

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 for Housing and Preventing Homelessness
Subject:	Update on rough sleeping pathway
Date of meeting:	26 July 2021
Report by:	James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services.
Report Author(s):	Paul Fielding - Assistant Director - Housing Nicola Clannachan - Interim Head of Housing Needs, Advice & Support
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by Cllr Sanders Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness

2. Purpose

2.1. To update councillors on the progress of the rough sleeping pathway, specifically:

- 2.1.1. The new rough sleeping accommodation and interim support
- 2.1.2. The new Rough Sleeping Advice Hub at Kingsway House
- 2.1.3. The new support contract for rough sleeping services within the pathway.

3. Information Requested

3.1. Background

- 3.1.1. The 14 July 2020 Cabinet Report on rough sleeping services in the city (updated in an information report of 01 December 2020) was the basis of a medium and long term approach which led to a bid to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Next Steps Action Programme (NSAP) and resulted in Portsmouth receiving £4,608,403 of funding. From April 2021 the NSAP is called the Rough Sleeping Action Programme (RSAP)
- 3.1.2. This led to a rough sleeping 'pathway', proposed purchase of property, and procurement of support services, all of which was presented to the Housing and Preventing Homelessness decision meeting on 25 January 2021.

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3.2. Securing the new buildings

- 3.2.1. The January report enabled three former student accommodation blocks (Registry Office, Elm Grove Library and Kingsway House) to be purchased, subject to planning permission, with the support of Housing Revenue Account and NSAP funding. The City Council's Planning Committee gave that permission on 09 March 2021 and the purchase was completed on 24 March 2021.
- 3.2.2. Since the purchase was completed, extensive work has been undertaken to turn these former student blocks into places that can support those moving away from living on the streets, many of which have complex needs.
- 3.2.3. As of the 14 July 2021 there were a total of 81 people being accommodated within the Pathway in the following locations;
- The Registry - 31
 - 155 Elm Grove - 14
 - Kingston Point - 10
 - The Housing Network - 26

3.3. Ending the temporary use of rooms in Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO)

- 3.3.1. The Cabinet report on 14 July 2020 Cabinet approved an interim plan, lasting up to 12 months from the end of August 2020, and which included the use of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) through an HMO housing organisation. In addition to accommodation, floating support has also been provided to help service users to live safely within the accommodation, and the City Council's Housing Needs, Advice & Support service also helps ex rough sleepers find suitable and sustainable accommodation in the private rental sector.
- 3.3.2. In August 2020 decision a 12 month contract was negotiated with The Housing Network (THN) for the provision of 60 rooms in HMOs for the period to end on 31 August 2021.
- 3.3.3. With the purchase of the pathway properties outlined in section 3.2 of this report the demand for the services provided through THN has been removed and so this specific arrangement will cease. Any service user who remains in these HMOs in August will either be supported into private rental sector accommodation, or be supported within the pathway accommodation.

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3.3.4. This report would like to record its thanks The Housing Network for working with the City Council in providing this service during the last year. HNAS officers will continue to work with them, and similar organisations, to find different accommodation options for those who are homeless.

3.4. Providing interim support

3.4.1. The January report also approved the interim provision of support services for people living in the blocks. This was because permanent provision would not be available until the new contract started in October 2021. This new contract was delivered through the City Council's normal procurement processes and using the RSAP funding.

3.4.2. Support continues to be based around the individual and focused on a wide range of needs. This includes the 'Homeless Healthcare' project led by the City Council's Public Health service and funded by Public Health England.

3.4.3. This report would like to record its thanks to the interim service providers (Society of St James and Two Saints) and a wide range of City Council officers in Housing and other support services for their work during this interim period; many of whom worked outside their normal roles, to deliver the service since April 2020.

3.5. Future support

3.5.1. One of the concerns raised by the providers of interim support has been the inability to deliver secure support due to the short-term nature of funding. The new contract aims to address that concern by being in place until April 2024. In summary the new contract encompasses:

- **Outreach support** for individuals currently rough sleeping,
- **In reach support** staffing for those at The Registry, Kingsway House and Elm Grove Library, and
- **A Rough Sleeping Advice Hub at Kingsway House.** This will provide daytime assessment and support for rough sleepers and a 'No Second Night Out' service, of emergency accommodation with rapid assessment for new rough sleepers.

