



**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Zoe Young,  
Housing Options and Advice Service Manager

**Tel:** (07891816055)

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**Report of:** *Executive Director, Place*

**Report to:** *Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and  
Community Safety*

**Date of Decision:** 18.01.2021

**Subject:** *Next Step Accommodation Programme Funding*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <b>Neighbourhoods and Community Safety</b>		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Safer and Stronger Communities		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 802		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>		

**Purpose of Report:**

This report seeks approval for the Council to accept a grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) of £609,704 to reduce rough sleeping in Sheffield and sets out proposals for how the funding will be used.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member;

- Approves the acceptance of £609,704 funding grant for a period from early July 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021
- Approves the implementation of the spending plan as set out in the report.

**Background Papers:**

Appendix - Next Step Accommodation Programme Bid

Lead Officer to complete:-									
1	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Finance: <b>Sonya Oates</b></p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Legal: <b>Andrea Simpson</b></p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Equalities: <b>Louise Nunn</b></p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"> <p><i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i></p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.</p>	<p>Finance: <b>Sonya Oates</b></p>		<p>Legal: <b>Andrea Simpson</b></p>		<p>Equalities: <b>Louise Nunn</b></p>	<p><i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i></p>	
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## 1. PROPOSAL

1.1 On 26th March 2020 Luke Hall, Housing Minister wrote to Local Authorities setting out the Government's requirements for all rough sleepers to be offered accommodation as part of the Public Health response to the COVID-19 pandemic (the 'Everyone In' initiative). There were six main actions for Local Authorities to act upon:

1. Convening a local coordination cell (referred to in this report as the "Cell Group") to plan and manage response to COVID and rough sleeping involving the local authority (housing, social care and public health) and local NHS partners together. This would then report in to wider local COVID structures.
2. Seeking to stop homeless people from congregating in facilities such as day centres and street encampments where there is a higher risk of transmission
3. Urgently procuring accommodation for people on the streets – The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will support to do so
4. Triaging people where possible into three cohorts driven by medical advice:
  - Those with symptoms of COVID-19;
  - Those with pre-existing conditions but without symptoms;
  - Those without any of the above.
5. Getting the social care basics such as food, and clinician care to people who need it in the self-contained accommodation. It is likely that Local Authority will need to utilise commissioned homeless services to provide support to people in this accommodation and to work with the commissioned and non-commissioned sector to make sure there are adequate levels of support provided.
6. If possible, separating people who have significant drug and alcohol needs from those who do not.

1.2 As part of the 'Everyone In' initiative, approximately 15,000 people who were sleeping rough, in unsafe communal settings or at imminent risk of rough sleeping have been placed into hotels and other forms of emergency accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic nationally, in Sheffield we made 191 placements.

In July 2020 MHCLG invited local authorities, registered providers, and their local partners to engage with the next stage of the COVID-19 Rough Sleeping response.

- 1.3 Funding became available via Next Step Accommodation Programme (NSAP) for 2020/21 to continue the support for rough sleepers.

The overall objectives of the NSAP were to reduce rough sleeping and to seek to ensure rough sleepers brought into emergency accommodation in response to COVID-19, do not return to sleeping rough. As COVID-19 remains a risk, it is also essential that people, particularly those who are at increased risk of severe illness, are kept safe. This means ensuring that the current provision that has been set up to safeguard people who were taken safely from the streets is able to continue for an appropriate length of time, with a planned transition to more sustainable interim accommodation options until vital longer-term move-on accommodation can be put in place.

- 1.4 There were two different aspects to this fund. One aspect was for long-term accommodation and support for rough sleepers and the remainder was for interim accommodation and support for the 15,000 vulnerable people accommodated during the pandemic.

- **Shorter-term/interim accommodation and immediate support**

On 24 June, the Secretary of State announced £105 million to be used for immediate support for local authorities. The funding was to cover a range of interventions, from moves into the private rented sector, to extending or procuring interim accommodation such as hotels or student accommodation and supporting individuals to reconnect with friends or family.

- **Longer-term Move-on Accommodation**

On 24 May, the Secretary of State announced £161 million for 20/21 to deliver 3,300 units of longer-term, move-on accommodation. The £161 million for this financial year was split into £130 million capital funding and £31 million revenue funding. This part of the bid was solely for new units of accommodation that could be built or acquired to have in place by March 2021.

