

**PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**DLUHC'S SINGLE HOMELESSNESS ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME**

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – HOUSING & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR SEAN PRENDERGAST

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. North Herts Council has been invited by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to submit a bid to its Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).
- 1.2. The Council is co-producing a bid with Hertfordshire County Council to seek funding for a new accommodation-based support scheme in the district for vulnerable young people who are experiencing or are at risk of rough sleeping. OneYMCA has been selected, following a comprehensive selection process, as the delivery partner and, should the bid be successful, would be responsible for the build and management of the scheme.
- 1.3. At the time of writing, OneYMCA are pursuing potential site options for the proposed scheme. The deadline for bid submission is 10 November 2023.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That Cabinet notes the content of the report and subject to a site being identified approves the submission of a bid under the SHAP programme.
- 2.2. That Cabinet delegates to the Service Director Housing & Environmental Health the preparation and submission of the bid in consultation with the Executive Member.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. There is an urgent need for high quality, accommodation-based support services for single homeless people in the district. Adopting the recommendations at 2.1 and 2.2 would allow the Council to pursue a funding opportunity which if successful, would enable the delivery of a valuable additional resource for the district, benefiting vulnerable young people at risk of rough sleeping.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1. Cabinet could decide against submitting a bid to the SHAP. However, this is not recommended as there are no alternative provisions proposed to cater for young people who are, or are at risk, of rough sleeping.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1 The Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, Cllr Sean Prendergast and the Deputy Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, Cllr Dave Winstanley, have both been consulted and are supportive of the proposals contained in this report.

## **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on 18 August 2023.

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1. The Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) was announced at the end of 2022 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), as part of the government's commitment to end rough sleeping within this Parliament. The SHAP will provide a total of £200 million in funding for additional high-quality specialist accommodation with high levels of support for two specific target groups: the most entrenched rough sleepers and vulnerable young people who are experiencing or are at risk of rough sleeping. DLUHC funding potentially comprises both capital for the initial development and revenue, to help deliver the service, for up to three years.
- 7.2. North Herts Council is one of around 80 local authorities which has been invited by DLUHC to bid for SHAP funding, in our case to address identified gaps in homelessness provision for vulnerable young people aged 18-25. Currently, specialist provision for this age group is provided at Jubilee House in Hitchin but the scheme does not cater for those with high or complex needs or those with offending histories, and typically operates with a waiting list.
- 7.3. The Council has been working with Hertfordshire Growth Board (which is leading the county response to manage growth and has identified accommodation provision for vulnerable adults as a priority) to develop a co-produced bid for submission to the SHAP to meet a 10 November 2023 deadline, the final opportunity to bid for funding. If the bid is successful, the Growth Board hopes to use the North Herts scheme as a template by which to roll out additional schemes in other district/boroughs across the county. Work on the bid is also being supported by Homes England and local DLUHC advisors.
- 7.4. The bid group has recently selected OneYMCA as its delivery partner following a comprehensive selection process. OneYMCA will work with the group to finalise details of the proposed scheme to be submitted to the SHAP and, should the bid be successful, would take on the build and management of the new scheme including provision of 24/7 specialist support services. Site options in the district are currently being explored and although extremely limited, options are being brought forward and being progressed by both OneYMCA and Hertfordshire County Council.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 There remains an ongoing need for high quality accommodation-based support services for single homeless people in the district. DLUHC has identified a specific need in North Herts, aligned to the SHAP target groups, for additional accommodation provision for vulnerable young people who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping. The Council has been invited to bid for funding to address this identified local need. A Strategic Gap Analysis of the existing provision in the district estimates an additional need for 15-20 units of specialist provision for this target group. This would provide intensive accommodation-based support for young people with multiple disadvantages, many of whom have already experienced failed placements, particularly those with an

offending history and/or care leavers. Without additional provision, some of these young people would remain homeless. The Council also remains reliant on hotel placements where alternative accommodation cannot be immediately sourced or where applicants' support needs are too great for current services.

