

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing First</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>Housing &amp; New Homes Committee 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Rob Persey, Executive Director Adult Services</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Sue Forrest</b>	<b>Tel: 29-2960</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report explains how the council is currently implementing the Housing First model and how this could be developed in the future.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Housing & New Homes Committee note the content of this report which is provided for information only.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 At Housing & New Homes Committee held on 21 September 2016, a request was minuted as follows:

- (1) That a report be brought to the next Housing & New Homes Committee on the expansion of Housing First provision, a way of funding this devised by capturing the savings this approach yields, with surplus savings being reinvested in additional service provision.

- 3.2 Additionally at the H&NH meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Rachel from Love Activists presented the following question:

“Will the council explain why the Housing First project has not been included on the agenda for this month’s meeting, despite it having been voted on unanimously at the Housing & New Homes Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> September, for a report to be heard at this month’s meeting? The Housing First model has ended homelessness in other parts of the world. With so many preventable deaths still happening on the streets of our city and around the country, homelessness and the application of this working model should be the upmost priority?”

The Chair replied as follows:

“Officers are continuing to work on developing a report to present to Committee assessing the options for Housing First going forward. Unfortunately it has not been possible to produce this report for the November Committee as further detailed financial modelling is required to assess both the costs and potential savings associated with this model. The report is now scheduled to come to the Housing and New Homes Committee in January 17.”

### **The Housing First Model**

- 3.3 The Housing First model was first developed in the USA and gives people a home first and ‘wraps’ flexible and personalised support around the individual, giving them control and choice over their lives, linking them into their local community, developing their strengths and interests. Access to housing is unconditional; the support provided is not dependent on behaviour or rehabilitation goals for example.
- 3.4 Many long-term and repeatedly homeless individuals have multiple and complex problems relating to drug and/or alcohol dependency, poor physical and mental health, contact with the criminal justice system, and histories of institutional care and traumatic life events.
- 3.5 Support for these groups in the UK is offered through supported accommodation services such as hostels, however there remains an ongoing problem of finding long-term and sustainable housing solutions for them.
- 3.6 Traditional housing models and our locally commissioned homeless pathway model ( the Integrated Support Pathway) have historically focused on a staged approach, with individuals needing to meet certain criteria before they can progress through the stages of support and accommodation into independent living, where they are then deemed ‘housing ready’.
- 3.7 The Housing First model is recognised as an exemplar of good practice and recent DCLG grants have focused on Housing First as an important and innovative model that should be adopted across the country.

### **Current Housing First Service in Brighton & Hove**

- 3.8 The council has provided a service in Brighton and Hove which uses the Housing First model since 2014. The service was retendered at the end of 2015 following a pilot and is now delivered under a contract with St Mungos. The contract is for 10 individuals including 2 young people who were previously looked after aged 18-25 being funded and referred by Children’s Services.
- 3.9 The council is one of the most innovative and is the only local authority to use Housing First for young people. The aim of the two places is to explore how this model works with young people in a more preventative role. These young people already present with all the hallmarks of traditional clients, multiple and complex needs and a history of accommodation loss.
- 3.10 The Housing First model provides a highly personalised approach to working with individuals with multiple and complex needs recognising the cross department, cross agency impact of these clients and the integrated service response

required and represents a significant cultural shift for services across the City by suspending the conditional model requiring clients to meet standards of eligibility before a service can be accessed.

3.11 The Housing First model of accommodation and support fits with the aims for the remodelling of single homeless services, the Care Act 2014, and the council's Rough Sleeping Strategy:

- To reduce rough sleeping
- To provide multi agency personalised support to single homeless people
- To improve outcomes for vulnerable homeless people and support them to develop the skills for independent living
- To improve health outcomes and prevent deaths
- To support recovery from homelessness, substance misuse, ill health and mental ill health
- To reduce revolving door homelessness

3.12 Following an independent evaluation of services using the Housing First model locally and nationally<sup>1</sup>, there are a number of challenges that have been identified with any future expansion of the current scheme. These include Local Authorities being able to source suitable accommodation in a short time frame and the lack of additional funding.

3.13 The average cost of accommodation in Brighton & Hove is £707 pcm for studio accommodation and £932 pcm<sup>2</sup> for 1 bedroom. In contrast the Local Housing Allowance (housing benefit) for this size of property is £663 pcm. There is therefore a significant shortfall between what we need to pay to secure accommodation and what we can achieve in income to offset the cost. In April 2017 there were 40 studios advertised on Rightmove that were within the Local Housing Allowance and 2x 1 bed flats.

3.14 The demand for such accommodation has contributed to the high rents. In addition, landlords are more likely to offer their properties to professional people and so there is limited availability of such property in the city.

### **Local Challenges for Brighton & Hove**

3.15 The city is a popular place to live with good transport links to neighbouring towns and to London. It has a buoyant housing market with an average property price of £353,176<sup>3</sup> which is 52% higher than the national average for England. The cost of buying a home in the city is unaffordable for many local residents with the average cost to buy a 1-bed flat around eight times the average household income<sup>4</sup> and a 3-bed house around twelve times the average household income.