The MHCLG adviser worked hand in hand with Sheffield City Council to develop

Next Steps Accommodation Programme proposal. It was felt due to the time constraints on having accommodation units ready for rough sleepers to move into in March 2021 we could not bid for any longer term accommodation but were reassured that there will be another round of funding announced with less restrictions in the near future. A bid was submitted at the end of August 2020. A copy of the bid is attached as an appendix to this report. On 17th September 2020 Sheffield City Council was informed it had been successful and allocated £609,704 towards shorter-term/interim accommodation and immediate support.

- 1.5 There is an expectation that the funding will impact the rough sleeping figures at the next annual MHCLG count in November. Monthly reporting will be required to ensure progress and measure the outcomes being achieved.
- 1.6 The information below details the interventions to be funded by the grant.

**Extending emergency accommodation for rough sleepers in response to Covid-19 (80 spaces) until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

When the bid was submitted at the end of August Sheffield had 80 people in emergency hotel provision. The allocation of funding covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and local authorities were able to bid for money retrospectively according to what provision they were funding. We wanted to extend emergency provision for the 80 people we had in emergency accommodation whilst developing the bid and gradually reduce this number over time as we move people on which will enable us to gradually close the hotels. The emergency accommodation for anyone sleeping rough enables engagement and early housing conversation to start immediately. Each of the 80 individuals have move on plans and have been either discussed at the multi-agency panel or are scheduled to be discussed. Multi-agency panel including representatives from housing, mental health services, physical health services, drug and alcohol support providers, the police and service providers. Panel discusses appropriate housing options and the wrap around support needed for each individual taking the rough sleeper's wishes and feelings into account. We have identified the most appropriate option available to move each individual out of emergency accommodation, this includes Housing First for people with high needs, move to commissioned services, direct lets into Sheffield City Council and Registered Providers accommodation with floating support and in the Private Rented Sector. The number of people in emergency accommodation

has now reduced but the bid does allow for some bed spaces as part of the severe weather protocol over the winter months.

**Ensuring the seamless transition from emergency accommodation –  
1 FTE move-on navigator**

To ensure the seamless transition from emergency accommodation we will phase the provision over 6/7 months between July 2020 and March 2021 and will keep this under review. To support move-on it is proposed to employ a move-on navigator for six months. The navigator coordinates partners to activate the wrap around support plan for each individual. It will also coordinate services that support each individual in the process of moving and ensure they continue to provide this until the person is settled and support is in place. The navigator will monitor all individuals and will be enabled to make adjustments to individual plans where necessary to achieve a successful move on.

**Ensuring staffing presence at each of the accommodation provided –  
3 FTE agency workers to support rough sleepers in hotels**

Having support workers involved in the hotels has been invaluable in offering support and advice to rough sleepers and discussing move-on plans and ensuring support is in place, this includes support for the hotel staff. Providing this from existing staff has been a challenge over 7 days a week and therefore it is proposed to employ 3 FTE agency staff until March 2021 to enable us to keep providing this.

**Ensuring emergency beds in the city for severe weather**

We have factored in the numbers we expect to be accommodated due to severe weather and will use the emergency provision where appropriate as we cannot use communal spaces in Commissioned Services, shared crash pads and space at Fire Service due to Covid restrictions. In 2019/2020 we made 87 severe weather placements between November and March. We will continue to make longer term plans for future provision that meet our needs as a city for this cohort, ensuring it is evidence based and fits strategically with the Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy (approved by Cabinet in December 2017).

**2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

2.1 The proposal will contribute to the Corporate Plan priorities of a Better Health

and Well-being, Thriving Neighbourhoods and Communities, and Tackling Inequalities. The Corporate Plan also recognises that to achieve these outcomes we will need to do things differently and this includes how we work collaboratively with our partners and individuals facing the greatest challenges. This Next Step Accommodation Programme aligns with the following Corporate Plan objectives:

- Better Health and Well-being – helping people to be healthy and well, by promoting and enabling good health whilst preventing and tackling ill health, particularly for those who have a higher risk of experiencing poor health, illness or dying early.
- Thriving Neighbourhoods and Communities – providing safe places to live for vulnerable people that contribute to tenancy and community sustainment.
- Tackling inequalities – making it easier for individuals to overcome obstacles and achieve their potential. Investing in the most deprived communities; supporting individuals and communities to help themselves and each other.

### **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

3.1 There has been no specific consultation in relation to the submitting of the bid. However, the proposal has been informed by the following consultation events as part of the Cell Group work.

