

# **DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **MEETING OF THE CABINET MEMBER – COMMUNITIES AND HEALTH**

**24 JUNE 2020**

### **Report of the Executive Director - Commissioning, Communities and Policy**

#### **URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMISSIONING, COMMUNITIES AND POLICY FUNDING TO SECURE AND PROVIDE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS IN DERBYSHIRE DURING THE COVID19 LOCKDOWN**

##### **1. Purpose of the Report**

To note the urgent decision taken by the Executive Director of Commissioning, Communities and Policy in accordance with the Council's constitution to provide funding to district and borough councils to secure and provide emergency accommodation for rough sleepers in Derbyshire during the Covid-19 Lockdown.

##### **2. Information and Analysis**

The COVID19 pandemic and subsequent social isolation measures has placed significant pressure on, and presented many challenges for, the Council, district and borough councils, other public sector providers and communities to support those unable to meet their basic needs, not least rough sleepers and the homeless across the county. To ensure that this vulnerable group were supported during this time, it was necessary for the Council and district and borough councils to secure and provide emergency accommodation for those at greatest risk.

Due to the urgency of the support required by rough sleepers and the homeless, the speed at which the lockdown was implemented nationally and the need for district and borough councils to act quickly given the rapid removal of the supply chain, an urgent decision was sought from the Executive Director of Commissioning, Communities and Policy for permission to provide match funding to district and borough councils to support the block booking of hotel accommodation in the north and south of the county to meet demand and provide the right amount of flexibility of supply.

Discussions with two hotels initially took place to ensure provision was available in both the north and south of the county for a period of four months.

Accommodation was subsequently secured at one hotel in Derbyshire and approximately 80 homeless people were supported during this time. The accommodation was provided on a voluntary basis for homeless persons to utilise.

A copy of the urgent decision of 27 March 2020 is attached at Appendix A. The urgency of support required and the need to secure funds to block book accommodation at a time when the sector was shutting down meant that consultation with the Leader of the Council took place in advance of the decision being made.

### **3. Financial Considerations**

The cost of match funding the provision of emergency accommodation for homeless people in Derbyshire during the Covid-19 pandemic is estimated to be no more than £250,000. 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 Legal Considerations**

The Council's Constitution provides that notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution Executive Directors shall have the power, after discussion, if practicable, with the Leader of the Council or the relevant Cabinet Member or Chair, to take such actions deemed to be necessary and expedient in matters requiring urgent consideration and which, because of the timescale involved, or the need to safeguard the interests of the County Council, cannot be dealt with by submission to the next meeting of the Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Member of Committee.

The Council has powers in accordance with s1-6 of the Localism Act 2011 to do that which will be to the 'benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'. The proposed benefit of this action is to seek to reduce COVID-19 infections amongst a vulnerable cohort of persons and reduce the transmission of the virus. The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 also gives certain health protection powers to local authorities in a pandemic situation.

### **5. Other Considerations**

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

### **6. Background Papers**

No.

**7. Key Decision**

No.

**8. Is it necessary to waive the call in period**

No.

**9. Officer's Recommendations**

That the report and the Officer Decision be noted.

**Emma Alexander**  
**Executive Director for Commissioning, Communities and Policy**

## DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## OFFICER DECISION RECORD

Officer: Emma Alexander		Service: Community Safety - Homeless
Delegated Power Being Exercised: Executive Director delegated powers under the emergency powers contained in the constitution.		
Subject of Decision:	Emergency funding to support homeless in Derbyshire during Covid-19 Lockdown	
Key decision?	No	
Decision Taken (specify precise details):	The approval to provide £250,000 to district and borough councils to cover the cost of providing emergency accommodation for homeless people in Derbyshire during the current Covid-19 lockdown period.	
Reasons for the Decision (specify all reasons for taking the decisions including where necessary reference to Council policy)	<p>The COVID19 pandemic and subsequent social isolation measures has placed significant pressure on and presented many challenges for the Council and district/borough councils. Protecting those most at risk is of paramount importance. The speed at which the lockdown has been implemented presents real difficulties in the provision of support to rough sleepers and the homeless.</p> <p>A recent count identified 38 rough sleepers across the county – the true figure is likely to be much higher at around 50. The rapid removal of the supply chain – with emergency providers having to self-isolate as part of lockdown measures - means that it is essential for district and borough councils to move quickly to secure and provide emergency accommodation for those most at risk.</p> <p>Discussions have initially taken place with two hotel providers in the north and the south of the county to block book up to 70 rooms for rough sleepers and the homeless for a period of four months. Unused rooms will be available for other at-risk groups during this time.</p> <p>The expected cost of match funding the provision of emergency accommodation will be no more than £250,000. District Councils have currently received limited financial support from the Government and as such it is recommended that the costs be met from funds the County Council has received from the Government's Covid-19 Emergency Support Fund.</p>	
Alternative Options Considered (if appropriate)	N/A	

## Appendix A

<p>Background/Reports/Information considered and attached (Legal, Personnel, Financial Implications etc)</p>	<p><b>Financial Considerations</b>  The cost of match funding the provision of emergency accommodation for homeless people in Derbyshire during the Covid-19 pandemic is estimated to be no more than £250,000. The costs will be met from the of providing grant-aid to infrastructure providers will be met from funds the Council has received from the Government’s Covid-19 Emergency Support Fund.</p> <p><b>Legal Considerations</b>  The Council’s Constitution provides that “notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution Executive Directors shall have the power, after discussion, if practicable, with the Leader of the Council or the relevant Cabinet Member or Chair, to take such actions deemed to be necessary and expedient in matters requiring urgent consideration and which, because of the timescale involved, or the need to safeguard the interests of the County Council, cannot be dealt with by submission to the next meeting of the Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Member of Committee”.</p> <p>A review of the scheme to assess whether funding has been utilised and to assess the appropriateness of payments will take place mid- June 2020.</p>
<p>Consultation with relevant Cabinet Member (s)</p>	<p>The urgency of support required and the need to secure funds to block book accommodation at a time when the sector was shutting down meant that consultation with the Leader of the Council took place in advance of the decision being made.</p>
<p>Decision:</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>Signature and Date:   Emma Alexander – 27 March 2020</p>	

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