

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	2 NOVEMBER 2021	5

ACCOMMODATION PROJECT FOR EX-OFFENDERS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of funding awarded under the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme announced by MHCLG in 2021 and request approval to combine this funding with the Rough Sleeper Initiative continuation funding received in 2021, to tender for an external agency to run Fylde Rough Sleeper and Ex-Offenders Accommodation Project.

In April 2021 MHCLG launched a new scheme to provide additional funding to local authorities to support ex-offenders into their own Private Rented Sector (PRS) Tenancies. The scheme aims to build a pathway from prison into the PRS and is supported by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The funding is to enable the introduction of new schemes specifically focused at supporting ex-offenders, increasing their access and sustainment of PRS tenancies.

Fylde and Wyre Councils jointly submitted an application to support 50 ex-offenders based on the number of prison releases to both boroughs in 2020/21. Funding was approved at a lower level to support 20 service users totalling £68,345, split between both authorities. Fylde Council are to receive £34,172. Support will include rent bond, rent in advance, rent top up for 6 months and assistance with essential items, white goods and carpets if required.

In 20/21 MHCHG announced continuation of the Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding at £27,000. The initial funding in 2019/20 enabled a Rapid Rehousing Officer to be employed to undertake support for clients presenting with multiple complex support needs, at risk of homelessness, or sleeping rough. This post has now been funded from other sources till 2026.

Environment Health and Housing approved in June 2021 for the continuation funding to be used to provide external support for clients facing multiple disadvantages, including substance misuse and related problems, including mental health issues, to improve their self-worth, access and continue with the support that is available. Although there has been interest from external agencies to work with Fylde Council to undertake this project, the level of funding available has been insufficient for agencies to commit.

RECOMMENDATION

To consider and recommend to Finance & Democracy Committee:

- Note the contents of the report and funding awarded under the 2021 Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme and the proposal to combine this funding with the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding 2021 to run Fylde Rough Sleepers and Ex-Offenders Accommodation project.

2. To recommend to Finance and Democracy Committee approval of a fully-funded revenue budget increase in 2021/22 for the total sum of £34,172 to be fully funded by MHCLG Ex-Offenders Accommodation grant within the current Rough Sleeper Initiative scheme.
3. To appoint an external agency to work with Fylde Council Homelessness and Housing Advice service to support rough sleepers and ex-offenders into accommodation.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

9/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx" [Final Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 07/01/2020](#)

[MHCLG Next Steps Funding to support homeless households 19/10/2020](#)

[Update 05/01/2021 Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025](#)

[Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding 2020/21 15/06/2021](#)

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	√
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	√
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	

BACKGROUND

1. In April 2021 MHCLG launched a new scheme to provide additional funding to local authorities to support ex-offenders into their own Private Rented Sector (PRS) Tenancies. The scheme aims to build a pathway from prison into the PRS and is supported by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The funding is to enable the introduction of new schemes specifically focused at supporting ex-offenders, increasing their access and sustainment of PRS tenancies.
2. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre have had 378 prison releases from April 2020 to March 2021. Of this cohort approximately 50 were released to the boroughs of Fylde and Wyre, with 60% aged under 35.
3. Nationally 53% of people who have slept rough in the last year have been in prison and as ex-offenders they face particular challenges in accessing private sector tenancies. Within Fylde, the majority of clients we work with who are at risk of rough sleeping and are rough sleeping, will have an offending history.
4. Fylde Council working with Wyre Council applied via the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for funding released from MHCLG, to provide additional funding to local authorities to support 50 service users, ex-offenders into their own Private Rented Sector (PRS) tenancies, across both authorities.
5. Funding was approved at a lower level to support 20 service users across both authorities in 21/22 and 22/23 totalling £68,345, split between both authorities. Fylde Council are to receive £34,172.
6. In 20/21 MHCHG announced continuation of the Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding at £27,000. The initial funding in 2019/20 enabled a Rapid Rehousing Officer to be employed to undertake support for clients presenting with multiple complex support needs, at risk of homelessness, or sleeping rough. This post has now been funded from other sources till 2026.
7. Environment Health and Housing approved in June 2021 for the continuation funding under the Rough Sleeper Initiative to be used to provide external support for clients facing multiple disadvantaged, including substance misuse and related problems, including mental health issues, to improve their self-worth, access and continue with the support that is available.
8. Although there has been interest from external agencies to work with Fylde Council to undertake this project, the level of funding available has been insufficient for agencies to commit.

9. This proposal is to combine the 2 funding streams to create a new project to deliver an, "Accommodation project for rough sleepers and ex-offenders".
10. Combining the two funding streams will create a new project to deliver support to those customers who have a history of rough sleeping and offending to a value of £61,172. It is anticipated at the outset that the project will run for a two-year period and will deliver an additional supportive role to complement the statutory role that Fylde Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Service delivers.
11. Elements of the funding will be required to provide Rent Bond, Rent in Advance, Rent top up on Private Rented Sector accommodation and assistance with essential items, white goods and carpets if required.

