

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	14 July 2020
<b>Subject:</b>	Supporting rough sleepers and the hidden homeless: options for the way forward
<b>Report by:</b>	James Hill (Director of Housing Neighbourhoods and Building Services)
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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## 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The Cabinet Member for Housing requested officers to provide Cabinet with a report outlining the support in place for rough sleepers and street homeless prior to the COVID-19 emergency, the response in light of the COVID-19 emergency and the work underway to continue to support those individuals supported and the direction of travel for the longer term.
- 1.2. The report provides cabinet with an outline of
  - 1.2.1. The support in place prior to and during the COVID-19 crisis
  - 1.2.2. The interim plan
  - 1.2.3. The long term plan

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Cabinet note the provision in place prior to the COVID-19 crisis
- 2.2. That Cabinet commend the remarkable efforts of the local authority and partners to meet the call from government to provide safe and secure accommodation for rough sleepers and thank the wide range of public services, the voluntary sector, the local communities, members, officers and the Accor Hotel group & the local hotel management team in continuing to support the emergency provision in place
- 2.3. That Cabinet note the learning to be used to underpin the solutions moving forward
- 2.4. That Cabinet note the emergent MHCLG funding announcements for the interim and long term plan and the work with the MHCLG to co-produce the interim and long-term plan.

- 2.5. That Cabinet approve the interim plan subject to funding being made available, to last up to 12 months from the end of August 2020 and which includes these elements:
- 2.5.1. Use Private Rented Accommodation and purchased/sub-leased property at Local Housing Allowance rents for those who need only financial support
  - 2.5.2. Use HMOs through the HMO housing organisation for suitable for a private rental tenancy provided floating support is available.
  - 2.5.3. Use a hotel or accommodation block for those who need intensive onsite support that can best be provided in such a setting alongside security.
  - 2.5.4. Use no more than 18 spaces between Kingston Point and Hope House as the final accommodation option for those not in the above categories. This will be accompanied by intensive support, boundaries and ways to deal with antisocial behaviour.
- 2.6. That Cabinet note the resourcing commitment to implement the interim plan and endorse that the Assistant Director of Housing is asked temporarily to focus on the delivery of the plans, alongside the cross-party and multi-agency Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping Partnership Group ("The Partnership Group") to implement the plans.
- 2.7. Cabinet recognises that the potential cost of the interim plan is circa. £2.5m and that the Council are working with MHCLG to prepare a bid to the national fund made available for this purpose amounting to £105m, in the event that there remains a shortfall between estimated costs and funding identified, a further report will be prepared for Cabinet to consider prior to entering into any additional financial commitment .
- 2.8. Cabinet therefore delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Housing, working with the S151 Officer, to submit a bid for the funding to support emergency, interim and long-term accommodation through the mechanism identified in the letter from MHCLG on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (Appendix 3).
- 2.9. That Cabinet agrees the following as principles for the long-term plan:
- 2.9.1. All those in the interim accommodation to be supported to find move on accommodation and given the opportunity not to return to rough sleeping.
  - 2.9.2. Accommodation first, not accommodation only approach, with support levels tailored to individuals.
  - 2.9.3. Developing the accommodation and support model to provide learning and work opportunities.
  - 2.9.4. A range of accommodation and support ideally located in Portsmouth, based on Government's desire to build, buy and rent homes.
  - 2.9.5. A financially sustainable model.
  - 2.9.6. An approach that provides accommodation and support into sustainable housing but also supports the prevention of homelessness and those who remain on the streets.
  - 2.9.7. Evidenced based using all the learning and data available to create solutions.

- 2.10. That Cabinet agrees to ask Government to help it overcome key barriers that may impact on the long term plan, including:
- 2.10.1. Automatically paying Universal Credit to landlords taking part
  - 2.10.2. Making sure payments cover the full cost of rent or Local Housing Allowance, whichever is higher
  - 2.10.3. Suspend the rule that means under-35s claim at a single room rate
  - 2.10.4. Work with the City Council to devise plans to help future rough sleepers and to prevent homelessness
  - 2.10.5. Assist in helping the city house those on the waiting list and the homeless the City Council has statutory duties towards.
- 2.11. That Cabinet request the Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping Partnership Group to develop the long term plan, based on these principles, as outlined in the report.
- 2.12. This Cabinet approves that this report forms the basis of the jointly produced plan with MHCLG for exiting the current approach both in the interim and long-term.