- City Response to Covid-19 and Rough Sleepers  
This survey was completed by all services and agencies working in the city including CCG, mental health services, drug and alcohol services, police, probation and voluntary community and faith groups. Some of the outcomes are listed below:
  - We have a very complex cohort in some of our most entrenched rough sleepers and they may need greater provision of bespoke, specialist, and intensive support;
  - We have had a unique opportunity in lockdown to engage with rough sleepers in new and different ways and this has worked for some of our most entrenched rough sleepers;
  - We need to build on the stability that the Covid-19 response has provided for some of our rough sleepers who are now ready to move on, but this must be slow and gradual with support to maintain tenancies, resettlement support, and wraparound



support for other needs.

- **Rough Sleepers Survey**

The Cell Group developed a Rough Sleepers Survey. A number of people who experience rough sleeping have been asked how they feel about Sheffield's response and what we should be doing to help them move on and meet their needs. The group had a positive response back with people saying they feel respected and listened to. They felt it helped in their recovery because services are attending the provision and providing support including prescribing drug treatment, mental health support and health care.

#### **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

##### **4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications**

4.1.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. No negative impacts were identified. It concluded that;

The funding will enable the Council and its partners to help target those most vulnerable who are rough sleeping.

Positive impacts were numerous including health, poverty and financial inclusion and the voluntary and faith sector.

##### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

4.2.1 A grant of £609,704.00 has been awarded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the purpose of delivering continued support to rough sleepers supported during the Covid response. Key features and terms and conditions (not exclusive) of the grant as set out in the allocation letter and MHCLG guidance are summarised below.

Note: A grant agreement as mentioned in the funding allocation letter has not yet been received; any terms and conditions contained within the grant agreement must also be adhered to.

4.2.2 This funding is allocated for short term/interim accommodation and immediate support

4.2.3 The funding is restricted and must only be spent according to the grant terms

and conditions as set out in the grant agreement. The following general conditions must be observed:

- Funding must be used to achieve move-on for those rough sleepers accommodated during the pandemic and a sustained reduction in rough sleeping in the local area.
- Discussion and engagement in communications on the NSAP programme must be agreed to where requested.
- Work with MHCLG analytical & policy teams for the national NSAP evaluation must be undertaken.

4.2.4 Support to non-UK nationals who are not eligible for homelessness assistance must comply with legal restrictions.

4.2.5 Key Performance Indicators as set out in the allocation letter must be monitored and reported.

4.2.6 All public sector procurement is governed by both European Legislation and UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in Sheffield City Council must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and Contracts Standing Orders.

4.2.7 Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase/acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.

4.2.8 The Project Manager will need to read, understand and comply with all of the grant terms and conditions and the [Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients](#).

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The grant is paid to the Council under the powers conferred by section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 to pay a grant to a local authority towards expenditure incurred by it, in this case for the purpose of the provision of shorter-term/interim accommodation and immediate support for rough sleepers temporarily accommodated under the 'Everyone in' initiative. The grant may be

subject to conditions determined by MHCLG, which will need to be considered and any specific legal advice required on them obtained.

The Council has a duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to secure that advice and information about homelessness, including the prevention of homelessness, securing accommodation when homeless, and the rights of a person and duties of the local authority under Part VII, is available to any person in its district regardless of whether their immigration status makes them eligible for further assistance. Utilising the grant money for the purposes set out in this report will be in accordance with these powers and allow the Council to develop and expand existing support where gaps in current service provision have been identified.

Part VII was amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to impose additional duties on local authorities to provide homelessness services to a wider homeless group than only those in priority need, including providing assistance and support to eligible people to help them to secure accommodation. The grant will assist the Council in meeting these duties by providing personalised responses.

To the extent that the proposals are not covered by any of the above legislation currently in force the Council is empowered to carry out these activities by the General Power of Competence contained in Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011, subject to any specific statutory restrictions none of which apply in this case.

#### 4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 There is an expectation that these interventions will reduce rough sleeper numbers. The proposed additional staffing will sit within the Housing Solutions Service, working closely with this service and both internal partners and external stakeholders.

### 5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 Compared to most core cities the number of rough sleepers in Sheffield is

relatively low. However, numbers have increased both locally and nationally. The Council and partners are successful in preventing people from becoming homeless and helping the majority of people off the streets quickly. However, the Council decided to bid for the funding to enable a tailored and bespoke approach for those considered 'vulnerable and entrenched in rough sleeping'. The current activity focussed on prevention and reducing rough sleeping will continue and develop, while this additional funding enables the Council facilitates a community wide approach to resettle people and prevent further homelessness and rough sleeping. Without this funding there is a risk of rough sleeper numbers increasing.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The grant from the MHCLG covers some of the costs we incurred from the additional requirements due to COVID 19 from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. It will allow the Local Authority to ensure anyone placed during 'Everyone In' can remain in the accommodation until a more suitable housing option is found.