

Cherwell District Council

Executive

1 July 2019

Cherwell District Council's Contribution to the Oxfordshire Adult Homeless Pathway

Report of Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning

This report is public

Purpose of report

To set out proposals for continuing to deliver the Oxfordshire Adult Homeless Pathway which is a partnership between the District Councils, the County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and provides housing related support services and accommodation for single homeless people. The report seeks agreement to Cherwell District Council's funding contribution from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To agree Cherwell District Council's continuing contribution to the Oxfordshire Adult Homeless Pathway for a further 2 years at a level of £83,930 per annum in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Adult Homeless Pathway (AHP) provides supported accommodation for homeless single people who are 18 years and over and who have support needs, including those who are rough sleeping or have previously slept rough.
- 2.2 The Pathway is commissioned, managed and funded by the Housing Related Support Joint Management Group which includes representation from Oxfordshire County Council, all Oxfordshire District/City Councils and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG).
- 2.3 The services currently commissioned have agreed funding contributions in place until 31 March 2020.
- 2.4 It is been proposed that all partners extend this arrangement for a further 2 years from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022 with additional financial contributions to be made by partners to ensure adequate accommodation is available for this

vulnerable group. This would ensure continuity of service and positive outcomes for people who need support to recover from homelessness and to move on to longer term accommodation. This report sets out the proposed contribution that CDC would make to the pathway in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and seeks formal agreement for this approach.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 Together with 5 district/city councils and OCCG the County Council created a joint governance structure to procure and manage services for single homeless people in 2016.
- 2.5 This joint working came about as a result of Oxfordshire County Council announcing that it was unable to maintain its funding contributions for the AHP and would be withdrawing funding after 2017/18.
- 2.6 Collectively the Housing Related Support Joint Management Group explored options to ensure provision continued to be available.
- 2.7 The preferred option included all Oxfordshire District/City Councils making financial contributions based upon their usage of the AHP, and to spread Oxfordshire County Council's final contribution of £1.5m over two financial years (2017/18 and 2018/19).
- 2.8 These joint working and funding arrangements were approved by CDC's Executive in September 2016 when Members agreed :
- to support the new proposals which provide a plan and include a financial contribution from Cherwell for a period of 3 years as calculated and recommended by the Oxfordshire Districts, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) and Oxfordshire County Council
 - to note and support the proposals for a new joint governance structure to procure and manage services through senior officer representation with delegated authority
 - to approve a financial contribution of £62,700 pa and required to be paid from Cherwell for 3 financial years commencing April 2017
 - the Executive note that a further report on the longer term sustainability of single homeless pathway arrangement across the county be submitted within the 3 year period covered by the report.
- 2.9 Since agreeing to this new joint working the parties have committed total funding of £2,940,000 which has enabled the AHP pathway to be funded until 31 March 2020. The table below sets out the contributions that have been made by each partner over this 3 year period.

Housing Related Support Pooled Budget Income – by partner	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total Contributions
Oxford City Council	£161,700	£161,700	£161,700	£485,100
Cherwell District Council	£62,700	£62,700	£62,700	£188,100
South Oxfordshire District Council	£36,300	£36,300	£36,300	£108,900
Vale of White Horse District Council	£36,300	£36,300	£36,300	£108,900
West Oxfordshire District Council	£33,000	£33,000	£33,000	£99,000
Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£450,000
Oxfordshire County Council	£1,000,000	£500,000	£0	£1,500,000
Total	£1,480,000	£980,000	£480,000	£2,940,000

- 2.10 CDC's current contribution of £62,700 per annum was based on the Council's usage of the AHP at the time contributions were agreed and secures 19% of all available bed spaces. This has been paid using part of the Council's annual allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 2.11 The contribution ensures CDC has access to a total of 24 beds. These consist of 11 'complex needs' beds provided at O'Hanlon House in Oxford in a purpose-built building and provides 24/7 support and supervision. We also have access to 13 'progression/move on ready' beds in Banbury (8 beds at Cope Road and 5 in West Street which all have shared facilities (bathroom/kitchens). These beds are for people who require lower levels of support than at O'Hanlon House and are working towards living independently.
- 2.12 The actual value of the contracts awarded for these beds totals £146,006 and represents good value for money for Cherwell's investment.

