

1. **Accommodation for Offenders Accommodation Scheme** (Pages 2 - 7)

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 Sam Sandell E-mail: cllr.sam.sandell@west-norfolk.gov.uk | | Other Cabinet Members consulted: | | |
| | | Other Members consulted: | | |
| Lead Officer: Ross Hefford E-mail Ross.Hefford@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial:01553 616299 | | Other Officers consulted: Duncan Hall, Nikki Patton | | |
| Financial Implications YES | Policy/Personnel Implications No | Statutory Implications YES | Equal Impact Assessment YES If YES: Pre-screening | 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| If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is (are) paragraph(s) 3 | | | | |
| Date meeting advertised: 15 th February 2023 | | Date of meeting decision to be taken: 22 nd February 2023 | | |
| Deadline for Call-In: 1 st March 2023 | | | | |

Accommodation for Offenders Accommodation Scheme Funding

Summary

This report details spending in respect of the Accommodation for Offenders Accommodation Scheme grant funding provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support prison leavers or ex-offenders who have served a prison sentence within the last 12 months in accessing accommodation in the private sector. A funding application was submitted by Norwich City Council on behalf of the seven Norfolk districts to provide this scheme across the county.

Recommendation

1. To agree the allocation of this external grant funding in line with the details within this report.
2. To delegate to the Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing & Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community, responsibility to enter both a contract and service level agreement with a Provider to deliver the scheme set out in this report and agree any changes required.

Reason for Decision

It is necessary to agree to the entering of an external contract to deliver this scheme in line with DLUHC's Accommodation for Offenders funding program.

Background

This funding is part of the DLUHC's joint working with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and has been developed to complement the MoJ's recently announced Community Accommodation Service (CAS), which will provide interim accommodation for people who are homeless on leaving custody, for up to 12 weeks.

Norfolk is a CAS funded region, and the aim is to build a pathway for those who would otherwise be homeless on leaving prison, through the MoJ's CAS provision, before moving onto their own private rented sector tenancy through this scheme. Norwich City Council have led on a second funding application which will provide four case workers across the county for two additional years (2023/24 – 2024/25) to access accommodation for ex-offenders in the private sector. King's Lynn & West Norfolk have been allocated one worker who will work across King's Lynn & West Norfolk and North Norfolk. This is the same as number of workers for the current scheme that is already in place.

The application has been to date DLUHC has been successful and the funding will be available within the next few months with this extension of the grant funding commencing on the 1st April 2023. The funding per worker per year equates to £43,218 in year one, £44,946.72 in year two. The funding also includes £125,000 per year to support a minimum of 50 ex-offenders per year (100 in total) to access the private sector with up to £2,000 per client to support them into private sector accommodation. The £2000 per client will be payable by Norwich City Council on a case by case basis. The four workers are split across the county with one worker allocated to Norwich City Council, one worker for Great Yarmouth, one worker for Broadland and South Norfolk and one worker for King's Lynn & West with North Norfolk.

The post holder will work with Probation, Prisons, Housing Options Teams and private sector landlords. These posts will provide some coordinating support to prison leavers (including women from Peterborough prison) and to landlords as well as negotiating and brokering access to the private rented sector.

This service supports the No Homelessness in Norfolk Strategy which aim is to deliver a more joined up approach to homelessness across Norfolk. The service will work alongside the Community Offender Manager in Norfolk Probation Service and the Homeless Prevention Team who manage the Community Accommodation Service (CAS).

This is a specialist area of work. The Council will procure the services of a provider to deliver this scheme. The funding will be used to secure a worker who will seek to secure accommodation for ex-offenders in the private sector.

The service will be delivered over a 24-month period. This new contract will commence on the 1st April 2023 to the 31st March 2025 and will be subject to TUPE arrangements for the worker who is currently providing the service. The funding can only be used for this purpose.

Options Considered

The funding can only be used to provide this scheme in line with the submission of the bid to DLUHC. The outcomes and success of this scheme are monitored by DLUHC.

Policy Implications

The proposal for using this funding is consistent with the Council's focus on homelessness prevention activities as set out in the Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2024.

