

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Partnerships, Policy and Planning (Introduced by the Executive Member for Homes and Business)	Executive Cabinet	21 <sup>st</sup> February 2013

## **LANCASHIRE SINGLE HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide an update on the Lancashire Single Homelessness Initiative including the funding methodology which is to be applied, and the measures which are to be funded using the grant.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. To approve the proposals for the programme and the funding methodology.
3. To approve the procurement approach proposed for the three measures.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**

4. In 2012, £20 million funding was made available by the DCLG to be targeted for services for single homeless people and intended to mitigate the impact of a series of welfare reform measures, including the extension of the single room rent to those aged 25 to 35 years of age.
5. Single homeless people are often more at risk of rough sleeping because in the majority of cases, they do not meet the legal criteria for statutory duties.
6. The DCLG selected lead authorities to act as coordinators within specific regions and Chorley Council was selected to coordinate the Lancashire programme, with grant allocation of £504,000. This will cover the 14 authorities across Lancashire.
7. Head of Housing along with officers from within the team have developed this programme from scratch within existing resources and over and above day to day business.
8. This report sets out how the established Steering Group is proposing to utilise the grant and the outcomes this will deliver.
9. The programme is regularly monitored by DCLG and as part of the initiative we have been required to devise an action plan to illustrate what actions we are delivering.
10. Three service areas are proposed to help tackle single homelessness on a locality basis, and these consist of:
  - A service to assist access to accommodation for single people

- Pre-Tenancy Training to help access and maintain tenancies
- Pilot House Shares for under 35 year old single people

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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<b>Reason</b> Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	<b>2, a contract worth £100,000 or more</b>
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

#### (If the recommendations are accepted)

11. This programme will provide services specifically for single people and will mitigate the impact of welfare reform.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12. No other options have been considered.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

13. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	X	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

### BACKGROUND

14. Prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping is a key national priority and all local authorities are required to have some form of frontline service in place. Welfare reform measures are being introduced which may have an impact on homelessness and certain categories of people will be more affected than others.
15. In 2012, the Government announced funding for local authorities to target single homelessness, particularly those considered to be 'non priority' (i.e. those to whom the Council doesn't owe any legal duty to accommodate) and at greatest risk of rough sleeping.

16. The DCLG selected lead authorities to act as coordinators within specific regions and Chorley was selected to coordinate the Lancashire programme, with grant allocation of £504,000. This will cover the 14 authorities across Lancashire.
17. Chorley Council is now the lead authority for homelessness in Lancashire and meets regularly with Homelessness Specialist Advisors to collect and disseminate information and best practise across Lancs.
18. The DCLG required that certain objectives be met in how the grant is utilised and placed some obligations on Chorley Council as coordinator. The key purpose of the grant is to ensure single people (to whom the Council do not owe a statutory duty to) are provided with a service to enable them to access accommodation either in the private rented sector or the social sector, which is affordable to them and therefore prevents the need to sleep rough.
19. The grant is very much intended to plug gaps in provision and therefore the DCLG were very explicit in that the grant must not be simply divided 14 ways and that it may be that smaller districts would benefit more than larger authorities.

#### **LANCASHIRE SINGLE HOMELESS STEERING GROUP**

20. Initially a number of authorities requested that the grant be divided 14 ways however the DCLG was clear that this was not permitted .Further the DCLG provided Chorley with a mandate to work with the partnership but to make any decisions wherever consensus could not be reached.
21. A steering group comprising of representatives from the 3 natural cluster areas of Lancashire was established (North, Central and East Lancs). These representatives provide the conduit to all the councils in their area and therefore are required to cascade information and seek views about key decisions etc.
22. A gap analysis survey was carried out and the findings of this survey along with the key objectives set by the DCLG , informed the decision made by the steering group regarding the measures which the grant will be used for.
23. The key outcomes which the DCLG have stated are the prerequisites for this grant include tailored advice & assistance, both face to face and in writing, an offer of suitable accommodation if required (be that access to the PRS, a hostel place or emergency accommodation) and access to / linked into any additional support they may need.
24. The DCLG also indicated that this programme must link to the No Second Night Out strategy and therefore needs to explore measures to prevent rough sleeping.
25. Some of the outcomes required by the DCLG will be achievable without the requirement of any grant funding including the introduction of a standard advice letter and the adoption of a Lancashire reconnection policy.
26. An action plan was developed by the programme coordinator, informed by discussions with the steering group, including the following measures to be funded by the grant.

