

Housing Related Support Grant Agreements 2022/2023

Councillor Andy Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance in consultation with Councillor Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation

Deadline date: 18th March 2022

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Councillor Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture, and Recreation Charlotte Black, Corporate Director People and Communities
Is this a Key Decision?	YES If yes has it been included on the Forward Plan: YES Unique Key decision Reference from Forward Plan: KEY/18FEB22/06
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	YES
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:

1. Award specific grants for Housing Related Support, which will be funded through the Housing Related Support Programme (formerly Supporting People Programme), to the following organisations for the period of 12 months, 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023:
 - Longhurst Group (formerly Axiom Housing Association) – Hostel Accommodation and Drop-in Services - £540,600.04;
 - Cross Keys Homes – Hostel Accommodation - £101,091.26;
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough YMCA – Hostel Accommodation - £255,060.67;
 - Futures Housing Group – Hostel Accommodation - £59,227.89
 - Home Group – Hostel Accommodation - £74,842.70

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 This report seeks the Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture, and Recreation approval to award grant funding to providers of Housing Related Support for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

2.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Resources to consider exercising delegated authority under paragraphs 3.4.3 and 3.4.6 of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph (k).

3. TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	N/A
---	-----------	---	------------

4. DETAILS OF DECISION REQUIRED

4.1 The Housing Related Support Programme is funded from a non-ring-fenced revenue grant from the Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG) which is paid to the Council through the Area Based Grant.

4.2 The focus of the Housing Related Support programme is now on the prevention of homelessness and includes the provision of homeless hostels, floating outreach support and drop-in services to vulnerable groups such as young people at risk, offenders or people at risk of offending, young parents, victims of domestic abuse, single homeless and homeless families, people with mental health illness, those who are chronically excluded and people with learning disabilities. The grant funding continues to contribute towards the cost of support staff providing Housing Related Support.

4.3 Subject to the recommendations of this Decision Notice being followed, the grant recipients that will receive Housing Related Support grants are:

- Longhurst Group (formerly Axiom Housing Association) – Peterborough Foyer, New Haven and Fair View Court Hostels housing 97 people and providing Drop-In Services for young people, young people at risk, young parents, individuals who are under licence with the probation service and refugees;
- Cross Keys Homes – five homeless hostels – 75 rooms in total for homeless individuals and families;
- Futures Housing Group – Mayors Walk Hostel and move-on flats supporting 26 people with medium support needs;
- Home Group – Eastlands Hostel for 14 people with mental health problems;
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough YMCA – The Cresset Hostel for 82 single homeless people with medium/low support needs and Time Stop for 22 young single homeless people with high support needs.

4.5 A review of Housing Related Support (HRS) services across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was completed in 2018. With the removal of the ring fencing and ongoing financial pressures being experienced by the Council, the HRS programme was subject to significant cuts several years ago. Providers have had to adjust the offer to ensure it was sustainable. Due to the uncertainty regarding potential ongoing financial pressure on the programme and because many of the support providers also provided the physical accommodation settings, a decision was made to move to annual grant agreement awards and this arrangement has continued for the last few years with supported clients also being in receipt of Housing Benefit at the higher rate as the accommodation units are classed as supported exempt accommodation.

