

Public Document Pack CABINET

8 APRIL 2019

Present: Councillors Chowney (Chair), Batsford, Beaney, Fitzgerald, Forward, Rogers, Lee, Patmore

167. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None Received

168. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

| <u>Councillor</u> | <u>Minute</u> | <u>Interest</u> |
|-------------------|---------------|--|
| Rogers | 170. | Personal- volunteer for snowflake |
| Beaney | 173a. | Personal - Hastings Housing company director |

169. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING ON 4 MARCH 2019

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2019 be approved as a true record.

RESOLVED under rule 13.3 of the council’s constitution, the recommendations set out in minute number 171 were agreed without being called for discussion.

170. ROUGH SLEEPING UPDATE

Andrew Palmer, Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment presented a report to advise Cabinet on trends in rough sleeping locally and update on the work of the council and its partners to address this issue.

Michael Courts, Strategic Housing and Projects Manager gave an update to the councillors around the rough sleeping in Hastings. He spoke about the range of activities that the council are undertaking to reduce the number of rough sleepers in the borough. The council is increasingly reliant on external funding to meet the increase in demand for homelessness services. Often the nature of the funding is that it is short term and has to be competitively bid for. This is resource intensive and can prevent effective long term planning. The Rough Sleeping Initiative is a joint project between Hastings and Eastbourne Councils and contains a multi-disciplinary team of health, mental health, social care, substance misuse and housing professionals working collaboratively to develop holistic support plans for each individual. It has been operating for 6 months so far and has been very successful. There is a new

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project the rapid rehousing pathway, the project is based on a supported lettings model, creating a dedicated team of support officers working with rough sleepers with low to medium level support needs and people at a high risk of rough sleeping to access and sustain accommodation.

Councillors discussed the service and gave thanks to the officers for all their hard work on this. They discussed how the home works service has been re-invigorated and how it tries to prevent people at risk from becoming rough sleepers. The funding is short term and officers are working hard daily to provide these services even though the projects future is uncertain with the nature of the funding. If these services were to be removed then there would be a crisis, and it is a service that takes time and trust.

Councillors asked questions around the supply of units for housing first and were told that working in partnership with Optivo, the largest landlords locally, they have created a memorandum with them that has flagged several units that will let the council know when they are vacant. The Council would hope to build on this in future and encourage other major landlords to participate in the scheme. Councillors spoke on how rough sleeping is a national problem and not just local, and that seaside towns in particular have seen an increase in rough sleeping. Many rough sleepers do not have a strong connection with the local area but come here because they have fond memories of childhood or other visits in happier periods of their life.

Officers explained that revised legislation covering single homelessness households had widened the Council's responsibilities and resulted in many more people being accommodated temporarily and for longer periods. Councillors discussed the problems in finding accommodation how some landlords will not accept guarantors. This might impact upon the council's ability to help rough sleepers find more permanent accommodation. It was recognised that a severe shortages of affordable housing in both the social and private stock was hampering efforts to move people on.

Councillor Batsford proposed approval of the recommendations of the Assistant Director's report. This was seconded by Councillor Rogers.

RESOLVED (Unanimously) that:

- 1. To endorse the actions outlined in the report aimed at helping to address the increasing trend in rough sleeping.**
- 2. To acknowledge progress mobilising the Hastings and Eastbourne Rough Sleeping Initiative in 2018/19 and to authorise expenditure of £824,843 to continue the programme of services in 2019/20.**
- 3. To authorise expenditure of £310,000 of funding awarded to the Hastings Borough Council-led Rapid Rehousing Pathway project. To grant an exemption to the council's Financial Rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures, to enable the council to procure the service directly from Southdown Housing Association.**
- 4. That £10,000 is reallocated from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant allocation to support temporary accommodation and rent in advance of deposits for people using the Rapid Rehousing Pathway.**

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5. To authorise expenditure of the from the reducing health inequalities programme, funded by Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group, including £20,000 worth of funding for a project working with rough sleepers.
6. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing and Leisure Services, to finalise arrangements for the mobilisation and delivery, including entering into any contractual arrangements, of the Rough Sleeping Initiative, Rapid Rehousing Pathway and Clinical Commissioning Group funded activities.

