

THE SINGLE PERSON GATEWAY – TEMPORARY AND SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR SINGLE PEOPLE AND ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT RECOMMISSIONING

HOUSING & COMMUNITIES (COUNCILLOR LYNDA THORNE) & CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & WELL-BEING (COUNCILLOR SUSAN ELSMORE)

AGENDA ITEM: 10

Reason for this Report

1. To respond to the report by Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee entitled “Temporary and Supported Accommodation – The Single Persons Gateway”
2. To update Cabinet on the work to address single person homelessness in the city and proposed way forward for the redesign of services.
3. To update Cabinet on the recommissioning of accommodation and support services and to set out proposals for a regional commissioning of services for male victims of abuse.

Background

4. The Single Persons Gateway is the access point to a range of accommodation and support for single homeless people and couples. This is one of 4 such gateways operated in Cardiff the others being Family, Young People and Gender Specific, the latter being for women affected by violence and abuse.
5. The Single Persons Gateway accommodation consists of a range of hostel and supported accommodation, managed by the council and partner organisations. On average 1400 individuals are housed in the Single Persons Gateway each year. There are 7 hostels with 261 units of accommodation and 363 units of second stage supported accommodation mostly in houses within the community. In addition there are more than 100 emergency bed spaces / short term accommodation.
6. There are a number of challenges facing the Single Person Gateway:

- There is growing demand as homelessness increases. Requests for assistance from homelessness services have increased by 84% since 2015/16. At the same time rough sleeping in the city has increased from 31 individuals in 2015/16 to 87 September in 2019. 91 individuals were assisted into accommodation between April and September 2019, however numbers of rough sleepers remain very high.
 - The single homeless client group is changing, those sleeping rough are much more likely to use illegal substances. In September 64 of the 87 rough sleepers had a lead support need of drug use while only 5 had a lead need of alcohol
 - Poly-drug use is more common and there are a higher number of clients with both mental health and substance misuse issues. Traditional health and support services struggle to cope with this mix of issues, tending to focus on a single issue.
7. As a result there are an increased number of complex individuals with chaotic behaviour which current accommodation and support services are struggling to assist. This has resulted in a high number of evictions from hostels and supported accommodation, with people revolving between homelessness, hostel and prison.
 8. On average there are only 39 positive exits per month from the Gateway accommodation (moves into social or private housing or return to friends and family). While there are on average 91 negative exits per month (abandoned, evictions, prison and hospital). Repeat evictions, abandonments and placement breakdowns are common – 83 clients have been housed more than 20 times since 2015
 9. There are significant issues with move on from hostel, although considerable priority is given on the social housing waiting list there are not sufficient lets to address this issue. Private sector accommodation is increasingly inaccessible due to high rents and the need for guarantors and bonds. Long times spend in unsuitable accommodation can lead clients to abandon properties and return to the street.

Issues

Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee (CASSC) Review

10. On 21st January 2018 CASSC held a meeting to review the temporary and supported accommodation provided via the Single Persons Gateway. The Committee heard from a wide range of witnesses including representatives from organisations that provide services as part of the Gateway: the Huggard Centre, the Wallich, and the Salvation Army, and representatives from the Council's own Supported Accommodation and Outreach team. An Independent Housing Consultant also gave evidence to the Committee and a number of publications were considered. The Committee's report can found at Appendix 1.

11. The Committee's findings very much reflect the issues set out above, including the difficulties involved in assisting those affected by substance misuse, which is made more difficult by the current legislation, and the increasing complexity of the needs of clients which require a different approach in terms of accommodation and support and a greater involvement from health partners in addressing the client's underlying issues.
12. The Committee's report made 9 recommendations all of which have been accepted in full or in principle. The response to each recommendation is set out at appendix 2.

Action taken to date

Increased Outreach Services

13. The Council's Homeless Outreach Team work on the streets 7 days a week and late into the evening. The team carry out homeless assessments and use informal methods to engage with clients, holding coffee mornings and arranging events and activities such as gardening clubs where engagement can take place. The size of the team has been increased and funding bids have recently been made to increase this further so that a full case management approach can be taken to those living on the streets.

Multi Disciplinary Team

14. The partnership working with health and police colleagues has improved significantly recently, with regular strategic meetings and the development of a multi-disciplinary outreach team (MDT) to address the underlying causes of homelessness. The MDT is based in the Housing Options Centre but engages with clients on the street, at the homeless day centre or specially arranged coffee mornings and events.
15. The MDT is made up of the following partners:
 - Mental Health Worker
 - Advocate
 - Additional Primary Care Nurse
 - Substance Misuse Outreach Worker
 - City Centre Social work team
 - Mental Health social worker
 - Rapid Prescribing Service
 - Therapeutic Outreach Workers and access to ring-fenced psychological services
 - Counselling
 - Peer Mentor Co-ordinator
 - A probation officer will join the team shortly
16. To date, the Multi-disciplinary Team has opened 270 cases to specialist workers. Of the 58 cases that have been closed, 33 clients (57%) have successfully secured accommodation or maintained their existing accommodation.