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<sup>1</sup> Joanne Bretherton and Nicholas Pleace Housing First in England An Evaluation of Nine Services February 2015 University of York Centre for Housing Policy p70

<sup>2</sup> \*Brighton & Hove Private Sector rent and Local Housing Allowance Comparison Report 13 April 2017

<sup>3</sup> Land register HPI report March 2017

<sup>4</sup> Based on a household income of £29,100 which is calculated to be the median income in 2015

- 3.16 The cost of privately renting a home in the city is also beyond the reach of many households with the average cost to rent a 1-bed flat requiring around 38% of a household's gross income<sup>5</sup> and a 3-bed house around 64%.
- 3.17 There are limited opportunities to build in the city and with land at a premium and rising building costs the pressures on providing additional housing cannot be met resulting in demand outstripping supply. The Housing Need Report 2012 identified over 17,400 additional affordable homes were needed by 2017 above the number already planned.
- 3.18 Through the New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme it is intended that a total of 500 new council homes on council land will be delivered across the city. In addition the affordable housing brief sets out how the council will achieve more affordable through housing policy and working with developers and its partner registered providers.
- 3.19 The reality of how difficult it is for households to find affordable housing in the city is reflected in the number on the council's housing register and households approaching the council due to being or at risk of becoming homeless. In April 2017 a total of 23,958 households were on the register, 85% of whom were 'Homeseekers' and the loss of private rented housing continues to be the most common single cause for being accepted homeless. The council has over 1,680 households in temporary accommodation which is the second highest number per resident household for a Local Authority outside of London.
- 3.20 During 2016/17 a total of 406 council homes were let to new tenants; 3.5% of the council's total 11,498 stock. This represents 2% of all 'home seekers' currently on the housing register.

### **Future Development of Services using the Housing First model**

- 3.21 The council has recently been successful with a bid to the DCLG for a tranche of funding through a Social Impact Bond for entrenched rough sleepers. The DCLG are expecting Housing First to be one of the delivery models used. The council led on a cross authority partnership bid with Arun, Adur & Worthing, Eastbourne and Hastings Borough Councils. This bid proposed a service which will work with 150 individuals over 4 years utilising the Housing First approach.
- 3.22 Following a committee report to Policy Resources & Growth Committee in March 2017, a procurement process is being undertaken to award a contract under which the council will use the Social Impact Bond to deliver services in accordance with the Housing First model. Bidders for this contract will need to demonstrate how they will secure accommodation. Accommodation can be both within and outside the city.
- 3.23 The Social Impact Bond works on the basis of a payments by results and providers are paid based on a range of outcomes, one of which will be placement and sustainment of individuals into accommodation.

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<sup>5</sup> Based on a household income of £29,100 which is calculated to be the median income in 2015

3.24 The council is also contributing to two research projects. One is being led by the DCLG to look at the impact of the Housing First approach and mental health and substance misuse. The second is a project led by FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) looking at how the Housing First model works with young people.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 The current service using the Housing First model is a small commissioned service which meets the needs of low number, high impact group of clients. This service is a valuable service for people with multiple and complex needs who do not fit into hostel or other types of supported accommodation. It is widely accepted that this model ensures good outcomes for people, especially those with complex needs.

4.2 Engagement with an effective support model dramatically reduces both the personal and economic costs of homelessness.

4.3 It is evident from research to date and local analysis that no single model of supported housing is effective for all homeless people with complex needs.

4.4 Any future expansion of the current service is restricted by access to suitable properties in a short time frame and access to funding.

4.5 This service links with Priority 5 Goal 10 of the Rough Sleepers Strategy and embodies the wider ethos and commitment of the strategy..

4.6 The way that the council intends to deliver the Housing First model is through the use of the Social Impact Bond grant to deliver services, funded through the DCLG.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

5.1 The Housing First contract is included as part of the Housing Related Support budgets. The 2016/17 net budget totals £5.094m and the Housing First contract value is £0.122m per annum.

There are currently no savings identified in the 4 year Integrated Service Financial Plan.

*Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis*

*Date: 14/12/16*

##### Legal Implications:

5.2 There are no significant legal implications to draw to Members' attention arising from this report for noting.

*Lawyer Consulted: Isabella Sidoli*

*Date: 05/06/17*

#### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An EIA for the single homeless pathway remodelling has been carried out and this recognises that some groups of people have either not done well or have been excluded by homeless services due their complex needs and that we require a flexible range of services to offer more personalised support, especially for people with complex needs.

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no sustainability implications.

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Housing First can have a significant positive role in reducing the crime and disorder perpetrated by the individuals within its service and this has been evidenced by the Brighton & Hove service.
- 5.6 The service provider, St Mungos, works closely with police, probation service and community safety colleagues to ensure services users are supported to reduce their involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Appendices:**

1. None

#### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. Client journey

#### **Background Documents**

Housing First in England An Evaluation of Nine Services February 2015, University of York