### **3. Background - Statutory Responsibilities**

- 3.1. The Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 gives the City Council statutory responsibilities for homelessness. These involve advice and assistance to almost all households who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, but to offer accommodation only if set criteria are met.
- 3.2. If a homeless person has no entitlement to public funds, does not meet the priority criteria for need or is deemed to have intentionally caused their homelessness the City Council has no ongoing duty to provide accommodation.
- 3.3. People that sleep rough in the city and/or access homelessness services typically do not meet one or more of these statutory criteria. As a result the City Council has no statutory duty to house this group and are referred to as Non-Priority Homeless (NPH).
- 3.4. The City Council's statutory responsibilities are set out in its Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2020. The City Council's policy in how it allocates housing to those in housing need is contained in the Portsmouth Allocation Scheme - Affordable Homes For Local People.
- 3.5. As at 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 there are 150 households in temporary accommodation waiting for suitable social/affordable housing to become available and 2,233 on the housing register in varying degree of priority housing need. The COVID-19 crisis has impacted on the supply of social/affordable housing and the normal functioning of the wider housing system. It is likely that the numbers in housing need, to whom the City Council owes a housing duty, will rise as a result of the crisis.

- 3.6. Although the statutory requirements to provide accommodation are limited, successive administrations have sought to provide support to those rough sleeping and street homeless. Moving from the initial 'winter shelter' provision to one that now extends the provision all year round. This is now known as the Night Bed Service.
- 3.7. The Government also had a commitment to "*end the blight of rough sleeping by the end of the next Parliament*" (May 2024). The City Council also has tackling homelessness and its causes among its 2019 Corporate Priorities.
- 3.8. The current approach and detail is contained in the Rough Sleeping & Street Homelessness Strategy (2018-2020).
- 3.9. A cross member party and multi-agency Partnership Group which is independently chaired has oversight of the strategy and the implementation of the strategy
- 3.10. The homelessness work (statutory and non-statutory) also reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

#### **4. The support in place prior to the COVID-19 Crisis for NPH**

- 4.1. Portsmouth has had an all year round Night Bed Service for NPH since Dec 2017. This provides emergency shelter, and an opportunity for engagement with support for homeless individuals who would otherwise be rough sleeping. This service has developed since it began in response to demand and learning. Starting at 45 beds, by March 2020 it had increased to 57 beds split across Hope House, Milton Road and Kingston Point, Kingston Road. Two Saints and the Society of St James are commissioned providers for the services.
- 4.2. It also runs a Day Service, based at Yew House, Milton Road. This service complements the Night Bed Service by providing advice and support around housing needs during the daytime, in addition to practical support in terms of breakfast, showers, laundry facilities, lockers and IT access. The service was open between 8am and 4pm. However, opening hours were increased in late 2019 to 8am to 8pm, along with a 'Homeless Healthcare' pilot that enabled on-site healthcare. This has seen fewer ambulances attend the Day Service, reducing the need for hospital visits.
- 4.3. The funding for the services uses a mixture of funding sources. The City Council provides some general fund funding, Rough Sleeping Initiative grant funding from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and housing benefit entitlements linked to the accommodation. The nature of the funding remains short term with a dependency on grants which typically do not have certainty beyond each financial year.
- 4.4. A key issue for The Partnership Group as part of the implementation of the Rough Sleeping & Street Homelessness Strategy (2018-2020) was the exploration of an accommodation and support model with a longer term sustainable funding model.

- 4.5. The provision in place has been underpinned with strong data collection to help understand the problems and to inform the solutions. The Partnership Group have access to a suit of measures which over time have created an understanding of the level of need.
- 4.6. Over the 27 months between the service starting and the start of the COVID-19 crisis, 766 separate individuals used the service (plus 15 who booked a bed but did not arrive) with an average of six new users a week. This is a key piece of learning that helps understand why the level of demand has been felt for the accommodation offered during the COVID-19 crisis.
- 4.7. It should be noted that these arrangements are further complimented by support offered via the voluntary and community sector, for example in the provision of food, additional shelter during the winter periods and outreach support.

