

Item No	Referred from:	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
5A	Date:	12 NOVEMBER 2024
	Title of item:	SUPPORTED HOUSING SCHEME FOR WOMEN
To be considered alongside agenda item:	Agenda Item 9	

The report considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 12 November 2024 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 12th November, 2024, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council](#)

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the Cabinet supports the allocation of £73k of ring fenced MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant to HCC to match fund the two-year pilot of Druglink’s Supported Housing Scheme for Women.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: This proposal has been made in order to enable the two-year pilot to go ahead.

Audio recording – 18 minutes 4 seconds

Councillor Dave Winstanley, the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health presented the report entitled ‘Supported Housing Scheme for Women’ and advised that:

- This proposal was to be put forward to Cabinet on 26 November 2024.
- The aim was to help address the growing need for housing by single homeless women in North Hertfordshire.
- This scheme would help homeless women who have support needs, such as suffering from domestic abuse, mental health issues and substance abuse.
- This was a two-year pilot which would be run in partnership by Hertfordshire County Council and Druglink, which was a Hertfordshire based substance misuse charity.
- An allocation of £73k was required to match fund a commitment from HCC.
- In December 2022 Cabinet had previously agreed funding of £73 of Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) ring fenced Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG) to support a similar scheme, which had fallen through.
- This proposal would offer a tailored safe space for women to empower them to gain independence.
- This initiative would not only meet a critical local need but would support the commitment of the Council to tackle domestic violence in line with the White Ribbon accreditation.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Laura Williams
- Councillor Tina Bhartwas
- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health advised that this scheme would provide a six bedded unit for homeless single women and that Druglink were a very experienced charity which ran similar schemes elsewhere.

In response to questions, the Strategic Housing Manager advised that:

- It was hard to estimate the turnaround of the 6 units until the scheme was up and running as the circumstances for each resident would vary.
- Costs associated with this scheme would be similar to costs associated with the previous scheme that had fallen through.
- If the scheme was successful, after the end of the two-year pilot, all parties would consider funding options nearer the time.
- Druglink were very experienced and looked at a broad spectrum of services, providing support for needs such as poor mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse.
- Meeting the support needs of survivors of domestic abuse was a key priority for the Council.
- The Council would be supporting HCC with a 50/50 stake in the two-year pilot.
- This scheme would be run in a building already owned by HCC and the service would be closely monitored.
- If this scheme was approved, it could be publicised as part of a wider article about the issues faced by homeless people in winter.
- The police would be notified once the scheme was approved in line with safeguarding procedures.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed the recommendation and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and following a vote, it was:

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