

County Council

19 October 2018

Agenda Item 7(a) - Notice of Motion by Mr Jones

Tackling Homelessness and supporting those at Risk – Briefing Note

National Context

Nationally levels of homelessness and rough sleeping have been rising over the last eight years and this is mirrored in the county as a whole and in particular localities. This may be attributed to a general period of economic slowdown, national policy changes in both welfare reform and planning policy alongside house price increases and the pressure on the housing market.

The publication of the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 set out the Government's aim for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. It builds on a programme of work that is already underway to address homelessness as a whole: the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act proposes more funding for local authorities to prevent homelessness and launches the Rough Sleeping Initiative. The strategy is backed by £1.2bn of funding to tackle homelessness in the short and long term. This includes £100m of investment over three next two years to tackle rough sleeping.

Distribution of responsibilities

There are a range of responsibilities within the system arising from a complex set of statutory obligations upon national agencies and local authorities. Welfare benefits to maintain independence and prevent poverty are managed by government agencies. District authorities have the principal statutory duty in preventing and responding to homelessness in their areas with the County Council in two-tier areas having a statutory role in relation to those who meet specifically defined needs associated with categories of vulnerability or risk of harm. Voluntary organisations provide significant levels of support and direct services to individuals supplementary to these statutory services.

District Spend

Core Costs

Districts operate their Home Options Service which includes costs of providing emergency and temporary accommodation. This uses district-owned housing stock or other options including bed and breakfast or private sector leasing arrangements.

In 2017/18 financial year the district and borough housing services in West Sussex spent £4,354,731 on bed and breakfast and/or temporary accommodation. Additional funding is provided to account for additional statutory requirements placed on districts and boroughs and includes New Burdens funding, the flexible Homeless Support Grant and Discretionary Housing payments as detailed below.

New Burdens

	17/18	18/19	19/20	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adur	29	27	28	84
Arun	71	65	69	205
Chichester	39	36	38	113
Crawley	51	46	49	146
Horsham	34	32	33	99
Mid Sussex	29	26	27	82
Worthing	48	44	47	139
Total	301	276	291	868

Flexible Homelessness Support Grant

	17/18	17/18	18/19	19/20	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adur	184	184	206	138	528
Arun	0	304	350	507	1161
Chichester	1	128	147	188	463
Crawley	258	448	506	610	1564
Horsham	21	124	143	206	473
Mid Sussex	27	193	222	281	696
Worthing	84	120	138	152	410
Total	575	1501	1712	2082	5295

Discretionary Housing Payment

	16/17	16/17	17/18	17/18	18/19
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
	Expenditure	Allocation	Expenditure	Allocation	Allocation
Adur	94	102	148	155	130
Arun	132	239	339	361	320
Chichester	143	159	175	232	202
Crawley	249	280	277	436	337
Horsham	102	141	199	210	155
Mid Sussex	105	126	223	207	169
Worthing	156	160	262	267	228
Total	981	1207	1623	1868	1541
Forgone		226		245	

County Council Spend

The County Council has no statutory housing function or responsibility for addressing homelessness or destitution. The County Council's responsibilities are found in legislation relating to children and to adults with care needs.

- To provide accommodation to children in need or at risk of significant harm – up to the age of 17;

- To provide accommodation to children looked after;
- To provide accommodation to former looked after children including in some cases up to the age of 25 if in full time education or training;
- To provide or secure accommodation to individual adults where they have no recourse to public funds and present with care needs (people who have no eligibility for welfare benefits or housing); and
- To provide or secure residential care for those whose care needs identify such need (the core Care Act duty).

The County Council received ring-fenced grant related to supported housing. In 2011 this ring fence was removed. The Council had settled contracts (floating and/or accommodation-based) which include provision for groups who are vulnerable and threatened with homeless, broken down by district. The current spend by District is as follows:

	Young people	Prevention	Adults	Total spend
Adur and Worthing	£639,275	£975,052	£178,482	£1,792,809
Arun	£114,169	£493,848	£301,115	£909,132
Chichester	£67,525	£441,565	£113,728	£622,818
Crawley	£335,377	£525,742	£92,750	£953,869
Horsham	£280,172	£268,417	£151,662	£700,251
Mid Sussex	£36,118	£294,051	£133,379	£463,548
Total spend by service	£1,472,636	£2,998,675	£971,116	£5,442,427
Youth Homelessness Prevention Team				£170,000
Floating preventative support – countywide demand led				£574,673
Other				£140,000
Total				£6,327,100

County Council spending review proposals

The Forward Plan, published on 29 August 2018, included a proposal to undertake a review of the County Council's spending on supported housing as set out above. It led to a decision to commence a process for consultation and engagement during which representations should be made. The aim is that the final decision will be taken in December 2018 taking into account all representations and submissions.

In addition to this review of spending commitments the Council proposes a collaborative model working across the tiers to better understand the issues and costs associated with homelessness in order to remodel joint arrangements and reduce potential inefficiency, duplication and avoidable cost from the system as a whole.

It is further proposed that consultation on the delivery models for the future of commissioned services is overseen by the Strategic Housing Partnership through a working group which will:

- Analyse the needs and demand of the client groups currently supported in the existing commissioned services;
- Provide clarity about statutory responsibilities of the district and borough housing services and those of the County Council;
- Identify what monies and funding streams are currently in the wider homelessness and prevention system; and
- Consult with, and work with the local authorities and providers to analyse what efficiencies can be identified and what alternative provisions and funding within the whole system there are to shape new models of services reflecting the resources available.

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