3.5.2. The overall service is funded from a combination of RSAP funding and existing budgets within the Council's general fund. The key principles of the service are:

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all individuals in the Pathway, including appropriate 24 hour oversight and intervention;
- Delivering flexible and person-centred support, responding to varying individual needs;

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- Successful and meaningful support to overcome the complex barriers faced by rough sleepers in securing and sustaining housing;
- Genuine and effective multi-agency working with all relevant partner agencies and professionals to develop a "Team round the Accommodation" approach; Offering tangible social value, seeking to promote and enhance the opportunities available to people affected by homelessness and to build positive and meaningful relationships with the local community that are of benefit to the whole city.

3.5.3. The successful bid was received from The Society of St James and was determined to best deliver upon those principles. In particular it provided:

- Opportunities for volunteering and mentoring, supporting rough sleepers through other services and initiatives that it delivers, and a commitment to delivering a minimum of six awareness talks to local community groups in Portsmouth each year.
- Weekly meetings to ensure a smooth transition for people using the service, and
- A good understanding of the needs of service users from the outset of the contract.

3.6. The Rough Sleeping Advice Hub

3.6.1. The provision of services for those who are rough sleepers and street homeless to access during the day has been provided by the City Council for a number of years prior to the pandemic. It has been provided through a contract with a support provider (SSJ) and financed through the general fund. The funding supports the provision of the Homeless Day Service and some outreach services.

3.6.2. Currently the Homeless Day Service is being provided from Yew House. However, as a result of the contractual changes outlined, the new service will be co-located with the rough sleeping pathway services at Kingsway House.

3.6.3. Although the location will change, the service, an open access drop in offering a safe space to address the homelessness needs of rough sleepers where they can receive personalised support, will continue. This includes;

- Washing and laundry facilities,
- Lockers to store personal possessions,
- 1-2-1 appointments in the afternoons,
- Offering personalised support depending on individuals' needs, and
- Making referrals for supported housing.

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3.6.4. The Rough Sleeping Advice Hub will operate from Kingsway House from 01 November 2021, with no change in how this is financed. More details on this will be agreed with the support provider and communicated to service users and councillors in due course.

3.7. Oversight of services

3.7.1. Once the new support contract has started, SSJ will meet with commissioners from the City Council on a quarterly basis to discuss

- delivery and performance,
- consider any relevant strategic or operational matters,
- safeguarding concerns,
- community issues and
- the key performance measures of the contract

3.7.2. SSJ will be required to provide a written report seven days in advance of each quarterly meeting to inform and focus discussions.

3.7.3. The performance measures will be used to understand the work and continuously improve outcomes for service users. SSJ will work with the City Council to collate the relevant data from its operations to inform the measures, which will be updated on a monthly basis. SSJ will also assist with any data returns required as a result of funding allocated by central government for the service.

3.7.4. The reports will include the number of people successfully moving on from the accommodation pathway, evictions from the service and unplanned placement endings (such as any abandoned placements). The duration of placements and the responsiveness of the provider in assessing service users' individual needs and putting appropriate support plans in place will also be measured.

3.7.5. Additionally, there are performance measures related to the outcomes for individuals who have moved on from the service, understanding how successfully they have been able to sustain their new housing placements and whether any have subsequently become homeless again, or have been re-referred back into homeless support services.

3.7.6. In line with its duties, the city's Health and Wellbeing Board will be provided with updates and statistics about the service as the contract progresses.

3.7.7. The Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Partnership Group will also receive updates on the progress and impact of the new contract and service.

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Signed by James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices: None

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
Supporting Rough Sleepers - Cabinet Meeting July 2020	Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 14th July, 2020, 12.00 pm Portsmouth City Council
Pathway for rough sleepers and purchase of associated properties - Housing and Preventing Homelessness Cabinet Meeting January 2021.	Agenda for Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness on Monday, 25th January, 2021, 3.30 pm Portsmouth City Council