- 8.2 The SHAP provides a valuable opportunity to leverage both additional funding for a much needed service and, through joint-working with OneYMCA and Hertfordshire County Council, new sites for development which are extremely scarce locally. At the time of writing, both OneYMCA and Herts CC are continuing to explore a small number of avenues for potential sites, with final scheme costs and the size and shape of the SHAP bid obviously dependent upon the outcome. The Council is not under any obligations to submit a bid, should a site not be forthcoming.
- 8.3 OneYMCA are an experienced provider of specialist accommodation-based support based on Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) principles and operate successful schemes across the county including at 20 High Street, Baldock following their merger with Haven First. OneYMCA schemes are modelled on psychologically informed environments enabling those who have experienced significant trauma and multiple disadvantage to recover with appropriate intensive support and move on to independent living. Any proposed scheme that receives SHAP funding will be subject to the relevant regulatory requirements, including obtaining planning consent.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. The Housing Act 1985 Section 1 (1) confirms that the District Council is the Local Housing Authority (LHA).
- 9.2 LHAs' homelessness duties are contained within the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which placed significant new duties on English local housing authorities.
- 9.3 LHAs have a legal duty to provide interim (also known as emergency) accommodation to homeless applicants, if, at any point during their enquiries, there is a reason to believe that an applicant may be:
- homeless
  - eligible for assistance, and
  - in priority need

If an LHA fails to provide interim accommodation, or if the accommodation provided is unsuitable for the applicant, this can be challenged by way of judicial review.

- 9.4 The LHA also holds the 'Relief Duty' which applies when a council is satisfied that an applicant is homeless and eligible for assistance; it requires the Council to take reasonable steps to help the applicant secure that suitable accommodation becomes available for the applicant's occupation for at least six months. This therefore requires the Council to work with the applicant to help them find and retain accommodation to meet this legal duty.
- 9.5 The Cabinet's Terms of Reference provides at paragraph 5.6.15; "To oversee the provision of all the Council's services other than those functions reserved to the Council".
- 9.6 The Council is not under any legal obligations to pursue a SHAP bid. Should a bid be successful, funding will be subject to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and DLUHC and a Funding Agreement will also be provided between the Council and OneYMCA. Any successful bid will also be dependant upon obtaining the necessary consents and permits, such as planning and building regulation approval.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Council may be asked to contribute to the capital costs to deliver the new scheme, alongside DLUHC and potentially Herts CC and OneYMCA. This would be considered in line with other requests for commuted sums monies held by the Council in lieu of affordable housing that could not be delivered on previous development sites.
- 10.2 The revenue costs of the bid could be funded by DLUHC for a period of three years to enable the service to bed into existing local pathways and commissioning cycles. Beyond this, the service will be supported in line with local commissioning and funding opportunities provided by partners, including potentially the Council where appropriate, proportionate to evidenced benefit.
- 10.3 The Service Director Resources will be consulted prior to any submission to ascertain the financial implications of any bid to the Council.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Although DLUHC has invited the Council to bid for SHAP funding, there is still a risk that a bid will not be successful or that there are insufficient SHAP funds remaining after the previous rounds of bidding.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. Should the Council's bid be successful, the proposed scheme would specifically benefit vulnerable young people aged 18-25 as stipulated by the SHAP funding criteria, in order to meet existing gaps in provision. This cohort includes young people with multiple disadvantages including those leaving the care system, those with histories of repeated homelessness and unstable housing and those with mental and physical health needs.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.
- 13.2. However, should the bid be successful, the scheme would be delivered by OneYMCA, an existing local provider of services in the district.

## **14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to the proposals in this report.

## **15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 The process of considering and submitting the bid are being undertaken within existing resources.

## **16. APPENDICES**

16.1 None.

**17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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**18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

18.1 DLUHC Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme: prospectus and guidance (outside of Greater London) [Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).