

Subject: **Next Steps - Rough Sleeping and Accommodation During COVID-19 Pandemic and Recovery**

Date of Meeting: **3 December 2020**

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Wards Affected: **All Wards**

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Action Required of Policy & Resources Committee:

To receive the recommendations of the Housing Committee for consideration.

Recommendation:

- (1) That the Executive Director of Housing Neighbourhoods & Communities and the Executive Director of Health & Adult Social Care be granted delegated authority to secure accommodation up to the end of March 2021, by entering into contracts to extend existing arrangements or alternative arrangements where necessary to extend the provision of shorter-term/interim accommodation acquired in response to the Covid 19 pandemic to 31st March 2021;
- (2) That funding be agreed until 31st March 2021 for the floating support required to enable people to move on to private rented accommodation who are in need of support to sustain and manage a tenancy so it is a viable option at an estimated cost of £0.086m, as detailed in paragraph 3.14 of the report. If agreed, this financial pressure will be reflected in future Targeted Budget Management (TBM) reports to P&R committee;
- (3) That in line with the NSAP funding allocation, the Executive Director of Health & Adult Social Care be granted delegated authority to enter into a contract with St Mungo's as a partner to the bid and as set out in the bid to deliver 20 units of high support accommodation as set out in paragraph 3.14 of the report;
- (4) That the NSAP funding allocation be noted and the spend in line with grant conditions be agreed;
- (5) That consideration be given to continuing to accommodate those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping who do not who do not fall within NSAP funding conditions beyond 30 September 2020 or statutory provisions (excluding those who have NRPFs except those to whom we have a statutory duty as outlined elsewhere in

the report) during the on-going pandemic at a maximum cost of £0.986m for 2020/21, as outlined in paragraphs 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 of the report;

- (6) That it be noted that if recommendation (5) above is approved, this could create a potential commitment in 2021/22 of between £1.4m and £1.9m. This will need to be reflected in the budget process for 2021/22; and
- (7) That the MHCLG contribution of £1.752m in capital funding towards the purchase of 30 new homes for rough sleepers and that approval of the new HRA capital budget for this purchase will be brought as part of the TBM 7 report to the December P&R Committee be noted.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

4.00pm 18 NOVEMBER 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Gibson (Joint Chair), Hugh-Jones (Joint Chair), Phillips (Deputy Chair), Williams (Opposition Spokesperson), Mears (Group Spokesperson), Atkinson, Barnett, Fowler, Hill and Osborne.

PART ONE

113 NEXT STEPS - ROUGH SLEEPING AND ACCOMMODATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RECOVERY

- 113.1 The Head of Housing Needs introduced the report which informs Members that in response to the Covid-19 emergency and in line with Government guidance the Council made an accommodation offer during the first lockdown available to all rough sleepers and those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping in the city. The Council have worked with Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and Homes England (HE) to secure funding to cover the cost of this accommodation and provide for move on options through our Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) bid.
- 113.2 Councillor Atkinson was informed that as of the date of the meeting, 107 persons have been moved on, which equates to 40%. The Councillor was also informed that that local authorities must ensure that any support offered to non-UK nationals who are not eligible for homelessness assistance complies with legal restrictions under legislation such as the complex Schedule 3 to the Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act 2002. The funding was for verified rough sleepers only, however basic shelter can be provided for others. Reconnections are enacted as soon as possible and there is no way to dissuade people from coming to Brighton and Hove. The shortfall indicated in the report related to the capital support where no funding would be available until March 2021.
- 113.3 Councillor Phillips was informed that the officers are working with the street community to explain position and supply information to those with no access to public funds. Spot purchase has extended to Eastbourne and other areas. Moving persons to other areas is a challenge, however the sheer volume of people arriving in Brighton and Hove means the city cannot accommodate all. Welfare officers are active in these areas.
- 113.4 Councillor Gibson was informed that more staff to collect housing benefit was being looked at. The sustainability of the cost of moving on was being looked at in light of improving prevention activities. Reconnections are not as fast as would be preferred. The Council has looked at the London Borough of Camden and noted their

reconnections programme. Hotel rates during lockdown have been looked in respect of the best rates available to the Council. The Protect Programme funding bid is proceeding. The YHA is being used as a 'no second night out' hub at this time.