ROUGH SLEEPERS AND EX-OFFENDERS ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

12. A procurement exercise will be undertaken and a selection of organisations will be invited to tender to undertake the project who have experience of supporting ex-offenders who are at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.
13. There are a number of support organisations that already work within Fylde area that will be approached:
 - a. AFC Fylde Community Foundation run a positive pathway for ex-offenders focussed on re-habilitation back into normal life.
 - b. Brighstarts are a Community Interest Company dedicated to providing high quality homes and support for people with substance misuse related problems. They also provide external floating support for clients referred into their service.
 - c. HumanKind Charity runs person centred offender rehabilitation services to improve opportunities for ex-offenders. HumanKind provide the Tenancy Training Programme available for clients approaching the Council for homelessness and housing advice.
 - d. Nacro are a social justice charity who focus on changing lives, building stronger communities and reducing crime. They provide housing and external floating support for clients.
14. The successful tenderer will be expected to:
 - a. Support clients with substance misuse related problems, to initially engage, and continuation of that engagement, with support services that are available. The intention is to reduce the likelihood of clients with substance misuse and related problems re-presenting to the Homelessness Service.
 - b. Assist clients to maintain their health, well-being and personal safety
 - c. Assisting to engage with individuals, professionals and other bodies concerned about a client's welfare
 - d. Ensuring support within the community and drug/alcohol services is accessed
 - e. Support to cope with the practicalities of everyday life
 - f. Providing life skills training
 - g. Assisting with personal budgeting and debt counselling
 - h. Assisting to deal with relationships and disputes
 - i. Assisting to deal with benefit claims and other professional correspondence related to maintaining a tenancy
15. Support will be focussed on three stages:

Stage 1: Identified rough sleeper and prior to release from Prison

- Gather information to inform presentation to Fylde Council under homelessness legislation
- Ensure statutory agencies working to support individuals currently rough sleeping or undertaking offender management adhere to the Duty to Refer policy framework into homelessness services
- Assisting to engage with individuals, professionals and other bodies concerned about a client's welfare

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring support required within the community has been identified, including mental health, health and well-being and drug/alcohol services is accessed either prior to release or homeless • Establishing life skills training required including assistance with benefit entitlement, personal budgeting and debt counselling • Involvement with IOM (Integrated Offender Management) and MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement) meetings to identify offenders prior to release and unaccommodated • Completion of OASys (Probation) and ASSET (Young Offenders) risk assessments prior to release and unaccommodated for circulation to relevant statutory support agencies
<p>Stage 2: Identified rough sleeper and upon release</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a homelessness assessment and sharing with local authority if a local connection lies with Fylde • Support to access accommodation within both the private rented sector and social rented sector • Ensure necessary information sharing protocols are in place • Ensure risk assessments have been undertaken and shared with relevant support agencies • Assisting clients to engage with agencies and services to meet identified support needs • Ensuring referrals in place for substance mis-use and mental health to ensure smooth transition from custody to community and if rough sleeping the referrals are in place within the community. • Ensuring life skills training required including assistance with benefit entitlement, personal budgeting and debt counselling is in place • Involvement with IOM (Integrated Offender Management) and MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement) meetings to identify offenders prior to release and unaccommodated • Undertake tenancy training with clients to ensure knowledge of accessing and maintaining a tenancy
<p>Stage 3: Identified rough sleeper and post release</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring ongoing engagement with substance misuse, mental health and other support services • Ensuring life skills training has been accessed and understood including assistance with benefit entitlement, personal budgeting and debt counselling is in place • Household essentials provided • Tenancy support for a period of 12 weeks to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utility suppliers in place ○ Benefit entitlement in place ○ Liaison in place between Landlord and Tenant to maintain tenancy

CONCLUSIONS

16. Note the contents of the report and funding awarded under the 2021 Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme and the proposal to combine this funding with the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding 2021 to run Fylde Rough Sleepers and Ex-Offenders Accommodation project.
17. To recommend to Finance and Democracy Committee approval of a fully-funded revenue budget increase in 2021/22 for the total sum of £34,172 to be fully funded by MHCLG Ex-Offenders Accommodation grant within the current Rough Sleeper Initiative scheme.
18. To appoint an external agency to work with Fylde Council Homelessness and Housing Advice service to support rough sleepers and ex-offenders into accommodation.

HOUSING SERVICE SHOW AND TELL

19. On the 15th March 2022 Fylde Council Housing Services are running our second Housing Service Show and Tell. The event will be open from 10am to 3pm in the Town Hall and will have displays and information from all

services with staff available to answer queries and questions. Services include: Affordable Housing Delivery; Disabled Facilities Grants; Homelessness and Housing Advice; Private Sector Inspection; and Tenancy Support.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	To recommend to Finance and Democracy Committee approval of a fully-funded revenue budget increase in 2021/22 for the total sum of £34,172 to be fully funded by MHCLG Ex-Offenders Accommodation grant within the current Rough Sleeper Initiative scheme and to appoint an external agency to work with Fylde Council Homelessness and Housing Advice service to support rough sleepers and ex-offenders into accommodation.
Legal	None
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Accommodation for ex-offenders	April 2021	Scheme giving ex-offenders a stable place to live up and running - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
MHCLG Rough Sleepers Initiative Funding	2021-2022	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-initiative-2021-to-2022-funding-allocations
MHCLG Rough Sleepers Initiative Funding	2020-2021	Rough Sleeping Initiative: 2020 to 2021 funding allocations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)