## **Personalised Solutions Policy**

27. This is a measure very much favoured by the DCLG and is closely linked to No Second Night Out. Basically a generic policy will be produced and all 13 districts will adopt with a small pot of £1,000 attached. This policy is about identifying creative solutions to getting someone off the street that night and some examples of how this could be used is for travel to night shelters in other areas, costs for a B&B , travel costs to friends or family or the cost of additional staff to enable someone considered to be high risk to use a supported accommodation service.

## **Access to Accommodation Service for Single People**

28. This service will provide accommodation finding service for single people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless, aged 18 years and upwards to access for a tailored solution to their needs to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. The service is intended to supplement existing housing options services and provide specific accommodation finding advice for single people who are not owed any statutory duty by the Council however who have a need for accommodation.
29. The service will cover the Lancashire areas as designated in the contracts & access to the service will be by referral only by the local authorities in Lancashire and their designated agencies.
30. The service will offer a menu of solutions across the Lancashire area with the main aim to help customers to secure accommodation. Some of these solutions may already be available in certain areas and the schedule sets out in appendix one, which solutions will be provided by the contractor directly, and which will be provided elsewhere, with the contractor referring into these where applicable.
31. As there will be three services commissioned to reflect the cluster areas within Lancashire, there may be variations in the service and additional benefits or services provided, for example, bringing empty properties back into use.
32. The services will include the provision of the following services:
  - Advice on finding accommodation. . It will also be the point of contact for any private landlord who is providing accommodation as part of the service.
  - Emergency accommodation finding service for those referred by the Housing Options Services who are in a crisis situation and (deemed) not to be owed a statutory duty, to prevent rough sleeping and 'a second night out'. This accommodation may or may not be funded by the service depending on the circumstances & the liability of cost for any accommodation identified will be explicit at point of referral.
  - Access to an enhanced rental bond in the private rented sector.
  - A tenant introduction scheme where landlords looking for tenants are matched to prospective tenants and tenancy facilitated with or without a rent bond package.
  - A house mates matching service where applicants are looking to share accommodation and have similar requirements are linked together and provided with support to identify and secure accommodation.
  - A private landlord support package, including incentives such as cash rent payments in advance rent bonds, support to secure direct payments, assistance to resolve tenancy

issues and disputes, and on-going support for private landlords accommodating customers identified as being single homeless.

33. The objective of this intervention will be to promote access into accommodation for single people and the critical success factors and therefore key measures in the contract would include number of tenancies created for single people, number of tenancies sustained for a period of 6 months or more & the % reduction in the number of rough sleepers in the Lancashire area based on a baseline taken from the year previous to contract commencement.
34. The value of this contract is £44,626.80 per year and it will be procured for one year with the option to extend for a further year (to a total maximum of two years) should the provider deliver the required outcomes and service meet expectations. The service will be a high value tender exercise and will be advertised openly on the chest.

### **Pre-tenancy training**

35. This is training for single people who are looking to secure accommodation and have an identified need to improve their understanding of housing related issues and also to improve their prospects of being provided with accommodation.
36. Training courses will be provided to single people aged 18 years and over who have been referred by one of the partner local authorities or their designated agencies.
37. The contractor will be required to devise a programme which will incorporate some key components including finding accommodation, presenting yourself to a prospective landlord, budgeting skills, setting up a new home and managing your tenancy,(including tenancy conditions and being a good neighbour etc.).
38. The objective of this measure is to equip people to access housing, to improve their chances of being made an offer of a property and also to improve the likelihood of the tenancy being sustained.
39. Performance of this contract would be measured amongst others against the following: number of courses completed by delegates, the % of course successfully completed by delegates, the number of tenancies created as a result of attendance at a pre-tenancy training course & the % of tenancies sustained for 6 months or more.
40. The value of this contract will be £14,875.60 per year and it will be procured for one year with the option to extend for a further year ( to a total maximum of two years ) should the provider deliver the outcomes required and meet expectations. The procurement exercise would comprise of an open advert through the chest and the selection process will prioritise those with experience of working with this client group.

