

Policy Committee Decision Report

Title of Report:	Homewards Sheffield
Date of Decision:	25 th September 2024
Report To:	Strategy and Resources Committee
Report Of:	Alexis Chappell, Strategic Director Adult Care and Wellbeing
Report Author:	Hannah Crossan-Smith, The Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales and Laura Costa, Service Manager, Commissioning and Partnerships

Executive Summary: The report provides information about and seeks endorsement for the Council's partnership with The Royal Foundation Homewards Programme.

The Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales have launched Homewards: a transformative five-year, locally led programme that will aim to demonstrate that together it's possible to end homelessness – making it rare, brief and unrepeated.

Sheffield is one of only 6 locations selected by The Royal Foundation along with Newport, Northern Ireland, Aberdeen, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and Lambeth.



Council Plan outcomes:

[A place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future](#)

[Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home](#)

[People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing](#)

Policy Committee remit:

This report is to be considered by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee as its remit includes responsibility for any issue identified as being of significant strategic importance or financial risk to the Council (which is considered to be by its nature cross-cutting)

[Part 3C - 3.3 Matters Delegated to Committees May 2024.pdf \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](#)

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? No

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee: -

1. Notes the Homewards Sheffield programme, its aims and ambitions and progress made.
2. Endorse Sheffield City Council's involvement in the Homewards Sheffield Programme and partnership with The Royal Foundation.
3. Notes that once the Local Action Plan is developed, implications of the Plan will be considered by the Strategic Director Adult Care and Wellbeing including any approvals required.
4. Requests that the Strategic Director Adult Care and Wellbeing provides an update in 12 months on delivery of the programme.

Financial Implications: [No] [Approved by: Finance Paul Foster]

Legal Implications: [No] [Approved by: Legal Officer Patrick Chisholm]

Climate Change Implications: Yes CIA Appendix 4- [Climate Impact Assessment](#). Approved by: Suzanne Allen

Equality and Inclusion Implications: Yes- Initial Equality Impact Assessment Completed: EIA ID: 2807 Appendix 5- [EIA Homewards](#) Approved by: Ed Sexton

Background Papers:

Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Overview of the Royal Foundation Homewards Programme.
- Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment

1. Background to the issue

1.1 Our vision is for everyone in Sheffield to have a place to call home.

1.2 As a Council, we have set an ambitious vision and mission for the City through the Council Plan and our contribution to the City Goals. Our focus on **Together We Get Things Done** is core to the ambition to end homelessness for citizens of Sheffield. Only by working across the Council, City and Partners will enable a system wide approach to improving lives and outcomes for people.

1.3 The [Sheffield Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28](#), which was approved by the Housing Policy Committee at its meeting on 15 December 2022, sets out the vision, strategic direction and priorities for homelessness prevention and reduction in Sheffield over the next 5 years. As the strategy sets out, many people are already in crisis before they approach a homelessness service. As a result, the strategy identifies 'proactively preventing homelessness' as one of the five priorities that the council will focus on over the next five years.

1.4 Our evidence shows that we need to get better at helping people earlier on with the right advice, practical help, and support to keep their current home or move in a planned way. We rely on strong collaboration between services to make sure people can access the support they need.

1.5 There is a strong partnership in Sheffield including the establishment of the Homelessness Prevention Forum and our Homelessness Prevention Strategy Board. We continually review and grow our partnerships to tackle system-wide issues that are a barrier to preventing homelessness and tackling multiple disadvantages in the City.

1.6 The foundations in place have enabled Sheffield to be selected by The Royal Foundation as one of only 6 locations along with Newport, Northern Ireland, Aberdeen, Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole, and Lambeth to pilot a programme of activity which will contribute towards ending Homelessness in the City.

2. Proposal

2.1 Homelessness Overview – What is the Current Challenge?

2.1.1 In 2022-2023 3,964 households presented to the Council as currently or at risk of Homelessness, with the main reasons being:

- Asked to leave by family and/or friends

- Fleeing Domestic Abuse
- Loss of Private Rented Housing

2.1.2 Although we are seeing some improvements in preventing Homelessness, including a dedicated Homeless Prevention Team, we continue to experience similar presentation numbers through 2024.

