9 Best Value

The use of the accommodation will only be actioned in the event other accommodation is not available within the private rented sector.

7 Appendices to the Report

None.

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

None