Housing First

17. Housing First takes those sleeping rough directly into permanent, self-contained accommodation with intensive support. Experience elsewhere has shown that Housing First is much more successful at helping clients to retain accommodation than traditional hostels or supported accommodation.
18. There are 3 Housing First pilots in operation in Cardiff using Welsh Government funding:
 - Salvation Army Scheme - 12 clients have sustained tenancies (2 failed)
 - Council private sector scheme – 8 clients sustained tenancies
 - New Council prisoner scheme – 1 client has moved in recentlyWhile an excellent option for some, Housing First in the community does not meet everyone's needs.

Additional Supported and Accommodation

19. Since 2017 the following additional accommodation has been created for single homeless people:
 - 41 additional emergency accommodation spaces (individual or shared spaces - not floor space).
 - 40 self-contained supported accommodation units specifically for rough sleepers /those at risk of rough sleeping. Plans are in place to increase this to 60.

Work to prevent evictions

20. Work is ongoing with partners to reduce evictions, a process has been put in place to notify the Gateway if evictions are imminent. An Advocate service is in place to intervene where there is a threat of eviction. Despite this negative exits from the gateway remain high.

The Need for a more fundamental Review of Services

21. It has become increasingly clear that there is a need for whole system multiagency review of services for single homeless and vulnerable people
 - In 2018 Cardiff commissioned research by Homeless Link, a well-known homelessness organisation. Their report has recently been completed and a large number of recommendations have been made to change services.
 - During summer 2019 the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities led a multi-agency delegation to Helsinki, and Glasgow to review good practice
 - More recently the Welsh Government Homeless Action Group has reported on changes needed to support for homeless people.

Taking the recommendations / learning forward

22. To take forward the findings from the above a Strategic Review of services for Single Homeless and Vulnerable people has been established with key partners from health, third sector, probation and the police.

23. The work-streams covered by the review are:

- Accommodation and Support
- Assessing and meeting complex needs
- Prevention and rapid rehousing
- Street based lifestyles, including harm reduction and addressing community impact

The aim of the review will be to deliver a vision for future services in Cardiff and to inform future recommissioning.

Recommissioning of Services

24. In January 2018 Cabinet considered the phased recommissioning of accommodation and support services. The report set out detailed proposals for the recommissioning of young person's accommodation and support and this has now been completed with a full service now in place for both homeless and looked after young people. The report indicated that further cabinet reports would be brought forward for the recommissioning of services for male victims of abuse and for supported housing, specialist floating support and hostels.

Single Persons Gateway Supported Accommodation and Hostels

25. Given the need to carry out the review as outlined above it is not proposed to take forward full recommissioning of the Single Person Gateway accommodation and support services at this time, instead it is proposed to work in partnership with existing providers to reconfigure services to better meet needs of current clients. A strategic review of services will then be undertaken.

26. There is clearly a need for more accommodation for those with complex needs and more challenging behaviours. For some this may mean Housing First in the community and for others this will mean a higher standard of supported accommodation, with greater support on site to help tenants maintain their accommodation.

27. It is equally clear that there is a need to assess those with low needs quickly and to provide separate services focused on rapid rehousing, with only a short stay in an appropriate hostel or supported housing, where necessary.

28. It is proposed that most services shall have their contracts extended for a further year, with some reconfiguration as above. However where a review of performance shows that services are not meeting current need and reconfiguration is not possible, it is proposed that the contract for

these services cease or are phased out releasing funding to be used to pilot alternative approaches. It is proposed that the Assistant Director of Housing and Communities should take this work forward in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities.

29. A further cabinet report will be brought forward to set out the results of the Strategic Review, the vision for future services and the approach to be taken to recommissioning of services.

Male Victims of Abuse and Sexual Violence

30. A collaborative approach with other funders has been taken for services to male victims of abuse due to the smaller size of the client group and to offer economies of scale. Following lengthy consultation with other local authorities across South Wales and Gwent, it is proposed that a regional tendering exercise take place for Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend Councils to procure a specialist service for male victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is proposed that Cardiff Council will take the lead in the commissioning process on behalf of the region, and facilitate the option for other authorities to purchase elements of the service at a later date within the term of the contract.
31. It is proposed that there will be one contract for Accommodation and Support services delivered either by a single provider, a lead provider with sub-contractors or a consortium, to include provision of advice; information and signposting; management of Police referrals; supported accommodation; floating support, including assistance throughout court proceedings and therapeutic support.
32. The proposed contract duration would be an initial fixed period of 3 years with the option to extend, provided that the contract term did not exceed 7 years in total; the total value of the contract is not expected to exceed £3m combined for all partners, over the full term. The contract will include the ability to amend the terms should funding decrease or following a change in legislation or demand.
33. Stakeholder consultation: Two consultation workshops took place in April 2018 and May 2019, one with statutory partners and stakeholders, one with other local authorities throughout South Wales and Gwent. From this a comprehensive needs assessment is nearing completion, which will inform the design of the new service. Feedback from service providers and prospective tenderers will help inform the detailed specification.
34. Service user consultation: A questionnaire asking male victims about their experiences of services, how the service could be improved and what they want from a service has been completed. Face to face interviews also took place. It is proposed that further focus groups will be held to garner additional feedback from those either previously in receipt of services, or who would be the beneficiaries of a future bespoke service.

