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**To:** Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

**Date:** 20 February 2020

**Subject:** Housing and Homelessness Update

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## **1 Purpose of note**

- 1.1** To provide an overview update to Scrutiny Board on progress made in delivering the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan
- 1.2** To provide a more detailed update specifically on progress made to tackle Rough Sleeping and the commissioning of Homelessness Support Contracts.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1** Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) are recommended to consider the updates and progress outlined in this report and identify appropriate recommendations for the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing.

## **3 Rough Sleeping update**

- 3.1** In Spring 2019 Coventry City Council secured funding from MHCLG through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) to employ a Rough Sleeping Coordinator and two outreach workers; one based with the Migrant & Refugee Centre and having a remit to work with those who have no recourse to public funds. The team have been working to deliver the new Rough Sleeping Strategy that was agreed by Cabinet in December 2019.
- 3.2** Previously in Coventry many agencies were supporting rough sleepers independently and were fragmented from each other. The team have worked hard to bring people into shared space to ensure a joined up and co-ordinated approach. The team work daily with The Salvation Army Rough Sleeper team and The Arc based at 'Steps for Change' in the City Arcade. Other close partners include Crisis Skylight, Change, Grow Live (CGL), The Cyrenians, WM Police, DWP, Council street cleansing and enforcement teams, Langar Aid House, Coventry Winter Night Shelter, Jesus Centre, the probation service, Coventry Comfort Carers, Turnaround and Kairos.
- 3.3** During the first six months of operating the team have got to know the individual rough sleepers and their needs as part of a coordinated case-management approach whilst building rapport with them individually. A requirement of the RSI funding is that councils undertake unofficial counts every two months as well as the formal annual count in November. The outcome of these counts is below:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| July 2019      | – 58 people sleeping rough                         |
| September 2019 | – 42 people sleeping rough                         |
| November 2019  | – 24 people sleeping rough (official annual count) |
| January 2020   | – 20 people sleeping rough                         |

The above numbers are snapshots on a particular night, but the team estimate that about 200 individuals may have slept rough in Coventry at some during 2019.

- 3.4** Since July 2019 the team has helped accommodate 45 rough sleepers directly with a further 16 accommodated as part of the Housing First pilot. Of these 45 individuals 43 of them have not returned to sleeping rough. The team have also supported 18 rough sleepers who had no recourse to public funds to gain settled or pre-settled status, thus entitling them access to public services. The Rough Sleeper Action Group has been recently established with partners supporting people to move on by discussing the current most entrenched rough sleepers in the city in order to find individual solutions to resolve their issues.
- 3.5** In late 2019 the team secured additional funds from MHCLG to provide short term stays for those who were between temporary accommodation and Housing First flats to avoid them returning to the street for periods while between properties. Recognising the team's progress, further funding of £464,899 has been secured for 2020/21 and includes extending the current fixed term contracts, 4 additional outreach workers, a part time nurse, personalised budgets and fund for additional beds. This new funding will enable the team to build on their success to date and work with a greater number of rough sleepers in 2020 to get people off the streets.

#### **4 Commissioning of Homelessness Support Contracts update**

- 4.1** In 2019 Cabinet approved the recommendation to redesign and re-procure all current housing and homelessness commissioned provision. This decision recognised the complex and specialist nature of providing good quality floating and accommodation-based support services and the need to move away from support only being available once people were in crisis.
- 4.2** As such, each of the lots in the new contracts are based on the positive pathways approach which provides a holistic framework including universal prevention, targeted prevention and early help, crisis prevention and relief (with floating support), specialist accommodation for move-on and recovery, and sustainable housing supply.
- 4.3** Coventry City Council has now awarded the four contracts for the provision of housing related support services. The initial contract period is 01/04/20 – 31/03/23 with possible extension periods.
  - Lot 1 - Awarded to The Salvation Army for complex needs supported accommodation and assertive outreach.
  - Lot 2 - Awarded to People, Potentials, Possibilities (P3) for family's floating support.
  - Lot 3 - Awarded to St Basil's for young peoples (18-25) supported accommodation and floating support.
  - Lot 4 - Awarded to People, Potentials, Possibilities (P3) for older singles (over 25) floating support.
- 4.4** The service is currently working through mobilising the contracts and is on course to go-live in April 2020 as planned. Part of this mobilisation includes possible TUPE implications for contracts 2 and 4 and the new providers are in discussion to complete this. Contracts 1 and 3 were won by the incumbents; and though the new services are different to the existing services there will be minimum disruption in terms of transition.
- 4.5** Performance indicators, monitoring and contract management provisions have been included in the contract specification/conditions for all of the contracts. The team are currently working through mobilisation including defining and agreeing criteria and referral routes into the services. All four services will go live on Monday 6 April 2020.