Reasons for Recommendations:

The council has secured additional funding for projects to reduce rough sleeping.

171. MUSEUM COMMITTEE MINUTES - 11 MARCH 2019

Under rule 13.3, the recommendations of the report were agreed without being called for discussion.

172. NOTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

173. URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

173.1 Temporary Accommodation Update

Andrew Palmer, Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment presented a report to update Cabinet on progress in acquiring temporary accommodation units, using the capital budget set aside in October 2018. To seek delegated authority from Cabinet to mobilise the Accessing the Private Rented Sector, Flexible Homelessness Support Grant top-up and Homelessness Prevention Grant top up a project funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local

Andrew Palmer, Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment spoke on the report to the councillors. The private rented sector has become more expensive and supply of accommodation in the social sector is increasingly limited. As a more households were being placed in temporary housing by the council and for longer periods, consequently costs had risen. Accommodating larger families in in B&B's is was particularly challenging and expensive. The council was taking a number of measures to relieve the pressure including directly purchasing housing specifically to meet this demand.

Michael Courts, Strategic Housing and Projects Manager added that the council has also secured more funding for a team of tenancy sustainment officers. This will help with people who are accessing mainstream housing services having a poor tenancy sustainment history. A key element of this project is accessing the private rented sector and improving access to accommodation as well as managing the temporary accommodation the council already owns more effectively.

Councillors agreed the importance of acquiring more homes for this purpose as it would save the council money as well as helping people to get their lives back on

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track. It is important to move people out of Temporary accommodation and into permanent accommodation. Councillors also asked if people were having difficulty find accommodation because landlords are selling their properties or just because there are fewer properties on the market.

Mr Palmer advised that there was a regular turnover of private stock as owners bought and sold portfolios Section 21 notices were a common reason for loss of accommodation; although not the only reason

Officers explained that the landlord guarantee scheme was being introduced to help people access private rented sector accommodation

Councillors raised the issue of some landlords refusing to accept guarantors and whether this would affect the council's efforts in finding people accommodation. They were told that the council has indications from some letting agencies that that they would be prepared to accept guarantees offered by the Council. Councillors discussed how the council is looking at wrap-around schemes to support beyond the guarantor and make landlords more willing to take on the risk of renting to these people. Councillors discussed how serviced accommodations (such as air B&B) are affecting the market and asked if the council had any figures around this. It was agreed that officers would take this away and further consider the matter...

Councillor Batsford proposed approval of the recommendations of the Assistant Director's report. This was seconded by Councillor Lee.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) that:

- 1. For Cabinet to acknowledge progress in acquiring temporary accommodation**
- 2. For Cabinet to authorise expenditure of £372,500 from the accessing the private rented sector grant**
- 3. For Cabinet to authorities expenditure of £225,000 from the Homelessness Prevention and Flexible Homelessness Support Grant top ups for the interventions set out in the report**
- 4. For Cabinet to delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment, in consultation the Lead Member for Housing and Leisure to mobilise the projects**

Reasons for Recommendations:

There has been a significant increase in the number of households living in temporary accommodation in Hastings, as well as the amount of time people spend living there. This trend has both a financial implications for the council and impacts the quality of life of people living in temporary accommodation

173.2 Commercial Property Purchases

RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the meeting during the, consideration of the items of business listed below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of

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“exempt” information as defined in the paragraphs of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 referred to in the relevant report.

Peter Grace Assistant Director Financial Services and Revenues presented a report to consider the potential purchase of a commercial property

Reasons for Recommendations:

The site presents significant employment opportunities within Hastings and St Leonards and likewise a significant Business Rate income. Whilst there may be opportunities to redevelop the site in future years the need to retain the site for employment space is a priority, as is the need to retain Business Rate income. There may also be the opportunity to modernise and develop some of the building in the medium term providing the Council with the opportunity to drive greater economic regeneration.

Councillors did not propose the recommendations of the report

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.15 pm)

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