

# Cherwell District Council

## Executive

5 September 2016

### Re-commissioning of Single Homeless Pathway

## Report of Head of Regeneration and Housing

This report is Public

The appendices to this report are exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972

### Purpose of report

To advise Executive of the proposals recommended by the District Councils, the County Council, and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) as endorsed by the Health Improvement Board, to work jointly to provide housing related support services and accommodate single homeless from across the county for the next 3 years commencing from 1 April 2017.

### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 To note and support the proposal for a new joint governance structure to procure and manage services through senior officer representation with delegated authority.
- 1.3 To approve a financial contribution of £62,700pa (as calculated on Cherwell's current use of hostels with 24 hour care) and required to be paid from Cherwell for 3 financial years commencing from 1 April 2017.
- 1.4 That Executive note that a further report on the longer term sustainability of single homeless pathway arrangements across the county be submitted within the 3 year period covered by this report.

### 2.0 Introduction

Accommodation services for single homeless were previously funded through the Government's Supporting People Programme. Supporting People funding became unringfenced in the Oxfordshire County Budget spending allocation under

Government changes, followed by significant reductions from central Government to its budget. The County Council's financial position has now led the County to review and reduce service provision and this has also resulted in an announcement that confirms Oxford County Council are no longer in a position to continue to provide housing related support funding.

Therefore a final grant of £1.5m is due to be paid for housing related support in April 2017 from the County Council.

This grant of £1.5m from Oxfordshire County Council currently funds a pathway of services for rough sleepers/single homeless people who have a range of support needs in 285 units of accommodation across the County, with 252 beds based in the City. The value of these contracts was reduced by approximately 30% in 2015/16, due to budget pressures with new contracts only awarded to the end of March 2017.

Eligibility for all bed spaces is for single homeless clients with support needs, with a county connection. The phased withdrawal of this grant from April 2017 with no further action could leave no accommodation based services with housing related support in the County for this client group after March 2019.

The City Council and District Councils fund a range of other services in each District which wrap-around this provision for single homeless clients. In Cherwell this includes outreach and verification services to identify rough sleepers; access to Day Centre drop ins and help to access the private rented sector.

A new proposal has now been formed in partnership by the County Council, OCCG and Districts at a time when the system is already under considerable pressure. City and District estimates for rough sleeping for 2015/16 were: City (56- a 50% increase), Cherwell (21 - a 40% increase), South (5), Vale (5), and West (3). The Health and Wellbeing Board's target to not exceed the baseline rough sleeping County-wide estimate for rough sleeping (an alternative to street counts) of 68 set in 2014/15, has been missed in 2015/16 with an official estimated figure of 90.

The current demographic of the hostel population demonstrates that rough sleeping and single homelessness is a serious County-wide issue. Around 60% of rough sleepers have multiple needs including homelessness, offending, substance misuse and mental health issues. The withdrawal of these services would most certainly impact on statutory homelessness duties but the real and high cost would also be shunted onto mental health wards, public health, especially substance misuse, statutory adult social care under the Care Act 2014, A&E as well as policing, custody and prison as people will inevitably deteriorate on the streets and reach crisis point.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 Since the County Council announced its final funding contribution for support for single homeless accommodation, officers from across the Districts have been working very closely together to agree and plan how best we can continue to provide services to meet these ongoing needs for this complex group. There have been extensive officer meetings including two Health Improvement Board (HIB)

workshops which include elected members from across the Districts. All have worked to agree how best we can find a way to re-commission services, undertake remodelling, recommend new and fair financial contributions, and utilise a financial contribution from OCCG to meet the health needs of this client group. We have also liaised with the County Council to suggest how to make best use of the final financial contribution from them.

3.2 An officer working group has been established to:

- Develop proposals for medium term financial plans and transition planning. This included how the County Council contribution can be re-profiled within the scope of its agreed budget and the modelling of its longer term plans following the removal of these contributions
- Propose joint governance arrangements for overseeing a pooled budget to support homeless people with complex needs
- Model options for maintaining existing services for up to an additional year so that a review and re-commissioning process can be completed
- Determine the scope of a review which will include discussions about where to locate services, the level of support provided and what criteria will be used to determine eligibility. As part of this a definition of complex needs and health outcomes will be agreed
- Consider the impact of national housing policy changes on medium term plans

3.3 The outcomes of their work were presented for discussions and decision by the HIB on 1 July where they recommended Option 3 as detailed in **Appendix 1** (exempt). The officer group has now been tasked to develop an implementation plan and transition plan based on the proposed commissioning plan subject to each Council agreeing a financial contribution, new joint commissioning principals and a proposal for new joint governance arrangements.

3.4 New Commissioning Principals

Commitment is required from all parties to enter into a set of new medium term governance and commissioning arrangements for housing related support across the county. This will include the creation of a new pooled budget arrangement to be identified with financial contributions agreed from all partners to form a pooled budget.

3.5 Housing related Support Pooled Budget

A new officers group from the 7 partners is recommended to oversee and negotiate and monitor the transition from existing services, also undertake and specify new commissioning. It is proposed that the County Council continue to provide contract management for the period of this arrangement to provide continuity and whilst they continue to make the most significant financial contribution.

For the next three years starting from 1 April 2017, the pooled budget will oversee spending of £2,940,000 contributed by 7 partners as outlined in **Appendices 1&2** (exempt).

District and City councils contributions will be new and have been calculated based on their current usage of the adult homeless pathway; officers have spent time monitoring to ensure this percentage reflects Cherwell current use:

The County Council contribution remains as agreed by their cabinet in February 2016 which is a final contribution of £1.5 million which will be spread across the first two years to enable services to initially continue. Transition arrangements will include decommissioning services and commissioning of a new service which is equal to the amount of district financial contributions. The new services include 56 beds in one hostel in Oxfordshire for those with more complex needs requiring 24 hour support.

