

Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No 4/18

Date: October 2018

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: This briefing note sets out the Council's position in relation to the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative fund; the award for 2018/19; the progress so far and the intentions for utilisation of the potential funding award for 2019/20. This note is in response to questions from Members regarding rough sleeping when considering the Council Plan Monitoring Performance report at the 5 July 2018 meeting of the Business Support O&S Committee.

Heading: Medway Rough Sleeper Initiative

Background

In March 2018, commitment to addressing the scale of Rough Sleeping was consolidated into agreement around funding a co-produced programme in the 83 local authorities deemed to have a high level of rough sleeping at the November 2017 count. Initial discussions were held with local authorities and this was followed by a spreadsheet being sent out, with a drop down menu of options, to find out what options the local authority could see working in their area. In mid-May, visits were carried out by Advisers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), where they scrutinised our proposals, rejected some elements and suggested changes. We then had to submit a detailed, costed proposal of how we would deliver each of the costed interventions, and how we saw these impacting on the number of rough sleepers in Medway.

We were asked to work towards a 50% reduction in rough sleepers by the November count. Our proposal was submitted at the end of May and we received agreement to fund the majority of our initial interventions on 11 June. We were granted £410,000 with the understanding that we would deliver services from the start of July.

Medway Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018/19 interventions

It is important to note that the funding is strictly tied to individual interventions and Medway Council has not been given a pot of money to allocate to services. Each individual intervention has been costed, benchmarked by the MHCLG team and

agreed. There is no flexibility around usage of this funding without explicit consent from the MHCLG.

Since the early conversations with MHCLG, and with a clear vision following the announcement of funding, we have worked at high pace to ensure that our services are mobilised in a timely fashion. We carried this out by directly employing key staff members in the roles of Rough Sleeper Coordinator and Private Sector Brokerage Worker. We seconded in a 0.5FTE Social Work Practitioner to support vulnerable rough sleepers with mental health problems, and we commissioned a range of services from providers operating within Medway (Pathways to Independence, Riverside, Turning Point and Improving Mental Health Provision).

Medway Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018/19 interventions

From July 2018, utilising the £410,000 grant received, the following services have been in operation.

Rough Sleeper Coordinator	Funding for a rough sleeper coordinator to oversee the Medway RSI project and monitor performance and provide monthly progress against targets to the MHCLG and to agree remedial action where diversion from planned targets is seen. The role would coordinate actions across partners within the RSI service. The post would also act as operational point for management of all elements and link directly with partner services and the Blue Light Project.
Personal Budgets	A personal budget allowance of £10,000 - equivalent to £500 for twenty individuals for rent deposits, furniture, etc. To be allocated by the RSI Coordinator.
Assertive Outreach Team	Outreach team leader and three outreach workers to cover a shift pattern including early mornings, evenings and weekends. Specific targeting will be made to women, especially where there is history of domestic abuse, couples and people leaving prison.
Housing First Service	This funding allows us to scale up our existing Housing First provision, covering staffing costs for two workers, furnishings, equipment and mobile phone costs for each person living in the service. Provision must be able to cater for rough sleeping couples and ensure allocations meet the needs of women amongst the rough sleeping population.
Rough Sleeper Assessment and Accommodation Service	For increased provision to provide high support units within existing hostel provision. This will allow two commissioned homeless hostels to take on clients with higher complex needs. This funding provides 11 units of higher support accommodation.
Private Rented Sector Brokerage Worker	Provision of a specialist worker to navigate access to private rented sector rooms or flats for people who are at risk of sleeping rough or have just started sleeping rough. To include freeing up spaces in supported housing and hostel provision by

	sourcing properties and making offers to people when they are ready for move on.
Guaranteed rents for Private Rented Sector Brokerage Intervention	This provides interim rents to ensure properties are not lost due to concerns around benefit delays or any potential stoppages. Any monies recouped from housing benefit will be recycled into further deposit and rent advances.
Extended temporary accommodation pilot	This funding allows emergency accommodation to be used for people who would be deemed non-priority to allow focussed work from existing services to get them into appropriate housing.
Funded mental health practitioner to enhance all RS services	This funds a qualified Mental Health practitioner to act as a direct conduit between mental health services and the Rough Sleeping Initiative to work with MH issues amongst the street population and significant number of MH/dual diagnosis street population who will not access existing services. The post would also facilitate fast access to primary care services such as GP practices. This is supplemented by a drop in service, with outreach and visiting support from a voluntary sector mental health provider.