## **5. The support currently place during the COVID-19 crisis for NPH**

- 5.1. Prior to the lockdown measures, officers from Housing and Public Health had been discussing what impact COVID-19 would have for those in a shelter hostel setting with shared facilities. The initial focus was on ensuring that the provision remained open as a critical and essential service. Accommodation was identified that could provide a means of self-isolating but it became apparent that additional accommodation would be required.
- 5.2. On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020 the Prime Minister's Homelessness Advisor, Dame Louise Casey, issued an email called 'Everyone in' in which she mentioned how authorities were working with rough sleepers "to ensure that everybody is inside and safe". Government guidance tasked the City Council with providing all NPH with a place they could self-isolate in if required.
- 5.3. City Council officers stepped up their work to find suitable accommodation that would hold the 57 night bed users, plus the estimated 20-30 homeless sleeping on the streets and with capacity for additional demand.
- 5.4. At the end of March 2020 many accommodation providers were closing down operations, but after an initial deal with a hotel fell through, officers contacted Accor (owners of Ibis hotels). Both parties agreed to use Ibis Budget Fratton Way on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.
- 5.5. The facility was supported from the beginning by security contractors and the support providers (SSJ and Two Saints) from the merged day and night services.
- 5.6. People entered the hotel from 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020. All entrants then and since received temperature checks and Government guidance, especially about hand washing and social distancing.

- 5.7. As a result of continual growth in the number of people from Portsmouth who approached the City Council needing the service, Accor and the City Council agreed to use the Ibis Portsmouth on Winston Churchill Avenue in late April 2020.
- 5.8. A Temporary Hotel Management Group (THMG) was formed to oversee the emergency provision with links to the City Council's business continuity gold command structure. THMG and operational sub-groups included the Police, hotel security and Accor. The arrangement enabled a quick and agile response to the standing up of the provision and ongoing management of the provision.
- 5.9. The Partnership Group remain sighted on the work through updates and the chair of the partnership group in a member of THMG.
- 5.10. During lockdown, when shops were difficult to access and food outlets were closed, food was provided daily for all users, thanks to the Council, HIVE Portsmouth and many volunteers. Where users generally have higher support needs, they receive three meals a day to enable them to stay within the hotel as much as possible. Where users are more able to manage independently, residents receive breakfast and an evening hot meal every day.
- 5.11. Funding has come from the Government's COVID-19 non-ring fenced government support grant.

## **6. Learning for the provision of support before & during the COVID-19 crisis**

- 6.1. The Partnership Group had gained a lot of insight in overseeing the Night and Day services. The response to the COVID-19 crisis and the movement at speed to a self-contained accommodation model has created a unique opportunity to learn from the experience in managing the accommodation and in the opportunity to engage with those accessing the accommodation through the housing assessments.
- 6.2. Appendix 1 outlines the learning points and will be used in the interim and longer term plans.
- 6.3. As of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, approximately 214 individuals have been supported in the two Ibis Hotels and the property offered by a service provider.
- 6.4. Since 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020 an average of 16 new NPH individuals require accommodation, with an average of six per week moved to other mostly longer term accommodation arrangements (i.e. private sector housing).
- 6.5. This growth is in line with the picture previously seen in the Day and Night service and shows that people become homeless for a variety of reasons and may dip in and out of homelessness.
- 6.6. Everyone who presents as homeless is assessed by the City Council's Housing Needs, Advice and Support team and will complete a homelessness application. The information collected during the homelessness application process and

feedback from support staff in the hotels enables the correct support. That assessment is also vital in helping to inform the plans to support individuals going forward.

6.7. The results of the assessments provide a core set of data which should shape the internal and longer term plans. It enables the solution to be linked directly to the need of individuals.

6.8. The housing assessments and health assessments is gaining information that can be used to help find the type of accommodation and support required to meet the need. The data has shown that:

- 25% will require supported housing with intensive support
  - 28% will require supported housing or PRS with floating support
  - 39% can access the PRS with start-up financial support (e.g. rent deposits)
  - 8% have indicated they want to re-unite with family or friends
- In addition 14 people have no recourse to public funds.

6.9. Any learning going forward will need to consider the experience of the residents around the Ibis in Fratton. As has been reported in local media, local residents made complaints about the behaviour of some of the individuals using the hotel provision. The City Council issued a press release in response (Appendix 2).