OCCG are committed to continue to contribute financially to this proposal. They will be investigating how to gain health outcomes which justify their health spending to benefit this client group during the three year period, they may also be considering some remodelling of their health spending. They will consider any further funding for this pathway by the end of the three year period.

The pooled budget has been profiled and is to be agreed by each District /City Council to supplement the County Council and OCCG contributions. This is detailed in **Appendix 1** (exempt).

In Cherwell the Council made provision of a financial reserve for this purpose which remains available and can provide our first year contribution. This proposal provides the Council with a three year window when Officers can undertake a full review of their needs for this client group and of the current spending to form future plans and provision. The Council will need to take steps to ensure it makes adequate provision for its financial contributions required in years two and three of this proposal.

### 3.6 New Governance – **Appendix 2** (exempt)

The working group have proposed a two tier governance structure to set strategic direction for a 3 year period to manage the new housing related support funding pool budget.

Tier 1 – elected members / senior officers through the Health Improvement Board

Tier 2 – Officer level through a Housing Related Support Joint Management Group

Draft terms of reference have been modelled on the latest section 75 agreement in Oxfordshire. These are draft to be signed in due course. The County Council is continuing to provide the most significant contribution to the pooled budget for the period of the agreement.

### 3.7 The preferred commissioning option – see option 3 **Appendix 1** (exempt)

This option will provide a hostel with 24 hour support which will continue to be located in Oxford City. Cherwell will be able to refer to 19 % of the bed spaces for those clients who meet the criteria in line with its budget contribution as above. This will mean we may access up to 10/11 beds which we will refer to and monitor.

This option will also initially continue to provide funding for the housing related support provided to 13 beds of supported accommodation in Cherwell.

### 3.8 HIB workshop members considered all the following proposals and agreed them subject to each constituent party also giving approval to the governance structure. They are recommending acceptance of officer recommendations which are:

- Agreement to the new commissioning principals as outlined above
- Agreement to creating a new Housing Related support pool budget as described
- Confirmation of financial contributions to the new Housing related support pool budget from each constituent party
- Agreement to the draft terms of reference for the new governance structure
- To task the officer led working group to produce an implementation plan and a transition plan, in preparation for and subject to these decisions being formally ratified by each constituent party within the agreed timescale.

3.9 Finally it should also be noted that additional funding from the County Council also funds floating support services across the County for nearly 500 clients. This has a hugely preventative focus, helping clients remain independent in the community.

The County Council also currently funds domestic abuse services (including advice, outreach, refuge provision) across the County to the value of approximately £330,000 per annum, alongside various other funding streams. A strategic review of these services is also currently underway and expects to report Autumn 2016. Decisions regarding the future funding for these services remains outstanding. It should be noted that Cherwell currently contribute from their Cherwell Homeless Prevention Grant for the Domestic Abuse Outreach service in this District. This review may be the subject of a further report in due course

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

4.1 The new proposals have been a significant achievement and demonstrate excellent joint working across all partners. Officers have made considerable efforts to negotiate across the County to reach this stage and form these proposals. All parties have considered a full range of options to retain hostel beds for complex case with 24 hour support in Oxford, also to maintain and hopefully expand local service delivery to provide housing related support. This proposal provides a full overview of the preferred recommendations which will maintain the commitment to provide the current level of housing related support funding already allocated to Cherwell to be continued during the period of the agreement. This means that although Cherwell will need to contribute £62,700 per year to maintain the service for complex needs in Oxford, this also means housing related support investment will continue to be received in Cherwell during the next 3 years.

## **5.0 Consultation**

None

These proposals will be fully consulted once all 7 districts and partners have confirmed their agreement to the HIB Board

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

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

Option 1: Not to agree the joint county plan and financial contribution as recommended for the next 3 years. This would result in Cherwell needing to fully fund and make its own arrangements for rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs. It would also result in the withdrawal of the housing related support funding currently received from the County and spent within the district.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 A commitment for payment to the joint housing related support financial pool for a period of 3 years commencing 1 April 2017. Cherwell payment is calculated at £62,700 pa. Provision has been made through a reserve for 2017/18 in anticipation of this request. The Council will need to ensure adequate funding can be available to meet payments they will be committed to in 2018/19 and 2019/2020.

Comments checked by:

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### **Legal Implications**

- 7.2 A new governance agreement is in draft for the Council to agree to describe commissioning and management of the joint financial pool across the County Council, OCCG and the District Councils of Oxfordshire. Cherwell can appoint suitable officer representation for the officer working group which will report to the Health Improvement Board where the Council is also represented by an elected member from Cherwell District Council.

Comments checked by:

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### **Risk**

- 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 initially sustained and remodelled in a suitable time frame. These services provide a vital safety net for the most vulnerable in society. This plan for 3 years also provides a period which allows the Council to consider and explore all new and different options to make alternative provision for this client group in future, with adequate time to review and commission as necessary to ensure adequate arrangements can continue.

If one party does not agree there will need to be further consideration to reach any agreement on a way forward to provide services for this complex need. It is unlikely that a further joint proposal can be identified which may mean increased costs for Cherwell.

These risks will be managed through the operational risk register and escalated to the corporate risk register as and when 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

Cherwell: a thriving community

c.3 Provide high quality housing options advice and support to prevent homelessness

c.4 Work to promote health and wellbeing across the District

### Lead Councillor

Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Housing

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1 - EXEMPT	Paper on Housing Related Support Re-commissioning Options for HIB workshop on 1 July 2016
2 - EXEMPT	Housing Related Support Pooled Budget Agreement
Background Papers	
None	
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