

**CABINET – 23 JUNE 2023****REVIEW OF HOMELESS SUPPORT SERVICES****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to consult on the revised delivery model for homeless support services.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that
 - (a) The commencement of consultation on the draft model for homeless support services be approved;
 - (b) A further report to be submitted to the Cabinet in November 2023, regarding the outcome of the consultation exercise and seeking approval to proceed with the proposed model.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. Following a review of the current service model, a revised delivery model is proposed.
4. The current contract for the provision of homeless support services ends on 31 March 2024.
5. The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27 includes a requirement for savings via a review of homeless support services.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. Subject to the Cabinet's approval it is intended that the consultation will commence in June. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report as part of the consultation exercise at its meeting on 13 September 2023.
7. It is intended that the outcome of consultation and proposed final model will be submitted to the Cabinet on 24 November 2023.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27 (agreed by the Council on 22 February 2023) includes a requirement to save £300,000 by 1 April 2024 through a review of homeless support services.
9. The proposal is aligned with the Public Health Strategy "Delivering good health and prevention services 2022-2027", the Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032 "Staying Healthy, Safe and Well", and the County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26, in particular the outcome keeping people safe and well: ensuring that people are safe and protected from harm, live in a healthy environment and have the opportunities and support they need to live active, independent and fulfilling lives.

Resource Implications

10. The proposed model is expected to achieve savings of £300,000 per annum which would contribute to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings target.
11. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

12. This report will be circulated to all members.

Officer(s) to Contact

Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health
Tel: 0116 305 4239
email: mike.sandys@leics.gov.uk

Joshna Mavji, Assistant Director, Public Health
Tel: 0116 305 0113
email: Joshna.Mavji@leics.gov.uk

PART B

Background

13. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places duties on housing authorities to prevent homelessness and to provide homelessness services.
14. Locally, these responsibilities sit with district councils. Funding through the Homelessness Prevention Grant has been provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support district councils to deliver against these responsibilities.
15. It is not a statutory duty for the County Council to provide specific services for individuals who are homeless, and the Council is not a recipient of grant funding that is focused on preventing or relieving homelessness.
16. The Homelessness Code of Guidance states that housing authorities (in Leicestershire, the district councils) should engage with upper tier authorities in identifying resources available to meet support needs across all cohorts that are at high risk of homelessness. The emphasis of this element of guidance is on prevention of homelessness. There is no statutory responsibility on the upper tier authority.
17. The County Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27 includes a requirement to save £300,000 through a review of homeless support services. This report summarises the review and sets out the proposed new model for consultation.

Review of Existing Service Provision

18. The Council currently commissions a homeless support service which provides support to adults who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This is provided for the Council by Falcon Support Services (Falcon) and Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA). The contract value is £300,000 per annum and ends on 31st March 2024.
19. The support commissioned from Falcon and NCHA is aimed at adults who are homeless or risk becoming so. The key elements of provision include:
 - A referral hub – to process and assess all referrals received to determine the most appropriate course of action.
 - In-reach support – provided within hostel accommodation across Leicestershire.
 - Outreach support – provides services such as telephone support, group work, benefits advice surgeries, signposting, and one-to-one support.
20. The service aims to support individuals to maintain their tenancy, to develop the skills needed to live independently as possible and to access local health

and wellbeing support. It should be noted that the funding does not pay for the running of homeless hostel buildings.

21. A summary of the current offer and challenges are described in the table below.

Provision	Description of provision	Challenges
Referral hub	<p>Service users and professionals refer into the service via telephone or email.</p> <p>An assessment is carried out and the service user is assigned a case worker.</p>	<p>The service holds a waiting list leading to delays in service users accessing support.</p>
Hostel based (in-reach) support	<p>Support provided within hostel accommodation across Leicestershire.</p>	<p>Limited to 30 service users at any one time.</p> <p>Support offer is concentrated within the Falcon Centre in Loughborough.</p> <p>Support offer is concentrated towards non-priority need individuals.</p> <p>Service is underutilised due to slow move-on of service users into alternative accommodation.</p>
Outreach support	<p>Case worker works with a service user on a short-term basis on any areas where they require support.</p>	<p>Predominantly focused on signposting and providing information and advice.</p> <p>Specific support on areas such as substance misuse is not provided.</p>

Proposal

22. The proposal to be consulted on is for the County Council to cease funding a dedicated homeless support service, and instead to provide support via the Council's existing public health services where eligibility is wider.
23. This will be achieved primarily through the universal offer of First Contact Plus and the Local Area Coordination service as opposed to a bespoke offer specifically for individuals who are homeless. First Contact Plus is an online

tool which helps adults in Leicestershire to access information, advice, help and support on a range of services. Local Area Coordinators work with individuals who may be vulnerable or at risk of crisis by building a supportive community around them thereby reducing social isolation.

24. This proposal has been developed based on the review of existing provision, a review of need, a review of the public health grant conditions, and the latest MTFS requirement.
25. The principles of the future approach centre around the following:
 - i. Coverage across the whole of Leicestershire.
 - ii. Eligibility that includes any individual who is currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, irrespective of whether they fall under the priority need group or not.
 - iii. Access to support via a central point of access.
 - iv. Support that is tailored to the needs of each individual with no defined timescales for the support offer.
 - v. Greater focus on improving the health and wellbeing of individuals.
26. This model will involve using First Contact Plus as the referral hub into services which include the following:
 - Department for Work and Pensions for support to access the right benefits.
 - Citizens Advice for debt management support.
 - Community Recovery Team and Local Area Coordination Team for one-to-one support.
 - Warm Homes Service for support on housing issues such as damp, mould, draught proofing, and signposting to funding for energy efficiency measures.
 - Health and wellbeing services such as smoking cessation, drug and /or alcohol misuse, healthy weight, physical activity, and sexual health services.
 - Mental wellbeing services such as Vita Minds (a talking therapies service for low level mental health support).
 - Services provided by the Council's Adults and Communities Department, including community support workers and social care.
 - Adult Learning and Multiply for support on accessing learning and educational courses, including support on budgeting. Multiply is a programme aimed at helping adults to improve their numeracy skills.
27. Where one-to-one support is required, the Local Area Coordination service is well established within communities and so can meet this need through their links with community groups, drop-in sessions and through the direct provision of one-to-one support. Other services commissioned by Public Health such as the substance misuse treatment service and the sexual health service already provide outreach services.

28. A key strength of this approach is that links can be made to a broader range of health and wellbeing services therefore providing a more holistic support offer for individuals. In addition, this approach enables better links into existing public health services and wider onward referrals including to the district housing authorities.

Consultation

29. Subject to the Cabinet's agreement, a 10-week public consultation exercise will take place from June 2023 to seek feedback on the proposed model.
30. The consultation will seek the views of the general public, users of the service, service providers, and a range of additional stakeholders including NHS service providers, district councils, voluntary sector providers, and Leicestershire Police. The survey will be accessible online on the County Council's website and available as a hard copy on request. Consultation will also take place through face to face and online information sessions.
31. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the proposed model at its meeting on 13 September 2023 as part of the consultation process.

Equality Implications

32. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and the impact of a change in service model will be informed by the outcomes of consultation. Initial findings are that the proposal will have a wider reach and be able to offer additional support. The post-consultation EIA will be presented to the Public Health Departmental Equalities Group for sign-off.

Human Rights Implications

33. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Health Implications

34. It is intended that the proposed model will enable individuals to access a broader range of health and wellbeing services therefore providing a more holistic support offer for individuals.

Background Papers

Report to the County Council on 22 February 2023 - "Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 - 2026/27" and minutes of that meeting - <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=134&MIId=6913>