6.10. All complaints were investigated by the council and action taken against users of the hotel where appropriate. The use of 24/7 security and support providers on site were all aimed to minimise the impact of facility, especially as everyone was becoming used to how it needed to function. In addition the City Council worked closely with the Police so that when incidents did occur they were investigated properly.

## **7. MHCLG Support and Funding**

7.1. On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2020, the MHCLG announced that a specialist taskforce has been created to lead the next phase of the government's support for rough sleepers during the pandemic. Spearheaded by Dame Louise Casey, the taskforce will work closely with councils in England on plans to ensure rough sleepers can move into long-term, safe accommodation once the immediate crisis is over, ensuring as few people as possible return to life on the streets. It aims to ensure that thousands of rough sleepers in emergency accommodation continue to receive the physical and mental health support they need they continue to self-isolate from the virus.

7.2. On 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the MHCLG announced a £433m programme to provide 6,000 new homes with support for rough sleepers, with 3,300 of those homes in the first year. Charities would receive a further £6m, with £700,000 earmarked for care leavers at risk of homelessness.

7.3. On the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, the MHCLG provided detail (Appendix 3) on the funding package to be made available to support the ongoing interim arrangements and the longer term plans for rough sleepers.

7.4. MHCLG's Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Advisers have been working with the City Council to help support and shape local plans. This includes how previously provided funding, such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative, can be repurposed now that the challenges have fundamentally changed.

7.5. Officers will continue to work with the MHCLG on all aspects of the work and any bids related to the interim as the detail of the funding availability emerges.

## **8. Moving Beyond the initial emergency COVID-19 crisis response**

8.1. The hotels were an immediate response to the COVID-19 situation and the requirement to bring 'everybody in'. Between the start of April and mid-June officers have focussed on setting up the arrangement, dealing with the growth in numbers, and ensuring that the arrangement was contractually secure for the emergency period. The opportunity has also been taken to gain information about individuals, their circumstances and where they could move on.

8.2. What has become apparent is that this solution was only suitable for a short period of time. The reasons for this are:

8.2.1. Cost - The costs for this emergency accommodation have been borne by the City Council's hardship fund, which was provided by the government. This fund is limited and needs to be used efficiently and effectively.

8.2.2. Hotels coming back to operation - The providers of the hotels, Accor, are a commercial organisation who have seen a large number of their hotels in the UK and beyond closed due to the COVID-19 crisis. Whilst the temporary use of them in Portsmouth has been on a commercial basis, they have confirmed their desire for the service to exit the hotels by the end of August 2020.

8.2.3. Sustainable arrangements - whilst the initial response was remarkable given the speed with which Portsmouth was required to respond the current accommodation has limitations and creates operational issues. The IBIS Fratton hotel provided an immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis but has limited space internally and externally beyond the self-contained bedrooms and the behaviours of some individuals has created negative feedback from residents living near the hotel. The interim and longer term plans will have the benefit of using all the learning as outlined in Section 6 of this report.

8.3. The City Council's Public Health team says NPH can be accommodated in a place where they have their own bedroom but access shared bathrooms and other facilities, provided the local outbreak plan identifies suitable isolation facilities in the event of a positive test for COVID-19. In addition, MHCLG in a letter dated 3 July said "all communal night shelters should remain closed at the present time."



Therefore, until lockdown has formally ended it would not be acceptable to provide NPH with shared bedrooms, and this is a model the City Council may wish to move away from regardless of an end to lockdown.

8.4. It is also clear that there are options which are impractical, these include

8.4.1. Exit from the hotel provision and return to the Day and Night Services

8.4.1.1. Consideration has been given to the emergency accommodation being ended and the service returning to the previous provision of 57 night beds at Kingston House and Hope House and the day service at Yew House. This solution would result in no new costs on the council surrounding the accommodation of this cohort. However this option would not provide a solution to the 92% of the hotel users (195 people) that, through assessment, have stated that they do not have accommodation to return to. The accommodation is also limited as it functioned preCOVID-19 with shared sleeping spaces. It is therefore not a practical option to exit from the hotels.

8.4.2. Exit from the hotel provision to a long term solution

8.4.2.1. Consideration has been given to the possibility of leaving the emergency accommodation and moving directly into a new, long-term model of accommodation and support. At this stage this is not practical for the following reasons:

8.4.2.1.1. Multi-agency involvement in the long term plan- It is proposed that The Partnership Group, supported by City Council officers, consider the complex problem of non-priority homelessness in the city, explore funding options and develop some principles upon which a long term plan can be based.