2.1.3 As a result, the use of Temporary Accommodation (TA) has increased by 29.3% since 2022 to 2023. As of March 2024, a total of 725 households were in Temporary Accommodation, including 391 in Bed and Breakfast emergency provision. In line with national housing pressures, Sheffield is experiencing a shortfall of affordable housing for the use of emergency and move on accommodation, resulting in limited options and increased lengths of stay in emergency provision.

2.1.4 In 2023/24, the Council incurred additional costs of £4.9m relating to temporary homelessness and a further £3.5m relating to providing additional supported accommodation. In 2024-25, this is forecast to cost the Council £7.1m for temporary homelessness and £5.5m for supported accommodation and represents a major component of the Council's forecast overspend for the current financial year (as noted by the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 29 August 2024). One of the ways the cost can be mitigated is by upstreaming prevention, to reduce people presenting in crisis. This is both financially beneficial for the Council, and crucially will result in better outcomes for people at risk of homelessness.

2.2 Homewards Programme

2.2.1 In 2023, Sheffield City Council submitted an Expression of Interest to partner with The Royal Foundation alongside a small group of partners in the city. With a shared ambition of ending homelessness, we were able to demonstrate to The Royal Foundation our collective drive and were successful in being chosen as one of six locations nationally to host the Homewards initiative.

2.2.2 Sheffield was successful in being selected for Homewards because we demonstrated a strong existing partnership approach to preventing homelessness, early help and tackling multiple disadvantages through the changing futures programmes.

2.2.3 Homewards is a transformative five-year, locally led programme, supported by The Royal Foundation, that aims to demonstrate that together it is possible to end homelessness, making it rare, brief, and unrepeatable.

2.2.4 Each of the six locations across the UK is being supported by the Royal Foundation to create coalitions of committed people and organisations at a local and national level, giving them the space, tools and relationships to end homelessness together.

2.2.5 Homewards' reach is evident as Sheffield has been invited to join the International Mayors Council on Homelessness through the city's involvement in the Homewards initiative. It is a global forum for city leaders, working on the most pressing challenges, share evidence on initiatives that have worked, and bring global perspectives into the UN agenda. The council includes mayors and elected leaders from major cities across three continents including Chicago, Paris, São Paulo and Helsinki. Sheffield is one of only four British cities chosen to take part. Alongside the Deputy Mayor of London, Cllr Hunt joins Leaders and Mayors from Lambeth, Greater Manchester and Glasgow at the table.

2.2.6 In addition to the global reach, Homewards is supporting Sheffield by providing:

- A Local Delivery Lead, based in Sheffield to support the city and convene the local coalitions, bring in new partners, drive forward the development of a local action plan and identify new opportunities.
- Access to an unprecedented network of best-in-class expertise ensuring our work will be effective and impactful.
- An independent research partner that will support with capacity building, evaluation and sharing what works throughout the programme ensuring our work is replicable and scalable.
- The Homewards Fund, which will support the delivery of Homewards Sheffield's Action Plan, with £500,000 of flexible seed funding available across the lifecycle of the five-year programme.

2.2.7 Appendix 1 provides an overview of the Homewards programme and its intentions. Homewards Sheffield's Coalition has come together over recent months in a process facilitated by the Local Delivery Lead, to develop a locally led Action Plan. The Local Action Plan will be based on outcome of engagement sessions, reference to international best practice and consideration of the opportunities available in Sheffield.

2.2.8 Homewards Sheffield are expecting to publish their local action plan in October 2024, following approval from Homewards Sheffield Coalition Members. This timeline will align with all 6 Homeward locations. Following approval, Homeward will then move into the delivery phase of Homewards in Sheffield. The Local Action Plan will be iterative and will look to evolve the plan with reviews at agreed

points across each year of delivery. Early themes from the workshops are included in the overview of homewards programme at Appendix 1. Once published, the local action plan will be shared with Elected Members for awareness.

2.2.9 Additionally, as part of the Homewards Sheffield programme, and included in the Local Action Plan, Homewards Sheffield are supporting local partners to develop an Innovative Housing Project (IHP) in each of the 6 locations. The purpose of each IHP is to help each location to inspire and demonstrate potential, to test innovative solutions to homelessness by targeting the experiences of a particular demographic group and/or demonstrating a unique approach to solving homelessness.

