

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Title of meeting: | Cabinet |
| Subject: | Information Update on the Rough Sleeping Work |
| Date of meeting: | 01 December 2020 |
| Report by: | James Hill, Director for Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services |
| Wards affected: | St Jude, St Thomas and Charles Dickens |

1. Requested by Councillor Darren Sanders, Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To provide Cabinet with an update on the successful bid and allocation to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) interim fund and its use
- 2.2. To provide Cabinet with an update on the successful bid and allocation to the MHCLG (NSAP) long term capital and revenue fund
- 2.3. For Cabinet to note the proposed use of the long term capital and revenue fund and to note the work and timescales attached to meeting the funding requirements

3. Update on bid for funding to MHCLG's Next Steps Accommodation Programme

- 3.1. A report was brought before Cabinet on 14 July 2020 titled "Supporting rough sleepers and the hidden homeless: options for the way forward". The purpose of that report was outline the support in place for rough sleepers and street homeless prior to the COVID-19 emergency, the response to the call for 'everybody in' in light of the COVID-19 emergency and the work to continue to support those individuals and the direction of travel for the longer term.
- 3.2. Therefore this report is solely focussed on the issue surrounding those who the City Council does not have a formal duty to support in finding housing under various legislation, and are referred to as Non-Priority Homeless. Those whom the council has established, or is in the process of establishing, that it has a formal duty to support will continue to be provided with temporary accommodation in the usual way, despite the rise in numbers as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

- 3.3. The recommendations agreed within that report included the delegation of authority to the Assistant Director of Housing, working with the S151 Officer, to submit a bid to NSAP for the funding to support emergency, interim and long-term accommodation.
- 3.4. Subsequent to the decision, officers worked with MHCLG to co-produce a plan which met the strategic interim and long term plans outlined by the Cabinet decision and the desired direction of travel of MHCLG and the City Council in reducing the number of rough sleepers within the city. Officers submitted a bid on 20 August 2020 to NSAP, alongside other authorities and against both a fixed funding source and MHCLG's bid criteria.
- 3.5. Throughout the process officers have regularly engaged with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Preventing Homelessness through the exit strategy management group. In addition group leaders and the City Council's 'Gold Command' have been updated and opposition spokespeople for Housing and Preventing Homelessness have met with officers on a fortnightly basis which included updates on this work. Finally the Street Homeless Partnership Board has continued to meet on a regular basis and has been engaged in the long term plan.

4. NSAP Interim funding and pathway

- 4.1. A bid for NSAP interim funding for the remainder of financial year 2020/21 was made. Confirmation was received in mid-September that the council had been awarded £1,565,427, the seventh highest allocation in England.
- 4.2. This funding has been used to support the emergency hotel accommodation during August and September, and fund the interim pathway model. This included the use of 60 HMO rooms and two intensive support accommodation properties on Elm Grove and St Michael's Road. These intensive support accommodation were previously used as student accommodation and leased on a 12 month basis whilst a more permanent solution was considered. A third property had been identified for the pathway but is not currently not available for use.
- 4.3. Residents and stakeholders in both locations were written to before the interim accommodation was used, and ward councillors have been appraised throughout. A temporary planning application was also submitted.
- 4.4. To date the operation within the private rented accommodation, HMOs and intensive support accommodation has gone very well. Service users have somewhere stable in which to settle and be supported whilst they prepare to move on to more permanent and settled accommodation, and the number of reported issues have been low. The number of complaints from neighbouring residents has been very low and ward members are not reporting more than a handful of issues.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

4.5. In summary, the exit of service users from the emergency hotel accommodation was completed by 16th September. The interim funding provides the following model funded until the 31st March 2021

- HMO - 60 rooms
- Elm Grove & Registry - up to 60 rooms
- Hope House - 7 rooms
- Kingston Point - 11 rooms

4.6. Although not funded from the NSAP interim funding approximately 40 individuals were supported from the emergency hotel accommodation to access the private rented sector

4.7. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness wrote to all involved in the emergency response, exit and standing up of the interim arrangements. The letter highlighted the efforts involved in the response to date. (Appendix A)

5. NSAP Capital & Revenue funding and long-term pathway

5.1. A bid for capital funding was submitted to support the purchase of properties within the pathway. This totalled £2,152,100 and the council was informed at the end of October that, subject to final verification, it had been successful in receiving funding.

5.2. A bid for revenue funding to support the operation of the pathway within the sites purchased by the capital was submitted totalling £2,456,303. The council was also successful in receiving funding linked to the capital projects, again subject to final verification. The funding covers the period 31 March 2021 - 31 March 2024. Together, these form the sixth highest allocation to any council in England.

5.3. With the confirmation of the capital and long-term funding, officers are working to implement the bid and purchase property within the conditions set out. This sets a clear expectation that properties will be purchased and available for use by 31 March 2021.

5.4. As part of the lease discussions with the current owners of the three identified interim properties, confidential discussions were also had regarding options for the possible purchase of the properties. These negotiations were subject to a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) until early November.

5.5. On the 9th November 2020 the NDA was released allowing disclosure in this report that the NSAP long term funding enables the discussion with the property owner to continue involving the purchase by the City Council of the two properties located in Elm Grove, namely 155 - 157 Elm Grove & Kingsway House, Elm Grove and the Registry Building at St Michael's Road.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

5.6. Officers are undertaking preparatory work to purchase the identified properties, including:

- 5.6.1. Preparing to submit a planning application for the change of use for the properties so that they can be used for temporary homeless accommodation
- 5.6.2. Undertaking pre-application consultation with local residents
- 5.6.3. Undertaking building surveys and valuations

5.7. Subject to the work currently being undertaken by officers, a formal decision will be required to purchase the properties. The properties are likely to be held within the Housing Revenue Account or Housing General Fund, for use as homeless accommodation and adopting the pathway model. The decision report including the financial appraisal is expected to be brought to either the Housing Portfolio decision meeting in January 2021 or to a Special Housing Portfolio decision meeting arranged specifically for this acquisition decision.

5.8. Subject to the formal decision outlined in 5.7 of this report, it is anticipated that an application will be put before the planning committee in February 2021.

5.9. The Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Partnership Group will continue to be sighted on this work.

5.10. The existing Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018 - 2020 was planned to be updated during the second half of 2020. That has been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic and that will now be undertaken in 2021. There remains the opportunity in doing so for a single strategy to be created combining the City Council's statutory homelessness strategy with the street homelessness and rough sleeping work.

6. Summary

6.1. Though the NSAP funding requirements provide a challenging timescale the priority to deliver against the timescales is fully understood by the relevant services within the key directorates involved in the work; Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services and the Regeneration Directorate.

6.2. The MHCLG and Homes England will monitor the delivery against the funding allocation and issues impacting on the delivery against the timescales will be discussed with them in addition to the relevant Cabinet members and Cabinet as appropriate.

6.3. It is anticipated that an update to Cabinet would be brought in February/March 2021.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

.....
Signed by **James Hill, Director for Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services**

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Letter of thanks to support partners

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:

| Title of document | Location |
|---|---|
| Cabinet Report 14 July 2020 "Supporting rough sleepers and the hidden homeless: options for the way forward". | https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=4504&Ver=4 |
| MHCLG NSAP funding allocation October 2020 | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/next-steps-accommodation-programme-guidance-and-proposal-templates#history |
| Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018-2020 | https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Street-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Partnership-Strategy-2018-2020.pdf |
| Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023 | https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Homelessness-Strategy-2018-2023.pdf |