8.4.2.1.2. Support contracts - is significant flexibility within the Public Contracts Regulations (2015) to considerably vary the scope of existing contracts or enter into new arrangements via non-advertised negotiation where a true unforeseeable emergency arises on a short term basis. However, any new agreements, or changes to existing arrangements that constitute a material change in scope that cannot be linked to pre-existing options, or in the absence of such options increase the lifetime value of the contract by more than 10% of the overall lifetime value of the contract, the length of the contract commitment for the new arrangement / variation must be time limited to either cover the time it is needed for in the case of a short term requirement or in the case of a medium / long term requirement the time in which a compliant procurement process can be effectively undertaken, effectively limiting the duration to no more than 1 year.

8.4.2.1.3. At this stage whilst the MHCLG have announced longer term funding availability the detail is yet to be released. How any longer term plan is funded and can be made sustainable remains uncertain.

8.4.2.1.4. Time to find ideal locations and suitable accommodation.

8.5. It is clear that arrangements will need to be considered that continue to meet the holding position of 'everybody in' with an interim plan to continue to do so in a sustainable way whilst also working on a longer term plan. Both have interdependencies and overlaps.

## 9. Proposed Interim Plan

9.1. An interim plan which enables the service to move into a more sustainable solution whilst the permanent solution is planned, commissioned and delivered is required. Learning gained from the emergency accommodation has been used to shape what this interim solution should look like. It is proposed that the plan is:

- 9.1.1. Available from August (or as soon as possible afterwards), noting that different elements of the proposal will move at different timescales. Where it is possible to enable individuals to move into alternative accommodation that work is happening and will continue.
- 9.1.2. Financially sustainable - using MHCLG funding and council funding
- 9.1.3. Suitably located to maximise access to services.
- 9.1.4. Can facilitate the required support. It is vital that the support services can work with residents in the interim setting
- 9.1.5. Have the right amount of multi-agency support to help people to move on
- 9.1.6. Provide approximately 220 places. Although the approaches during the COVID-19 emergency continues to grow, it is unrealistic for the council to continue to grow this provision at that rate indefinitely. Therefore all efforts will focus on finding accommodation for the 220 people currently accommodated in the hotels.
- 9.1.7. Provide furnished individual rooms with bathrooms to ensure self-isolation in the event of an outbreak alongside communal space
- 9.1.8. Food dependent upon setting. Food will not be provided to those in HMOs where individuals have the facilities to manage their own food. Food may be provided in other settings if the logistics make it possible, and in a way which does not create a financial strain upon the City Council.

9.2. The interim plan includes the following solutions:

**9.2.1. Use of Private Rented Accommodation.** This is both a short-and long-term solution that can start quickly. As identified, approx. 82 people have been assessed as suitable for moving into the Private Rented Sector (PRS) with financial support. At current rates, no growth in numbers and a positive rental market within the city, this will take approximately 9 months to achieve. Whilst waiting for a permanent move on into the PRS, it is proposed that individuals are housed in one of the other interim options identified in sections 9.2.3 - 9.2.5 of this report.

9.2.1.1. The City Council is already taking steps to help the private rented sector. A pilot package of measures to help people into PRS was approved

in February 2020. 25 flats have been let to homeless since January 2020 using temporary resources provided by MHCLG access funding, although this will be skewed due to COVID19 lockdown. It is felt that between 75-100 placements per year into the PRS could be made by this team.

9.2.1.2. Although there is significant availability of PRS properties in the city, it is currently unknown how many of them would ultimately be suitable for homeless people. Despite the rise in the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate from April 2020, it is still well below the median rent in the private sector. Despite this barrier, it can be initially estimated that 10% (73) of available PRS tenancies may be suitable for NPH.

9.2.1.3. An issue outlined within the draft PRS Strategy agreed by the Cabinet in March 2020, is landlords' perception that rough sleepers are likely to be a high risk so landlords need assurance when offering them a tenancy. Ongoing discussion with landlords through groups like the Portsmouth & District Private Landlords Association will be important to work through the issues.