- 113.5 Councillor Williams was informed that the Council does ensure that accommodation is in place at the other end of reconnections through the Council and St Mongo's. East and West Sussex are working with Brighton and Hove to ensure the accommodation is suitable. The Council will continue to support those in need after the government set date of 20 September 2020.
- 113.6 Councillor Mears was informed that the letter from the Co-Chair of Housing to the Home Secretary asking that all necessary measures are taken to avoid pushing migrants into homelessness for the duration of the pandemic has not been finalised yet. The costs to the HRA are neutral as funds are coming from government and rental stream. The Councillor expressed concerns relating to the budget.
- 113.6 Councillor Gibson noted that the Floating Support fund has acted as a stop gap between rough sleeping funding for those moving out of hotels and guest houses. The Councillor considered that a plan was needed to prevent getting into temporary accommodation. Unlocking the potential government funding would be good. Housing First has always worked well and needs to be. Funding support is crucial. The councillor supported the report.
- 113.7 Councillor Atkinson noted the predictions for next year were not good with many private rented evictions possible across England. It was noted that there was a six months ban on evictions in Brighton and Hove. The Councillor considered a package of support would be needed for private renters and noted that as much as £2m maybe required. It was a concern that as many as 50 people arrive in the city each month looking for accommodation. The Councillor supported the report.
- 113.8 Councillor Williams noted the report was very detailed and a living document, where information could be included later. The Councillor supported the report.
- 113.9 Councillor Mears expressed concerns at the lack of budget paper's, and this did not inspire confidence and they would be abstaining from the vote.
- 113.10 The Chair put the recommendations to vote and they were agreed by 8 votes with 2 abstentions.
- 113.11 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That Housing Committee note the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) funding allocation with the projected shortfall in funding required, and the conditions set out in the grant award.
 - (2) That Housing Committee note that NSAP funding is ring-fenced for those who have been accommodated up until 30 September 2020, and those who are subsequently brought in as verified rough sleepers.

- (3) That Housing committee note MHCLG guidance dated 22 September 2020 that local authorities must ensure that any support offered to non-UK nationals who are not eligible for homelessness assistance complies with legal restrictions (for example, the restrictions contained in Schedule 3 to the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002).
- (4) That Housing Committee approve proposals (in paragraph 3.10) for officers to work with the local community and voluntary sector organisations to provide clear information for rough sleepers with NRPF who the Council cannot accommodate including sources of support and assistance.
- (5) That Housing Committee note that the Co-Chair of Housing has written to the Home Secretary asking that all necessary measures are taken to avoid pushing migrants into homelessness for the duration of the pandemic. This includes asylum seekers and others with no recourse to public funds as well as recently recognised refugees whose asylum support is being withdrawn.
- (6) That Housing Committee note the action plan set out in Appendix 3 to deliver progress and meet the conditions of the NSAP funding allocation.
- (7) That Housing Committee agree that progress on meeting the conditions of NSAP funding and next steps – ‘Rough Sleeping and Accommodation during Covid 19 Pandemic and recovery’ as outlined in 1.2, be reported to future meetings of Homeless Reduction Board.
- (8) That Housing Committee note the assumptions in paragraphs 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 of costs of continuing to accommodate those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping who do not fall within NSAP funding conditions beyond 30 September 2020 or statutory provisions during the on-going pandemic (excluding those who have NRPFs except those to whom we have a statutory duty as outlined elsewhere in the report).
- (9) That Housing Committee agree that officers report back on the implications to the Homelessness Reduction Board and a future Housing Committee on systems and resources needed to enhance the Council’s offer to homeless people including those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping who do not fall within NSAP funding conditions beyond 30 September 2020 or statutory provisions, during the on-going pandemic, subject to funding.
- (10) That Housing Committee agree an additional £7.5m expenditure in the HRA capital programme for 2020/21 to be funded by £1.752m grant and £5.748m borrowing and notes that this will be subject to formal approval by the Policy & Resources Committee when it considers the TBM Month 7 report at its December meeting as set out in the recommendation at paragraph 2.17.
- (11) That Housing Committee recommends to Policy & Resources Committee:
 - (1) That the Executive Director of Housing Neighbourhoods & Communities and the Executive Director of Health & Adult Social Care be granted delegated authority to secure accommodation up to the end of March 2021, by

entering into contracts to extend existing arrangements or alternative arrangements where necessary to extend the provision of shorter-term/interim accommodation acquired in response to the Covid 19 pandemic to 31st March 2021;

- (2) That funding be agreed until 31st March 2021 for the floating support required to enable people to move on to private rented accommodation who are in need of support to sustain and manage a tenancy so it is a viable option at an estimated cost of £0.086m, as detailed in paragraph 3.14 of the report. If agreed, this financial pressure will be reflected in future Targeted Budget Management (TBM) reports to P&R committee;
- (3) That in line with the NSAP funding allocation, the Executive Director of Health & Adult Social Care be granted delegated authority to enter into a contract with St Mungo's as a partner to the bid and as set out in the bid to deliver 20 units of high support accommodation as set out in paragraph 3.14 of the report;
- (4) That the NSAP funding allocation be noted and the spend in line with grant conditions be agreed;
- (5) That consideration be given to continuing to accommodate those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping who do not fall within NSAP funding conditions beyond 30 September 2020 or statutory provisions (excluding those who have NRPFs except those to whom we have a statutory duty as outlined elsewhere in the report) during the on-going pandemic at a maximum cost of £0.986m for 2020/21, as outlined in paragraphs 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 of the report;
- (6) That it be noted that if recommendation (5) above is approved, this could create a potential commitment in 2021/22 of between £1.4m and £1.9m. This will need to be reflected in the budget process for 2021/22; and
- (7) That the MHCLG contribution of £1.752m in capital funding towards the purchase of 30 new homes for rough sleepers and that approval of the new HRA capital budget for this purchase will be brought as part of the TBM 7 report to the December P&R Committee be noted.