

1. **Churches Together Winter 2019** (Pages 1 - 6)

CABINET MEMBERS DELEGATED DECISION

Open		Would any decisions proposed :		
Any especially affected Wards	Discretionary /	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide	YES	
	Operational	Need to be recommendations to Council	NO	
		Is it a Key Decision	NO	
Lead Member: Cllr Adrian Lawrence E-mail:		Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
		Other Members consulted:		
Lead Officer: Duncan Hall E-mail: Duncan.hall@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial:01553 616445		Other Officers consulted: Ray Harding		
Financial Implications YES	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is paragraph 3				
Date meeting advertised: 11 th July 2018		Date of meeting decision to be taken: 18 th July 2018		
Deadline for Call-In: 25 th July 2018				

NIGHT SHELTER PROVISION – NOVEMBER 2018 TO MARCH 2019

Summary

This decision deals with making a financial contribution towards the costs of operating a night shelter provision for next winter. The proposed initiative will be operated by a local group of 'Churches Together', on the basis of running seven nights a week from November 2018 until March 2019.

Recommendation

That the Council supports the proposal by making a financial contribution of £25,000 from funds ring fenced for tackling homelessness activities. The proposed provision will ensure that partner organisations have planned for the worst, and mean that robust arrangements will exist that are adequately resourced and managed.

Reason for Decision

The Council wants to eradicate rough sleeping in line with central government objectives. This provision planned for 2018/19 will mean that if anyone is rough sleeping they will have somewhere safe to shelter from the cold and avoid the dangers associated with sleeping outside. Working in partnership with Churches Together will help the Council and its partners engage with people that often do not directly seek help. This engagement is vital in order to help those seeking shelter secure an appropriate form of accommodation.

Background

The winter of 2017/18 presented significant difficulties in respect of efforts to provide severe weather shelter for people without accommodation. During 2017 the local group of 'Churches Together' initiated a new provision over the winter. This utilised the Purfleet Trusts building at St Anne's Fort and operated on Friday and Saturday night. The arrangements that had been used in previous years – utilising some emergency beds at Merchants Terrace and a room with camp beds at Gaywood Road (a scheme run by Genesis) also operated.

The demand for these spaces was significant because of two factors: - 1) unrepresented numbers of people with no accommodation (42 people used the night shelters over the period). There were around 60-65 people identified with no accommodation over the period the shelter provision was run; And 2) Extended periods of cold sub-zero temperatures (night and day).

The emergency beds were continuously occupied from November through to March. Over this time, periods of extreme cold extended during the day time as well as the night. Some people using the provision were suffering from health conditions related to being exposed to hours of cold weather during the day including frost bite, hypothermia, and trench foot. The shelter provision was then for some periods of time opened during the day as well as the night.

There were problems in responding to this level of demand that meant that the organisations involved namely: Genesis, Purfleet Trust, Churches Together and the Borough Council were not prepared. There were difficulties in covering the hours required by appropriate staff. Bank staff that had been used in previous years was no longer available. There were also issues with disruption to the Purfleet Trusts normal daily activities. In discussions with all of these organisations in March it was agreed that we collectively needed to prepare for a different approach for winter 2018/19

A meeting was held in May 2018 to discuss the way forward and from this meeting a service is proposed that will address the issues of last year and ensure that plans are made to deal with the worst case scenario.

Proposal

- A night shelter operational from 5.30pm to 10am the following day. The initiative to run from November until March covering 22 weeks.
- The provisions to be based at the Purfleet Trust's former premises at St Ann's Fort – Purfleet are re-locating to the former Red Cross premises, Austin Fields.
- The service to be provided by Churches Together but working in partnership with Genesis (particularly the new rough sleeper outreach service) The Purfleet Trust, and the Borough Council.

- Churches Together to operate the provision with 4 employees, who will additionally be supported by a team of volunteers – many of whom have already made a commitment to be involved.
- In addition to the Shelter provision Churches Together will provide some food and comfort to people using the service – from voluntary donations
- It is planned only for 2018/19 – and to be reviewed thereafter

Agreed principles and conditions

- ‘Churches Together’ want to ensure universal access – they will need to work with other partners to ensure that everyone engages with appropriate agencies to facilitate accommodation solutions. This will apply to people outside the area with no local connection. Partners will ensure that whilst access is maintained that efforts will be made to help people re-connect with areas they have come from.
- The shelter will be in line with basic ‘rest centre’ provision and is not appropriate for extended periods of time.
- The shelter is designed to be a temporary solution to avoid rough sleeping or sleeping in a dangerous environment and is not accommodation.
- The Borough Council will need to be satisfied in relation to arrangements for personal safety and fire risk assessment.

Financial implications

Initial cost estimates prepared by Churches Together indicate the costs involved will be in the region of £50,000 – this will include staffing costs and costs of hiring the building for the period of the service.

It is proposed that the Borough Council make a conditional commitment to meet half of these costs of **£25,000**. This will then enable Churches Together to have the confidence to move forward on arrangements including recruiting staff, and securing the building. The conditionality is based on the service as described being delivered i.e. 7 days a week. The funding can be met from available resources under the Flexible Homelessness Support grant received from Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government for year 2017/18.

Funding requests to cover the remaining costs will be made to Norfolk County Council, the local CCG, and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Options Considered

The alternative option is to commission an alternative provision. This is not favoured as it is unlikely that any other organisation would be interested in

delivering such an initiative. The proposal also benefits from the commitment of a number of volunteers who will assist employed staff. Furthermore, the group are committed to assisting people in these circumstances, and commissioning an alternative service would probably mean that a duplicate service would run which would not be appropriate.

Do nothing is not an option in the context of evidence over the last 2-3 years of increasing numbers of vulnerable people with complex needs rough sleeping.

Policy Implications

Severe weather shelter arrangements form part of the Councils emerging new strategy on homelessness and rough sleeping.

Personnel Implications

None

Statutory Considerations

Providing cold weather shelter arrangements go beyond a statutory duty, however, there is an expectation from government that housing authorities take a co-ordinating role in these matters.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Pre screening report template attached)

Risk Management Implications

It is important that adequate and robust arrangements for severe weather shelter are made as there is a risk that people that the Council has identified as being without accommodation, could experience serious harm associated with living outside in cold weather.

Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None

Background Papers

None

.....
Signed
(Cabinet Member)

.....
Date

Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



Name of policy/service/function	Proposed night shelter –provision Winter 2018/ 2019				
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	New				
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	Provision of a shelter operating 7 nights a week through the winter from November to March 22 weeks. This is not a statutory provision but will help stabilize those who are rough sleeping, and give an opportunity for appropriate organizations to engage and work on accommodation solutions.				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			√	
	Disability			√	
	Gender			√	
	Gender Re-assignment			√	
	Marriage/civil partnership			√	
	Pregnancy & maternity			√	
	Race			√	
	Religion or belief			√	
	Sexual orientation			√	
	Other (eg low income)			√	
Question	Answer	Comments			
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	No				
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No				
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	Yes	The initiative is designed to address the disadvantage faced by homeless people with complex needs			
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	Yes / No	Actions: no action			
		Actions agreed by EWG member:			
Assessment completed by: Name Duncan Hall					
Job title Housing Services Manager	Date 10 July, 2018				

Please Note: If there are any positive or negative impacts identified in question 1, or there any 'yes' responses to questions 2 – 4 a full impact assessment will be required.