**9.2.2. Use purchased/sub-leased property at Local Housing Allowance rents.**

This is another long-term solution that can work quickly, albeit not before 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020. The City Council can buy or sub-lease property which it can make available for rent. This must be separate from the social housing provided through the allocations process, and the buyback properties being purchased to resolve temporary accommodation. Whilst waiting for a permanent move on into such accommodation, it is proposed that individuals are housed in one of the other interim options identified in sections 9.2.3 - 9.2.5 of this report.

**9.2.3. Use HMOs through a housing third party.** Approximately 60 people have been identified as suitable for a private rental tenancy but only where floating support is available. It is proposed that this group of people are placed into a housing third part solution on an interim basis which their long-term move is found. The aim is that the housing third party can provide at least 60 places at £25 per night per person. This requires a 12-month commitment.

**9.2.4. Use a large hotel or accommodation block.** At least 53 people have been identified as needing intensive onsite support which can only realistically be provided in a suitable communal setting where support, and security, can be available. A hotel or accommodation block is the proposed solution. Where locations have already been investigated, it appears that an initial commitment of at least 12 months is needed.

**9.2.5. Use Kingston Point and Hope House.** The current contractual arrangements with SSJ and Two Saints mean that these two facilities will remain available for NPH until at least the end of the financial year. However, the guidance from Public Health means that this capacity is 18 across both sites, not 57. These facilities should continue to be used for those NPH who cannot be safely housed in the other facilities, or have been excluded from the other facilities. This should

become the final accommodation option offered to rough sleepers who present with generally unacceptable behaviour, and a continuation here to exhibit dangerous or anti-social behaviour should result in exclusion from the service. The learning from the hotel is that intensive support, boundaries and a way to deal with antisocial behaviour must be provided if this is to work.

9.3. The resources required to deliver this interim plan are identified in section 10 of this report.

9.4. The successful delivery of this interim plan is not entirely within the control of the City Council as it depends upon a number of external factors and agreements being reached with third parties. The risks of the interim plan include:

- 9.4.1. Finding a suitable and affordable hotel or accommodation block within the timescale for a 9-12 month let
- 9.4.2. Reaching an agreement with the HMO housing third party
- 9.4.3. Enough private landlords wanting to rent to NPH
- 9.4.4. The gap between Local Housing Allowance and private rental rates being covered by Discretionary Housing Payment
- 9.4.5. Suitable City Council officer resources, both amount and skill level, to deliver the plan being available.

9.5. Other work

- 9.5.1. Some Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) have committed to working with the MHCLG and local authorities to support homelessness. Officers will continue to engage with housing associations to link the support on offer to the interim and long term plans
- 9.5.2. Officers are part of the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers working group which is a sub-group of the regional 'Protecting our vulnerable residents group' to look at the issues collectively across Hampshire. That work will continue in parallel to the need to quickly address the issue facing the city.
- 9.5.3. The City Council has been in discussions with owners of accommodation around the city, including University of Portsmouth. It is expecting its full accommodation offer to remain available and as many students as possible to be physically present in the city.
- 9.5.4. The City Council has the opportunity to look to its Housing Company, Ravelin to explore options for the building and leasing of housing to support NPH.

## **10. Support to deliver the interim plan**

10.1. An indicative financial model is attached in Appendix 4. At the time of submission of the report final agreements on the interim solution with providers had not been reached. However the costs are based upon discussions with a number of potential suppliers.

10.2. These costs are estimates at the time of writing and may be offset by several factors:

- 10.2.1. Negotiation with providers, either to reduce the rate or to reduce the commitment time
  - 10.2.2. Reallocation of resources from other activities. This would mean that other services may be reduced or postponed.
  - 10.2.3. More people leaving the system of their own volition
  - 10.2.4. The long term solutions (PRS and purchase of properties) becoming available more quickly than anticipated.
- 10.3. It is recognised that there is not a previously agreed budget for this work, and there are no funds for the Interim or long term plans agreed at this stage. However MHCLG has announced £105m for interim arrangements up to the end of this financial year alongside bids for funding to build homes in the longer-term. It has asked the City Council to 'co-produce' a plan for the interim and long-term.
- 10.4. It is also proposed that the Assistant Director of Housing is supported to focus primarily on the statutory and non-statutory homeless work, temporarily for the next three months, subject to review to provide a dedicated senior lead for the work. That will sit alongside the current resources allocated to the work, including the rough sleeping coordinator.