Future Plans for the Pathway

- 2.13 The joint funding arrangements have now entered the third and final year and officers have been in discussion with other members of the Housing Related Support Joint Management Group to consider options for ensuring services continue to be available from April 2020.
- 2.14 To support this process and consider the best way forward for CDC officers have undertaken a comprehensive review of CDC's requirement for supported accommodation for single homeless people including rough sleepers.
- 2.15 The findings from the review are that CDC needs to have at least 34 beds available. This is currently achieved though the funding CDC provides for the 24 AHP beds and 10 additional beds CDC has procured separately to ensure rough sleepers from CDC do not have to spend longer periods of time sleeping rough than is necessary.
- 2.16 As part of the discussions about the future of the AHP, Oxfordshire County Council has agreed to make a further contribution of £500,000 to be spread over two years (£0.25m in 2020/21 and in 2021/22).

- 2.17 Whilst this new contribution is welcomed, there is still a funding shortfall of £117,000 per annum in the budget if the existing levels of service are to be maintained in 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- 2.18 It has been proposed that each district/city council increases its current contribution to cover a proportion of the £117,000 shortfall on a pro-rata basis. For CDC this would mean paying 19% of the £117,000 (an increase of £22,230pa) and would result in the council's annual contribution increasing from £62,700pa to £84,930 pa.
- 2.19 The increased contributions from the district/city councils would mean that from April 2020 the contributions would be:

Housing Related Support Pool Budget Income	2020/21	2021/22	Total contributions
Oxford City Council	£219,030	£219,030	£438,060
Cherwell District Council	£84,930	£84,930	£169,940
South Oxfordshire District Council	£48,970	£48,970	£97,940
Vale of White Horse District Council	£48,970	£48,970	£97,940
West Oxfordshire District Council	£44,700	£44,700	£89,400
Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	£150,000	£150,000	£300,000
Oxfordshire County Council	£250,000	£250,000	£500,000
Total	£846,600	£846,600	£1,693,200

- 2.20 If this additional funding cannot be secured we would see a reduction in services for this vulnerable group or services would have to be recommissioned by each local authority individually.
- 2.21 Officers are therefore supportive of the recommendation proposed by the Housing Related Support Joint Management Group for each district/city council to increase its financial contributions from April 2020 to ensure services remain available for a vulnerable group of people whilst also still representing good value for CDC.
- 2.22 In addition to this work, CDC has also recently been awarded £136,000 from MHCLG's Rough Sleeper Initiative Fund. As part of the successful bid funding has been awarded to employ a Strategic Country Co-ordinator. It is expected that this role will lead and develop new countywide approaches to the prevention and resolution of homelessness and develop a countywide Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy that will help to inform commissioning priorities from 2022/23.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Housing Related Support Joint Management Group is now working to formalise its plans and requires agreement from all district/city councils that they are supportive of continuing the partnership and will increase their annual contributions from April 2020.

- 3.2 This new proposal ensures CDC continues to have access to supported accommodation for rough sleepers and remains within the countywide partnership for 2 further years.
- 3.3 Looking to the future there will be work done by the JMG to re-commission services beyond 2022 to ensure integrated and countywide provision, without the need for districts to commission separate provision to supplement what is available through the joint commissioning arrangements.

5.0 Consultation

None

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons set out below.

Option 1: Not to be part of the Housing Related Support Joint Management Group from April 2020 and stop making financial contributions to the pooled Budget – this option would result in Cherwell losing access to 24 units of supported accommodation. Cherwell would need to procure and identify new accommodation independently and would likely result in increased costs to the council

Option 2: To continue to be part of the Housing Related Support Joint Management Group but to maintain its existing funding contribution – this option would ensure that some supported accommodation continues to be available but would result in a reduction in the number of beds available to support single homeless people from Cherwell.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The additional contribution will be covered by existing homelessness prevention budgets.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

- 7.2 A governance agreement is already in place outlining commissioning and management of the joint financial pool across the County Council, OCCG, and the District/City councils of Oxfordshire. CDC has representation at the officer working group which reports to the Health Improvement Board where the Council is also represented by an elected member.

Comments checked by:

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Risk Implications

- 7.3 By supporting this proposed way forward the existing services to provide housing related support for single homeless and those with complex needs can be sustained. These services provide a vital safety net for the most vulnerable in society. This plan for 2 years also provides a further period to allow the Council to consider new and different options to make alternative provision for this group.

If one party does not agree to these new funding contributions further consideration will be need to be given to how services continue to be provided for this vulnerable group.

These risks will be managed through the operational risk register and escalated to the corporate risk register if necessary.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: Yes

Community Impact Threshold Met: Yes

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Support and Safeguard Vulnerable People
Homelessness Prevention
Deliver Affordable Housing

Lead Councillor

Councillor John Donaldson, Lead member for Housing

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Supporting Documents	
Adult Homeless Pathway report to Executive September 2016	
Background Papers	
None	
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