Medway Rough Sleeping Initiative planned 2019/20 interventions

We have proposed to run a similar range of services for the following financial year and this has been provisionally agreed by our Adviser. As we will have a greater spread of data throughout the year, this will allow us to see which interventions deliver the greatest returns in terms of engagement with rough sleepers and the numbers of people who have successfully moved into accommodation, reconnected with their home local authority or have had support to stay in accommodation and have been prevented from returning to sleeping on the street.

This programme of interventions is subject to modification prior to April 2019 with the agreement of our MHCLG Adviser. Our 2019/20 settlement is a grant of £486,000.

Summary of the expected outcomes of the Medway Rough Sleeping initiative

In line with all 83 funded authorities, Medway Council have been provided with a specific range of outcomes to determine the success of our 2018/19 Rough Sleeper Initiative. These are:

- a. Medway achieving a RAG rating of green or amber/green from the MHCLG. This RAG rating will be based on the following:
 - i. delivery of all the RSI funded interventions for 2018-19 funding that have been agreed fully and on time. (If the agreed interventions were not delivered fully and/or on time then MHCLG reserve the right not to pay the provisional allocation for 2019-20 or to only pay this partially).

- ii. The approval of the MHCLG RSI adviser that the purpose of the original proposals is being met. This assessment to take account of local environment and any mitigating circumstances.
- iii. The approval of the MHCLG RSI Adviser that Medway Council are demonstrating sufficient leadership and positive behaviours on the RSI agenda i.e. senior leaders engaged are in our plans to reduce rough sleeping, and Medway Council being responsive to MHCLG requests.

b. An appropriate rough sleeping strategy being in place and agreed with our MHCLG RSI Adviser. If your 2018 rough sleeping snapshot figure does not reduce against your 2017 snapshot figure: The MHCLG would reserve the right to work with us to revise and refocus our proposed interventions for 2019-20 where appropriate.

Summary of the monitoring framework of the Medway Rough Sleeping Initiative

We currently report on progress towards meeting the aims of the Rough Sleeping Strategy through a monthly data return to the MHCLG. This outlines:

- How each of our interventions has been mobilised, including how many staff are employed directly to provide these interventions.
- How many people we have sleeping rough month to month.
- Which of our interventions have been successful and the number of people directly assisted to move into accommodation from living on the street, or prevented from becoming a rough sleeper, by each of the separate interventions.

These returns are scrutinised by the MHCLG Advisers who are all experts in the field having been seconded into posts from rough sleeping charities and local authority and central governmental positions. This is overseen by Jeremy Swain on secondment from his role as Chief Executive of Thames Reach.

Summary of progress to date of the Medway Rough Sleeping Initiative

All of our interventions have been successfully mobilised. Significant work is being done cross service to ensure that a database of rough sleepers has been established, and work is being done to provide a brief action plan for each of the rough sleepers identified.

Our outreach and mental health services have been engaging with rough sleepers and building trust and rapport as the first steps to working towards an accommodation offer for each person.

We carried out a rough sleeper count in September. We have been asked to carry out a count every two months. The main count will be in November, and we have commenced preparations for this.

So far, our interventions have moved 30 rough sleepers into a range of supported and temporary accommodation, with a further 8 people having been supported to reconnect with their 'home' authority.

Our MHCLG contacts are in touch with us regularly regarding our performance and visit frequently to see how the service is being delivered. Our Adviser has praised the speed at which we have mobilised our interventions and the successes we have achieved to date.

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