## 11. Long term plan

- 11.1. The interim plan represents the step between the emergency accommodation and the long-term/permanent solution. Whilst it is possible that some of these interim solutions may become long-term accommodation options, there are several reasons why a long term plan is still required. These are:
- 11.1.1. As is evidenced elsewhere in this report, the City Council changed the provision that was available for NPH within a few days, and did so under lockdown conditions. Whilst officers have learned a lot about the cohort, how it operates etc There is much more that needs to be learned to make a fully function system for the NPH which goes beyond the model of the past.
  - 11.1.2. It is unclear what impact and real change the emergency model is making to the lives of the NPH it is housing. Whilst a small number have been moved into other accommodation, it is unclear if this will give permanent change. Learning from the interim plan will provide more evidence.
  - 11.1.3. The needs and views of a wide range of stakeholders need to be taken into account, and evidence needs to be presented and considered. This exists through The Partnership Group.
- 11.2. The aim of the interim plan is that it will exist for approximately twelve months. This will allow time to begin to put in place the accommodation and support needed to ensure a long-term solution.
- 11.3. It is proposed that oversight of the details of the plan will lie with the cross-party, multi-agency Partnership Group. The Health and Wellbeing Board will remain sighted on the work through the updates arising from the Homeless Strategy and Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy.

- 11.4. The Rough Sleeping and Street Homeless Strategy creates a clear direction of travel prior to the COVID-19 crisis but it is recognised that the response to the COVID-19 has created a unique opportunity and collective desire to continue to hold those provided with emergency accommodation and avoid those individuals returning to rough sleeping.
- 11.5. Cabinet may further wish to reinforce the direction of travel for The Partnership Group, endorse the scope of work and reinforce the principles for the Group.
- 11.6. Cabinet may wish the partnership group to use the following principles as they develop a longer term plan and solutions, for example:
- 11.6.1. All those in the interim accommodation to be supported to find move on accommodation and given the opportunity not to return to rough sleeping.
  - 11.6.2. Accommodation first, not accommodation only approach, with support levels tailored to individuals
  - 11.6.3. Developing the accommodation and support model to provide learning and work opportunities
  - 11.6.4. A range of accommodation and support ideally located in Portsmouth based on Governments desire to build, buy and rent homes
  - 11.6.5. A financially sustainable model
  - 11.6.6. An approach that provides accommodation and support into sustainable housing but also supports the prevention of homelessness and those who remain on the streets
  - 11.6.7. Evidenced based using all the learning and data available to create solutions
- 11.7. And ask The Partnership Group to consider key questions, for example
- 11.7.1. Type of accommodation? Self-contained or shared?
  - 11.7.2. Location? In Portsmouth or wider?
  - 11.7.3. Min and mix size of 'spoke' accommodation? 10-40?
  - 11.7.4. Support? Day service and night beds, or 24/7?
  - 11.7.5. Support model? PCC or external?
  - 11.7.6. What is required from a successful support provider?
  - 11.7.7. How best to engage with the various groups around the city?
- 11.8. Alongside these, the following details should be considered:
- 11.8.1. The long term role for the private sector in providing move on accommodation
  - 11.8.2. The long term role of the City Council in the purchase, provision or lease of property through the expansion of existing mechanisms such as the buyback scheme.
  - 11.8.3. The long term role for other Registered Housing providers
  - 11.8.4. The minimum and maximum sizes of suitable properties for intensive support

11.8.5. The contractual model for accommodation and support.

11.9. The Partnership Group also can work with colleagues across Hampshire to ensure the benefit of a regional approach to addressing the issues collectively faced by local authorities across Hampshire.

## **12. Reasons for recommendations**

12.1. The current emergency COVID-19 response for NPH remains needs to remain and is a key response to the MHCLG call to provide accommodation for those that would otherwise be rough sleeping.

12.2. The report outlines the need to consider a more sustainable interim plan and solutions to support that commitment alongside the opportunity to use all the learning to inform a long term plan

## **13. Integrated impact assessment**

13.1. An Integrated Impact Assessment to be completed with final report (Appendix 5)

## **14. Legal implications**

14.1. The report and recommendations proposed will enable the City Council to further its compliance with the statutory duties contained in the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and in particular the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which requires housing authorities to focus efforts on preventing homelessness.

