

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET MEMBER – COMMUNITIES AND HEALTH

24 JUNE 2020

Report of the Executive Director - Commissioning, Communities and Policy

KEEPING EVERYONE IN – DERBYSHIRE HOMELESSNESS COVID-19 RESPONSE

1. Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on work that is taking place to support the homeless in Derbyshire during the current pandemic and to seek approval for funding to continue Derbyshire's Covid-19 homelessness response - 'Keeping Everyone In' - a call to arms recovery service.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 Background

On 23 March 2020, the Government asked all councils in England to bring in everyone who was rough sleeping, and subsequently everyone who became homeless during the lockdown period. An urgent decision, to provide funding to support district and borough councils in securing and providing emergency accommodation for rough sleepers, taken by the Executive Director for Commissioning, Communities and Policy, is the subject of a separate report to this meeting.

In Derbyshire, district and borough councils have brought in 80 people to date, and, like the rest of the country, the majority have been placed in hotel accommodation. At the start of the crisis, district and borough councils and the County Council worked together to collaborate on the temporary acquisition of hotels to create much needed extra housing capacity to shield a large portion of the homeless and rough sleeping cohort. This jointly funded initiative, despite its challenges has proven to be a major success and several agencies and organisations including homeless and rough sleeping out-reach services, drug and alcohol teams, NHS teams, Police and council housing staff have all worked together to look after some of the most vulnerable people in society through the worst times of the Covid-19 crisis.

This partnership response is now at a crossroad point. The hotel provision, although effective, cannot be retained beyond the end of June 2020. In addition, partners do not expect the 'everyone in' initiative to continue much further. The people brought in need an offer of support to help them through the next phase

which will require the necessary resources to be put in place to support and re house as many people as possible into longer term accommodation.

Without a boost in support services and an increased supply in accommodation, most of the people accommodated in hotels, guest houses and B&B's at the current time, will have nowhere to go, and current support services will be unable to provide the care and expertise required for the amount of people being released onto the streets. This is unacceptable to partners who have been involved in supporting the homeless cohort during the lockdown.

2.2 'Keeping Everyone In' Proposals

Work is now taking place to build on the collaborative approach that has been nurtured over the last few months and the experience of key partners involved in the development and delivery of homelessness support. Proposals to put in place a recovery service - 'Keeping Everyone In' as part of Derbyshire's Covid-19 homelessness response are now in development. Priorities for the ongoing response are to:

1. Put in place the necessary support to help people find accommodation and then keep them in, to prevent further homelessness and negate the impact on key services and the public purse.
2. Create the necessary housing capacity in the supply chain including council temporary accommodation, social housing, private rented accommodation, refuge spaces and supported accommodation.
3. Continue with the full collaborative approach taken between sectors and embed this into the ongoing recovery and beyond.

Proposals will see the current partnership of district and borough councils, the County Council, key public sector agencies, Pathways and P3, providing an intensive and wrap-around support service to a cohort of approximately 60 homeless people in Derbyshire who have been placed in temporary accommodation by local authorities during the current pandemic. These individuals are currently experiencing overlapping and challenging issues such as offending, drug and alcohol misuse and poor mental health.

Pathways will focus support in Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bolsover with P3 will cover the remaining parts of the county. P3 currently deliver the Derbyshire Rough Sleeper Service (DOT). The new recovery service will work closely with the Derbyshire Rough Sleeping Outreach Team as they are currently engaged with this cohort, learning from their involvement, experience and local knowledge and ensuring a smooth transition for the individual from service to service. This will in turn inform delivery using a Link Worker model.

The experience of other services who currently deliver activity across the county will also be harnessed, enabling this cohort to access and maintain accommodation and with intensive person-centred support, move towards a positive change in their circumstances with improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

The cohort, for which this service is intended, is a complex group for whom existing provision will not sufficiently meet their needs, and who therefore “fall between the gaps” or receive services unsuitable for their level of need and/or circumstances. There is also the acknowledgement that existing services that may be able to meet the needs of this group are already at capacity and in many cases operating waiting lists, thus creating a barrier to timely access.

The new recovery service will be delivered on a county-wide basis covering both urban and rural areas over a twelve-month period. The minimum anticipated cost of proposals is currently estimated to be in the region of £224,000 which will support the funding of six Link Workers and one Senior Link Worker. Specialist Link Workers, including a Mental Health Nurse and a Specialist Addictions Support Worker, which are estimated to cost in the region of £57,000 and £45,000 respectively are recognised as potential excellent additions to the team and would provide a comprehensive service to the cohort that have been identified should additional funding be made available.

The County Council’s financial contribution to proposals is estimated to be no more than £125,000. However, as proposals are at an early stage of development, the Council will also be required to support the ongoing collaborative partnership response, helping the shaping and delivery of proposals to support homeless people in Derbyshire, they continue to emerge. Given the nature of the emerging response and the ongoing development of the recovery service, it is recommended further reports on progress be brought to a future Cabinet Member – Health and Communities meetings in due course.

3. Financial Considerations

The total cost of proposals to put in place a recovery service - ‘Keeping Everyone In’ – across the county to support Derbyshire’s Covid-19 homelessness response is approximately £224,000. The County Council’s contribution to the delivery of the recovery service is estimated to be no more than £125,000. The Council has received £37m of additional Government support towards the costs of Covid-19, this resource will have been spent by the middle of July. The Council will require additional support from Government over the coming months.

4. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; legal, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental, human resources, health, property and transport considerations.

5. Background Papers

Papers and files held in the Policy and Research Division

6. Key Decision

No.

7. Is it necessary to waive the call in period

No.

8. Officer's Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities:

1. Note the work that has taken place during the current Covid-19 pandemic to support homeless people in Derbyshire through the provision of emergency accommodation and support.
2. Support the ongoing Derbyshire Covid-19 response and the County Council's continued involvement in collaborative approaches to support homeless people across the county.
3. Approve £125,000 funding for proposals to establish a recovery service 'Keeping Everyone In' as set out in the report to be met from the funds received from the Government's Covid-19 Emergency Support Fund.
4. Receive further reports on progress in due course.

Emma Alexander
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