### **Pilot of House Shares**

41. The third measure which is to be funded using the grant is houseshare for those under 35 years of age. The objective of this would be for a provider to identify a small number of properties and facilitate a house share, working with the housing options teams in each respective Council.
42. This would test the market for demand for this housing option and also enable the Councils to evaluate the risks, cost –benefit and overall feasibility of supporting house

share as a housing option long term. The liability in regard to rent arrears or damage would be underwritten as part of the project.

43. Critical success factors for this project would include the following: number of house shares started in the contract period, number & % of house shares sustained for a period of 6 months or over with all original tenants, number & % of house shares sustained for a period of 6 months or over with at least two of the original tenants, number of house share vacancies successfully filled within two months of a vacancy arising & % of housewares where there is no claim for rent arrears or damage.
44. The value of this contract will be £14,875.60 per year and it will be procured for one year with the option to extend for a further year should the provider deliver the outcomes required and meet expectations. The procurement exercise would comprise of an open advert through the chest and the selection process will prioritise those with experience of working with this client group.

### CONCLUSION

45. Blackpool have indicated that whilst they are committed to partnership working, however they do not feel the measures the group have decided upon would provide any added value to their existing provision as they already have each in place.
46. Chorley officers have led the project so far however in order to progress the measures, the group have identified the need for a dedicated resource, which will be a post based at Chorley, with the flexibility to work across Lancashire-connection policy (covering the grouping and wider).
47. The funding methodology (see appendix A) uses population to determine how the main pot of funding will be distributed, following the top slicing for project administration and the Personalised Solutions Policy.
48. In terms of procurement, Chorley will only be responsible for the procurement of services in the south cluster (i.e. those to the value of £ 141,325.80). The other two clusters have identified leads who will undertake the procurement for their areas in accordance with their own authority procurement policy.

### IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

49. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	x	Customer Services	
Human Resources	x	Equality and Diversity	
Legal	x	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

### COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

50. The Council will act on this project as the accountable body. Therefore, there will be no cost to the Council other than the officer time involved in the start up of the project. The risk for an accountable body is that the grant is not spent in accordance with the grant award. I,

together with the Head of Housing, will take steps to ensure that robust governance arrangements are put in place in relation to expenditure.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

51. As outlined in the report the Council are meeting their obligations as Lead Authority in the administration of the grant. It is noted that Chorley Council are leading on the procurement exercise for the south cluster and it is recommended that our CPRs are circulated to the other authorities for information.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

52. The creation of a temporary dedicated post to assist in the implementation of the Single Homelessness Initiative is supported by HR. The post can be offered on a secondment basis to employees across the Lancashire wide group and/or advertised externally.

LESLEY-ANN FENTON  
DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS, POLICY AND PLANNING

There are no background papers to this report.

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
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## Appendix A Lancashire Single Homelessness Funding Methodology

<b>Lancashire Single Homelessness Funding</b>			
	<b>£</b>		
<b>Funding</b>	<b>504,000</b>		
<b>Project Administration (Topsliced)</b>			
Project Officer (2 yrs) – total pot (to be reviewed upon first 12 months)	-71,022		
Remaining budget = £427 ,000	432,978		
<b>No Second Night Out –Personalised Solution Pot (topliced)</b>			
£13,000 ( £1,000 pot per Council )	-13,000		
<b>Remaining budget</b>	<b>419,978</b>		
<b>Single Homeless Measures (pro rata)</b>			
<b>These will be apportioned between the 3 measures by each cluster</b>			
		<b>% split</b>	<b>Funding Split Population</b>
			<b>£</b>
Blackburn	147,500		
Burnley	87,000		
Hyndburn	80,700		
Pendle	89,500		
Ribble V	57,100		
Rossendale	68,000		
	<b>529,800</b>	<b>40.17%</b>	<b>168,705</b>
Chorley	107,200		
Preston	140,200		
S Ribble	109,100		
W Lancs	110,700		
	<b>467,200</b>	<b>35.42%</b>	<b>148,756</b>
Fylde	75,800		
Lancaster	138,400		
Wyre	107,700		
	<b>321,900</b>	<b>24.41%</b>	<b>102,517</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,318,900</b>		<b>419,978</b>