2.2.10 The Sheffield IHP will focus on families in the northeast and east of the City. It will support families to access more affordable, long-term family homes from the private rented and registered provider sectors and to connect to local community-based support.

2.3 Governance of the Programme

2.3.1 Homewards is a significant opportunity for the City. It is recognised that the transformation required to enable a meaningful shift towards prevention of homelessness as a partnership will likely take place over at least 5-year period.

2.3.2 In meantime, there are also immediate and short-term actions which will need to be undertaken to reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation, people who are rough sleeping and risks to those who are experiencing multiple disadvantages.

2.3.3 Due to this, the proposal is to work in partnership with Homewards so that Homewards programme enables a transformational shift towards prevention, whilst the:

- Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Board enables a local partnership approach towards the delivery upon our statutory homelessness functions, coordination of partnership activity and a response to immediate pressures and risks.
- Changing Futures Board enables a local approach towards addressing multiple disadvantages across the City.

2.3.4 Homewards Sheffield aim to align with the governance structures that already exist in Sheffield and have consulted with Coalition members about how to avoid duplication, add value and connect into established

groups, including governance arrangements that are currently in development for the City Goals.

- 2.3.5** As the Local Action Plan and Coalition are consolidated this will inform the future governance of the Homewards programme.

3. How does this decision contribute to the Council Plan?

3.1 Council Plan outcome

3.1.1 Caring, Engaged Communities- [People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing](#)

Work with communities to ensure people can access support and live the lives they want. The Homewards programme, will actively contribute to this priority by improving early help and prevention regarding beyond the Council's statutory obligations.

Enable everyone to feel valued and supported, tackling inequalities and celebrating the diversity of all our communities. The Homewards Programme will support the Council in the delivery of the Homeless Prevention Action Plan in effectively tackling poverty and responds to some actions identified in the Race Equality Plan, ensuring we understand the needs of specific communities and minorities in preventing homelessness.

3.1.2 Great Neighbourhoods- [Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home](#)

Increase the availability, quality and range of housing in our neighbourhoods. As part of the Homewards Innovative Housing Project, we will provide support, where applicable to The Royal Foundation, in mobilising accommodation that is affordable and for people at risk of or are currently experiencing Homelessness.

3.1.3 Children and Young People [A place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future](#)

Address inequalities for our children and young people and ensure we are equipped to support them. We understand that young people experiencing or have experienced significant challenge, and trauma will be more vulnerable to Homelessness. Homewards will contribute in responding to Youth Homelessness, improving provision and pathways.

3.2 People – Prosperity – Planet

3.2.1 People- Although the Programme is not led by the Council, we will continue to engage with a diverse range of people, in the Council's role and interventions in relation to the Programme, ensuring feedback is considered and implemented.

3.2.2 Planet- As the Council aligns the delivery of the Homeless Prevention Strategy, with the Programme, consideration will be given regarding the impact on the planet throughout, including mobilisation of Housing Stock that is compliant with low carbon and undertaking CIAs for specific activities, where required.

3.3 City Goals

The following City Goals are identified as a link to the delivery of the Homewards Programme:

- A Green and Resilient Sheffield
- A Sheffield of Thriving Communities
- A Connected Sheffield
- A Caring and Safe Sheffield
- A Sheffield for All Generations

4. What community or partner engagement has been undertaken and how has it informed the proposal?

4.1 The programme is not led by the council, as such the public engagement has been led by the Royal Foundation. The Council under a strict embargo submitted the expression of interest with the belief that the Homewards programme aligns with the public interest. Sheffield City Council and Homewards has since engaged with its existing governance and partnership, including Community Groups, the Homelessness Prevention Forum, and the Local Area Committees.

5. What alternative options did we consider?

5.1 Alternative Option 1:

To not endorse Sheffield City Council involvement in the Homewards Programme.

Although the Council currently has no formal arrangements, in the form of contracts and Memorandum of Understanding. However, the Programme is high profile and the Council's involvement is well known, not endorsing the Programme would result in significant reputational damage. In addition, the Programme will support the Council in upstreaming prevention and will support the delivery of the Homeless Prevention Strategy. Therefore, it is recommended the option of not endorsing is discounted.