14.2. The recommendations proposed with the aim of delivering a longer term plan will also enable the City Council to keep its homelessness reviews and strategy plan relevant and up to date.

14.3. It is within the Cabinet's powers to approve the recommendations proposed.

## **15. Director of Finance's comments**

15.1. The rough sleeping team have identified a number of accommodation sources in order to implement the interim plan. The cost of this plan could potentially amount to circa £2.5m for 12 months of provision and the Council are working with MHCLG to prepare a bid to the recently announced £105m fund for this purpose.

15.2. At this stage it is unclear whether the City Council will receive grant funding from MHCLG that will be sufficient to cover the costs of the interim plan. If the Council were to receive an allocation at levels consistent with previous distribution methodologies for Rough Sleepers and Homelessness then a sum of circa £600,000 to £700,000 would be allocated..

15.3. The City Council are in a position where the current accommodation arrangements will end at the end of August and there remains funding uncertainty or that funding

has been announced and there is a shortfall between the cost of the plan and the funding identified. In the event that a funding shortfall arises, a further report will be required to be considered by Cabinet prior to entering to financial commitments beyond the funding identified.

15.4. It is expected that the on-going costs of making housing provision for the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers, after the interim plan has come to an end, will be lower than £2.5m per annum as the homeless transition through to the alternative accommodation envisaged in the longer term plan. In the event therefore that a funding shortfall arises for the interim plan, it may be of a shorter term nature.

Signed by:

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James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services



**Appendices:**
**Appendix 1 - Learning about the Night Bed Service 2017-2020**
**Appendix 2 - City Council press release June 2020**
**Appendix 3 - MHCLG letter 24 June 2020**
**Appendix 4 - Approximate cost model for the interim plan**
**Appendix 5 - Integrated Impact Assessment**
**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>PCC Homeless strategy</b>	<a href="https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/cou-homelessness-strategy-2018-to-2023.pdf">https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/cou-homelessness-strategy-2018-to-2023.pdf</a>
<b>PCC Rough Sleeping and Street Homeless strategy</b>	<a href="https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/street-homelessness-rough-sleeping-partnership-strategy-final-august-2018.pdf">https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/street-homelessness-rough-sleeping-partnership-strategy-final-august-2018.pdf</a>
<b>PCC Housing Allocation Scheme</b>	<a href="https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/portsmouth-housing-allocation-scheme.pdf">https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/portsmouth-housing-allocation-scheme.pdf</a>
<b>Information report on rough sleeping (9<sup>th</sup> March)</b>	<a href="https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s26241/Resources%20for%20Rough%20sleeping%20info%20report.pdf">https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s26241/Resources%20for%20Rough%20sleeping%20info%20report.pdf</a>
<b>Letter from Minister of Housing Luke Hall MP (26<sup>th</sup> March)</b>	<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876466/Letter_from_Minister_Hall_to_Local_Authorities.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876466/Letter_from_Minister_Hall_to_Local_Authorities.pdf</a>
<b>Conservative Party Manifesto 2019</b>	<a href="https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba_Conservative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf">https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba_Conservative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf</a>

<b>Announcement regarding Dame Louise Casey</b>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dame-louise-casey-to-spearhead-government-taskforce-on-rough-sleeping-during-pandemic">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dame-louise-casey-to-spearhead-government-taskforce-on-rough-sleeping-during-pandemic</a>
<b>Draft PCC Private Rental Sector Strategy</b>	<a href="https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/prs-strategy-report-appendix-1-strategy.pdf">https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/prs-strategy-report-appendix-1-strategy.pdf</a>
<b>MHCLG launch of Rough Sleeping taskforce</b>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dame-louise-casey-to-spearhead-government-taskforce-on-rough-sleeping-during-pandemic">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dame-louise-casey-to-spearhead-government-taskforce-on-rough-sleeping-during-pandemic</a>
<b>Portsmouth News story 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020</b>	<a href="https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/politics/coronavirus-how-portsmouth-councils-safe-space-rough-sleepers-caused-controversy-anti-social-behaviour-2891935">https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/politics/coronavirus-how-portsmouth-councils-safe-space-rough-sleepers-caused-controversy-anti-social-behaviour-2891935</a>

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/  
 rejected by ..... on .....

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 Leader of the City Council