Financial Implications

The costs of the scheme outlined within this report will all be covered by the DLUHC grant. Using the funding in this way helps to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping, this in turn helps to avoid costs incurred by the Council of expensive B&B.

Personnel Implications

Not applicable at this time.

Statutory Considerations

The Council has statutory obligations under the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Equality Working Group will monitor the impact of the use of this grant funding and request feedback from Strategic Housing team at the end of each of the financial year 2023/24 and 2024/25. (Prescreening report template attached)

Risk Management Implications

The risks associated with this decision are that failure to respond to opportunities to provide accommodation and services to ex-offenders could lead to increasing levels of homelessness and rough sleeping. Failure to respond effectively to the identified issue of rough sleeping can lead to tragic consequences for individuals in our communities.

Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None

Background Papers

Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24

Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

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



| | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|----------|---------|--------|
| Name of policy/service/function | Accommodation for Offenders Accommodation Scheme | | | | |
| Is this a new or existing policy/service/function? | Existing | | | | |
| <p>Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened.</p> <p>Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations</p> | <p>This service is intended to support ex-offenders leaving prison or who have had a custodial sentence within the last 12 months to access the private rented sector. Ex-offenders will need to be tenancy ready, and any accommodation sought would need to be a suitable and affordable assured shorthold tenancy.</p> <p>The Council has statutory obligations under the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</p> | | | | |
| 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 | | | x | |
| | Disability | | | x | |
| | Gender | | | x | |
| | Gender Re-assignment | | | x | |
| | Marriage/civil partnership | | | x | |
| | Pregnancy & maternity | | | x | |
| | Race | | | x | |
| | Religion or belief | | | x | |
| | Sexual orientation | | | x | |
| Other (e.g. low income) | x | | | | |

| Question | Answer | Comments |
|---|--------|--|
| <p>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 favoring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</p> | No | <p>This report considers the use of DLUHC grant funding that is provided specifically for local housing authorities to provide a rehousing option for ex-offenders. The service is intended to support ex-offenders who the council would not normally have a statutory duty to accommodate i.e., would not have a priority need under homelessness legislation.</p> |
| <p>3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</p> | No | <p>This service will have a positive impact on the community as it helps ex-offenders who the council would not normally have a legal duty to accommodate access private sector accommodation. Providing ex-offenders with accommodation have a significant impact on reducing reoffending and improving the lives of e-offenders.</p> |
| <p>4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</p> | Yes | <p>The service is intended to support ex-offenders, to provide them with a rehousing option to prevent them from rough sleeping or becoming street homeless and reoffending.</p> |
| <p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</p> <p>If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p> | Yes | <p>The proposals outlined in this report are specifically designed to have a positive impact on the lives of ex-offenders. The impact of this proposal may be minor or significant depending on the specific circumstances of the individuals concerned, but the aim is to maximise the positive benefits for ex-offenders where possible.</p> <p>Actions: None</p> <hr/> <p>Actions agreed by EWG member:</p> |

If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:

A full impact assessment is not necessary as all of the impacts are positive. The proposal outlined will have a positive impact on ex-offenders and will be focused on those as outlined in the background segment of this report. The nature of ex-offenders rough sleeping means that these individuals are likely to have a low income, and many will have physical and/or mental disabilities. However, those without disabilities will not be excluded and are actively included within the service.

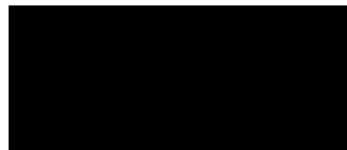
Other protected characteristics such as race, religion, gender or sexual orientation will not prevent access to the service as the criteria for receiving support is primarily based around the individual's specific circumstances in relation to ex-offending, being released from prison or having served a custodial sentence within the last 12 months and without accommodation.

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Individuals with protected characteristics are not expected to be more likely to access the service than others.

The Equality Working Group will monitor the impact of the use of this grant funding and request feedback from Strategic Housing team at the end of the 2022/23 to 2023/24 financial years.



Decision agreed by EWG member:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Assessment completed by: | Ross Hefford |
| Name | |
| Job title | |
| Date | |