- 4.6 It is now felt the appropriate time to enter into a suitable procurement exercise to award longer term contracts which will give providers more stability for planning and re-modelling purposes and to introduce robust performance monitoring on the providers delivery of those contracts. A Soft Market Test exercise was concluded on the 28 May 2021 to which there were six responses, three of which were from existing providers. Those responses clearly indicated that the providers would be unwilling to continue to provide the accommodation for current use if they were not awarded the support contract and would look to re-purpose the accommodation settings.
- 4.7 The Soft Market Testing was followed by a Supplier Engagement Event with several organisations prominent in the supported accommodation field attending. The proposed Supported Accommodation Pathway and Panel were discussed at that event. The Coronavirus pandemic has seen providers of accommodation and support come together in a more collaborative way than for some time and the opportunity to build on these strengthened relationships is one that needs to continue and grow. A fortnightly Supported Accommodation Panel, using a standard referral form, is now established and is a forum where cases are reviewed and where the clients progress since moving into the setting are discussed. It is proposed to widen the scope of the panel to include allocation decisions, moves between settings and ultimately, the move on to independent accommodation.
- 4.8 A paper was taken to the Joint Commissioning Board in June 2021 seeking approval to move away from the annually awarded grant agreements to existing providers and to adopt the proposed longer term procurement approach for Housing Related Support Services from April 2022. Approval was given but the board recommended that the procured services should be from April 2023 to give a realistic time frame in order to complete the procurement exercise. The Board recommended that the current grant agreements be awarded from April 2022 to March 2023 in order to facilitate this.
- 4.9 The Eastlands service, operated by Home Group, is jointly funded by HRS grant funding and Mental Health Support funding. The MH funding is currently undergoing a process of review and change and has recently moved to being funded on a client-by-client basis rather than solely by block funding. Further work is underway during 2022/2023 across this and other services which will result in a new framework of mental health support providers for eligible clients to buy specialist support as required.
- 4.10 Housing Related Support Commissioners are working with Mental Health Commissioners to help shape the proposed new service. Continued grant funding for the exiting Home Group service for 2022/2023 will allow time for that review of service requirements whilst maintaining service delivery to their vulnerable clients.
- 4.11 Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council jointly commissioned a multidisciplinary floating support service. Peterborough City Council's annual contribution to this service is £57,663.66. This service is currently being jointly re-tendered and is therefore not subject to this CMDN
- 4.12 Historically Peterborough City Council has made grant awards to Peterborough Women's Aid towards their refuge service. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have jointly commissioned the County Refuge Housing Related Support Service and our contribution to this is £61,409.41. The service will commence on the 1 April 2022 and therefore is not subject to this CMDN
- 4.7 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in February 2013 because of the proposed cuts to the Housing Related Support Programme in 2013/2014. The Equality Impact Assessment has been further reviewed in relation to the grant awards in subsequent years, which are at the same level, to assess the impact of the funding.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation has been carried out with all existing grant recipients of Housing Related Support funding on the award of grant agreements for a further period of one year from 1 April 2022 and the future full procurement which will continue throughout 2022.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

6.1 Award grant funding and grant agreements for the continued provision of accommodation based Housing Related Support to grant recipients for a period of one year.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS & ANY RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

7.1 The recommendations in this report will ensure that the continuity of Housing Related Support to some of the most vulnerable in society is achieved, whilst a longer-term solution is explored.

7.2 Housing Related Support is provided for vulnerable people, often with complex support needs either in an accommodation-based setting, through drop-in support or through floating support provided by outreach workers. Our evidence shows that the Housing Related Support provided through the homeless hostels plays a significant role in helping to reduce homelessness in the city. Drop-in and floating support reaches hard to engage groups, assisting people with complex and entrenched needs, often living chaotic lifestyles.

7.3 The Homelessness Act 2002 sets out the Council's powers to meet the aims of the act and its duties towards homeless people.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Cut funding completely and stop the Housing Related Support. Rejected due to the adverse impact on the provision of hostel provision and homeless prevention.

8.2 Carry out a full procurement exercise now – rejected. A full procurement exercise is underway with an achievable timeline to have contracts in place by April 2023

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial

9.1 Grants will be awarded subject to confirmed funding for the Housing Related Support Programme and the provider entering into a grant agreement with the Council.

9.2 The breakdown of Housing Related Support is as follows:

- Longhurst Group (formerly Axiom Housing Association) – Hostel Accommodation and Drop-in Services - £540,600.04;
- Cross Keys Homes – Hostel Accommodation - £101,091.26;
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough YMCA – Hostel Accommodation - £255,060.67;
- Futures Housing Group – Hostel Accommodation - £59,227.89
- Home Group – Hostel Accommodation - £74,842.70

Legal

9.3 The Council has the legal power to make grant awards under the general power of competence contained in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

9.4 **Subsidy Control - subsidy received under Services of Public Economic Interest has been considered in the application of this grant.**

Equalities

9.5 There are no equalities implications arising from this decision.

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.6 This decision is anticipated to have a neutral impact because the award of agreement continues existing arrangements and therefore emissions will not change.

10. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

10.1 None.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

None