## 5 Strategy and Action plan update

5.1 Below is a brief update on key areas of work related to the delivery of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action plan.

| Area of work                                     | Progress  | Next steps  |
|--|---|---|
| Operational data                                 | Data on temporary accommodation now confirmed accurate with daily reconciliation and checks.<br>Data and reporting across the service has improved significantly.   | Continue to develop projections to understand future accommodation need (by number of properties, size and support needs).  |
| Review Homefinder Allocations Scheme             | Engagement with Registered Providers and staff has continued. Public consultation survey has closed with 486 responses. Cabinet approval sought on 18 <sup>th</sup> February.   | Work with registered providers on implementation in Autumn 2020.  |
| Procure ICT case management system               | Providers will be evaluated between now and April 2020. The new system will deliver a unified case management system across all Homelessness teams.   | Select and award for the new system and begin the technical implementation. This is intended to go live in Autumn 2020.   |
| Reduce cost of expensive Temporary Accommodation | Households have been consistently moved from more expensive accommodation to higher quality and lower priced accommodation over the past year.<br>Reduction in costs across providers of TA is in excess of £1m per year. | Further reduce costs and use of expensive TA as we move clients into more suitable Council-led schemes such as Caradoc Hall, family property acquisitions and future property projects. |
| Reduce use of B&Bs for families                  | All families moved out of B&B accommodation into more suitable placements. No families placed by Housing team into B&Bs for more than a few days in emergency since September 2019.                                       | Maintain this achievement and work with services across the Council to end the use of B&B where their duties are owed.  |
| Property acquisitions                            | Close to letting 3 properties that have been acquired directly by the Council for use as temporary accommodation for larger families.   | Further two properties currently being worked on and brought up to standard – intention to let all properties by end March 2020.  |
| Refurbishment properties                         | 18 properties have now been let and families moved in. These are a higher standard and much lower cost compared to previous properties used as TA.  | Further properties awaiting letting dates with Citizen. 13 additional properties have been identified and will be let by April 2020   |
| Caradoc Hall                                     | Completion of the Lease including Fire Safety Strategy. Significant refurbishment works including fitting of a sprinkler system and fire doors have all been completed and independently inspected.                       | Council's Housing and Homelessness team will continue to work closely with the building manager's Housing Team to maintain over 90% occupancy in the building.                          |

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|   | Families started to move in before Christmas and the building is now fully let.  | Projected annual saving of £1.1m  |
| Discharge Homeless Duty into the PRS policy | Reviewed and updated policy has been completed. Updates reflect changes to legislation and the code of guidance.   | Team will continue to offer private rented sector accommodation where they can make a suitable offer.   |
| Temporary Accommodation charging policy     | Proposals to charge households a fair contribution towards their accommodation costs have been consulted upon.   | At time of writing consultation responses are being considered with intention to formulate recommendations for Cabinet in March.  |
| Frontline operational plan                  | Plan developed to increase the performance of the frontline service, especially to increase the total number of homelessness preventions.  | Monitor impact of planned changes to appointment processes, triage process and referral pathways.   |
| Exploring alternative TA provision          | Proposal being developed for new Council provision for single homeless people. Potential proposals indicate this could save money and improve outcomes for clients by providing more suitable accommodation and greater support. | Work up detailed business case for proposals including financial, legal and property management considerations. Outline proposal will be presented to Cabinet and Council seeking approval. |

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| Housing Advisers Programme | Successful bid for LGA grant money to fund research and development to increase the number of affordable permanent homes in the city. Could see investment into existing development fund, housing company, partnership with Registered Provider or similar. | Work with appointed provider, senior members and officers to determine best mechanism for delivery of housing. |
| Frank Walsh House          | 44 bed ex-sheltered scheme home owned by Citizen which is currently being refurbished to accommodate homeless families.  | Refurbishment should be completed and the building open in April 2020.<br>Projected annual saving of £0.5m     |

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