35. A detailed specification will be developed using feedback from current service providers, statutory partners and survivors. Quality criteria will be a significant part of the assessment process. It is envisaged that quality will have a higher weighting than price in the assessment. It is anticipated that the procurement process for Accommodation and Support Services for male victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence will commence in January 2020, with the aim of having new contracts in place by August 2020.
36. It is proposed that the Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Well-being, should take forward the regional recommissioning of services for male victims of abuse.

Reason for Recommendations

37. To respond to the report of Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee Temporary and Support Accommodation – The Single Person Gateway.
38. To agree interim arrangements for the Single Person Gateway Accommodation and Support Services ahead of the strategic review
39. To agree to the approach to regional commissioning of services for male victims of abuse.

Financial Implications

40. The report proposes a number of actions in response to a scrutiny report and Strategic Review of services for Single Homeless and Vulnerable people. Any actions will need to be taken and prioritised within existing Council budgets, in accordance with the terms, conditions and eligibility for any Welsh Government Housing Support Grant allocated to the Council and in accordance with the respective responsibilities of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. Where activities are undertaken with partners, the financial implications on the Council, including VAT will need to be understood as part of the development of such proposals.

Legal Implications

The First Recommendation

41. This raises no direct legal implications.

The Second Recommendation

42. Any variations and termination of contracts must be carried out in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) and the Councils Contract Procedure Rules. Accordingly,

Legal, procurement and HR advice should be sought on the proposals in respect of the individual contracts prior to implementation.

43. Further Legal implications will be set out in the Officer Decision Report.

The Third Recommendation

44. It is understood that the proposed services fall within the Schedule 3 list of Services to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("PCR 2015"). Where the estimated contract value for Schedule 3 services is £615,278 or above, what is known as the Light Touch Regime ("LTR") applies. This means that when procuring these services the Council should comply with the mandatory requirements of the LTR set out in Regulations 74-77. Detailed Legal advice should be sought on the proposed procurement strategy, the proposed procurement route and collaboration arrangements.
45. It is noted from the body of the report that further consultation to develop the specification will be undertaken. Consultation gives rise to a legitimate expectation that the outcome of the consultation will be taken into account in determining the way forward

General Legal Advice

46. The decision regarding these recommendations must be made in the context of the Council's public sector equality duties. The Council also has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties, Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. The Protected characteristics are: age, gender reassignment, sex, race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, religion or belief – including lack of belief.
47. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the Act") places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales – a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and is globally responsible.
48. In discharging its duties under the Act, the Council has set and published well being objectives designed to maximise its contribution to achieving the national well being goals. The well being objectives are set out in Cardiff's Corporate Plan 2019-22: <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Your-Council/Strategies-plans-and-policies/Corporate-Plan/Pages/Corporate-Plan.aspx>
49. The well being duty also requires the Council to act in accordance with 'sustainable development principle'. This principle requires the Council to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are

met without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Put simply, this means that Council decision makers must take account of the impact of their decisions on people living their lives in Wales in the future. In doing so, the Council must:

- Look to the long term
 - Focus on prevention by understanding the root causes of problems
 - Deliver an integrates approach to achieving the 7 national well-being goals
 - Work in collaboration with others to find shared sustainable solutions
 - Involve people from all sections of the community in the decisions which affect them
50. The decision maker must be satisfied that the proposed decision accords with the principles above; and due regard must be given to the Statutory Guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers, which is accessible using the link below: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/statutory-guidance/?lang=en>
51. The Council has to be mindful of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards when making any policy decisions and consider the impact upon the Welsh language, the report and Equality Impact Assessment deals with all these obligations. The Council has to consider the Well-being of Future Guidance (Wales) Act 2015 and how this strategy may improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommend to:

1. Note the issues facing services assisting single homeless people and to agree the response to Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee regarding the Single Person Gateway set out at appendix 2.
2. Delegate authority to Assistant Director Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to take forward the reconfiguration of single person gateway accommodation services as set out in the report, including the ending of some contracts.
3. To note that a decision will be sought from the Corporate Director - People and Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Well-being to carry out a procurement exercise on behalf of Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend Councils to establish a specialist regional service for male victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Sarah McGill Corporate Director People & Communities
	13 December 2019

The following appendices are attached:

Appendix 1 - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Report – Temporary and Supported Accommodation – the Single Persons Gateway. 21 January 2019

Appendix 2 - Response to the CASSC report – Temporary and Supported Accommodation – the Single Persons Gateway.

The following background papers have been taken into account:

Homeless Link - Review of Services for Homeless People in Cardiff with Complex Needs

Welsh Government Homeless Action Group -Preventing rough sleeping in Wales and reducing it in the short-term