6. How has equality, diversity and inclusion been actively considered?

- 6.1** The programme is not led by the council, however Tackling Inequalities, Equality, Diversity and inclusion are key priority of both the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and the Homewards programme.
- 6.2.** Homelessness disproportionately impacts those who experience marginalisation due to systemic and historic injustice, particularly racially minoritised, LGBTQIA+, disabled and migrant communities. Homewards' approach to EDI will be evidence-led and person-centred – ensuring that the approach to ending homelessness is based on ongoing analysis and collection of data around inequity and injustice within the local area and centres the voices of those with lived experience of marginalisation.
- 6.3** The EIA completed (2807) identifies potential impacts across a wide range of protected characteristics and equality interests, which will need monitoring and considering further as the programme develops. It also notes the strong alignment between the existing Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Homewards programme and its intended outcomes.

7. Financial and Commercial Implications

- 7.1** In 2024-25, emergency accommodation is forecast to cost the Council £5.8m over budget. Unless reductions in the use of B&B accommodation occur, this pressure will continue into future years. Overspend on supported accommodation is forecast to cause a further £5.5m pressure.
- 7.2** In both cases this is largely due to subsidy loss - the Council is bridging the gap between the amount the accommodation costs to procure and the amount able to be recovered via housing benefits. A corporate provision of £7.9m has been set aside in recognition of this issue, but this is not presently enough to cover the £11.3m overspend outlined.
- 7.3** Ways need to be found to mitigate this gap. If this policy to prevent and reduce people presenting in crisis was successful then a financial

benefit should accrue to help in this regard. This is difficult to quantify without estimated numbers.

- 7.4** An assessment of the cost of the Homewards Programme would be required once more is known about its actions but the £500,000 of flexible seed funding from the Homewards fund is noted.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1** The Council has a duty under section 179 of the Housing Act 1996, and section 2 of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, to provide advisory services on preventing Homelessness, securing accommodation when Homeless, the rights of persons who are Homeless or threatened with Homelessness, any help available and how to access that help.
- 8.2** The Council also have a duty under section 189B of the Housing Act 1996, and section 5 of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, to secure suitable accommodation for all eligible persons who are Homeless.
- 8.3** In dealing with individual cases of threatened homelessness, Local Authorities' responsibilities are subject to the Homeless Code of Guidance, underpinned by the Housing Act 1996 and Homeless Reduction Act 2017. The Guidance provides that Councils must act in cases of threatened homelessness 56 days prior to homelessness threatened. Homewards are not subject to the same restrictions and instead provide the opportunity to work with individuals at an earlier point where there is a greater chance to identify and address the underlying causes, tackle hidden homelessness and manage the risk of housing insecurity.
- 8.4** The partnership arrangements outlined in this report supports the Council in meeting the above duties.
- 8.5** Further decisions may be required at a later stage and will be in accordance with the Councils Constitution and Contracts Standing Orders.

9. Climate and Environmental Implications

A Climate Impact Assessment has been completed, please refer to Appendix 4. The outcome of the assessment has identified a maximum score of 15, indicating the Homewards Programme will positively contribute towards progress of Net Zero. A full assessment is not required at this stage, but this will be revisited depending on specific actions and workstream's

10. Other implications

The program is high-profile. There is a reputational risk if the programme does not deliver on its objectives. However Homewards Sheffield have described the first year as a necessary convening of the partners to the Coalition, with the development of a local action plan and governance arrangements as foundation to mitigation of any risks in relation to delivery on its objectives.

11. Reasons for decision

The Homewards Programme provides the opportunity to accelerate improving the prevention outcomes for customers and making transformative change to systems and services. It provides the opportunity to work with individuals at an earlier point where there is a greater chance to identify the underlying causes, tackle hidden homelessness and manage the risk of housing insecurity.

Endorsement of the Councils involvement in the programme, enables the Council to work with Homewards Sheffield to agree a Local Action Plan, Coalition and Governance which will provide the foundations to enable delivery of a transformation programme for Sheffield.

Asking for an update in 12 months will provide transparency and assurance regards delivery upon the programme.

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