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To: Supporting People in Kent Commissioning Body

Subject: Rough Sleeper Response Proposal

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

This report summarises the work of the Core Strategy Group in identifying proposals for using the Supporting People budget reserves.

Recommendations:

The Commissioning Body is asked to agree:

- (1) To utilise available funding to continue the 'Hostels Plus' model introduced in 2013/14 to provide additional short term bed spaces for rough sleepers all year round
- (2) To extend funding to the rough sleepers outreach service to facilitate support to greater numbers and at a greater intensity of support using the existing evidence base.
- (3) To focus upon year round provision, rather than season limited services
- (4) For Commissioned Services to facilitate a discussion between the Generic Floating Support Service Provider and Swale Borough Council to further explore the SBC proposal from existing contract capacity
- (5) For Commissioned Services and Sevenoaks District Council to explore more effective use of existing rent deposit monies within the Sevenoaks area.

1 Introduction

- (1) At its meeting of April 2014 the Kent Supporting People Commissioning Body discussed potential uses for the Supporting People budget reserves.
- (2) It was agreed that the Core Strategy Group would work together to compile proposals for utilisation of the reserves.
- (3) The Core Strategy Group met in June 2014 to discuss potential uses for the reserves.
- (4) This report sets out the needs data collected, and the proposals put forward by partners in the group.

2 Context

- (1) Kent County Council Commissioned Services currently commissions two specialist entrenched Rough Sleeper Outreach services, which serve the whole County.

- (2) The East Kent Entrenched Rough Sleeper Service reported utilisation of 101.9% at the end of quarter 1 of 2014/15, supporting 72 clients over the course of the period. The service is contracted to support 37 clients at any one time, and is currently supporting 40 clients.
- (3) The West Kent Entrenched Rough Sleeper Service reported utilisation of 99.4% at the end of quarter 1 of 2014/15, supporting 55 clients over the course of the period. The service is contracted to support 37 clients at any one time, and is currently supporting 40 clients.
- (4) The current provider estimates that there are approximately 146 people currently rough sleeping across the County.
- (5) These figures do not account for the 'hidden homeless', which may include people sofa surfing and those in unstable or unsuitable housing. This group of homeless people is supported through the range of floating support services currently commissioned by Kent County Council. The generic floating support services are the services most suited to this group, and these services reported utilisation of 84.7% and 86.2% across East and West Kent respectively in quarter 1, indicating that there is capacity to support greater numbers within existing services.
- (6) Additionally, there are a number of specialist floating support services, including an Offender specific service, which currently reports utilisation of 65.4% in East Kent and 110% in West Kent, indicating greater capacity to support offenders in East Kent.

3 Proposals for Reserves Utilisation

- (1) The Core Strategy Group met in June 2014 and representatives were asked to provide suggestions for utilisation of the reserves. The responses received are detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1:

District	Reserves Proposal
Ashford	To provide additional resources to enhance the coverage of the existing entrenched rough sleeper service
Canterbury	To provide additional resources to enhance the coverage of the existing entrenched rough sleeper service, on a more district focussed basis
Dartford	To provide funds to existing support agencies already working with rough sleepers (not commissioned through KCC) to enhance their provision. To provide 'sit up' beds in identified locations.
Dover	To provide additional resources to enhance the coverage of the existing entrenched rough sleeper service, on a more district focussed basis
Gravesham	Gravesend based YMCA, Foyers, single homeless specialist accommodation – linked with tenancy sustainment officers when ready for move on, accessibility to case equivalent rent deposit scheme –

	linked with specialist tenancy support for client groups with drug/alcohol issues
Maidstone	No Response
Sevenoaks	Introduction of initiatives to support accessing privately rented accommodation, and to attract private landlords to the sector.
Shepway	To provide additional resources to enhance the coverage of the existing entrenched rough sleeper service, on a more district focussed basis
Swale	Floating Support Officer to sit within the housing options team to provide advice and assistance to people as they come through the door and help with referrals to mental health services.
Thanet	A winter shelter provision placed within the community in the right area of Thanet would give an opportunity to capture the individuals that would not usually engage with local authority services and have a holistic approach to addressing all their issues; health, housing, employment etc. The necessary funding would be required to pool together existing local services and provide additional services where the area is lacking.
Tonbridge & Malling	Short stay direct access accommodation is a necessity as well as intensive support to help find more settled accommodation solutions
Tunbridge Wells	More personalised, intensive support for entrenched rough sleepers – focus on looking at their individual barriers to getting off the streets, and the addition of sit up beds in existing hostels
Kent Community & Rehabilitation Company	A scheme for offenders that provides access to very short term residential provision i.e. up to 3 months maximum stay, with sufficient non-residential 'key worker' staff to develop appropriate and individualised support packages.

- (2) Responses were received from 11 of the 12 district councils consulted, and the Kent Community and Rehabilitation Company.
- (3) The majority of respondents advocated funds being utilised to enhance the existing rough sleeper provision to deliver intensive support to the vulnerable rough sleepers in the county.
- (4) It has been proposed that this intensive support is delivered in conjunction with provision of short term, intensive supported housing bed spaces for this sector of the client group. The model proposed is broadly in line with the 'Hostels Plus' pilot initiative commissioned during 2013/14, details of which are included at Appendix 1.
- (5) It was also noted that this model requires robust move on processes and that the model should make provision for successful move on into the privately rented sector through the building of landlord relationships and access to deposit/ bond provision where none currently exists.

- (6) The Kent Community and Rehabilitation Company has proposed short term (up to 3-6 months) intensive residential accommodation to support the needs of offenders leaving custodial sentences and move them into settled accommodation. No property or capital funding has been identified for this proposal.
- (7) Sevenoaks District Council have identified that due to the low numbers of rough sleepers in the area their proposal is for funds to be allocated to attract private landlord and support access into the privately rented accommodation sector. Supporting People Rent Deposit Scheme monies remain available for use by Sevenoaks District Council.
- (8) Swale Borough Council also identified a lower need for rough sleeper services, and are instead proposing that funds could be allocated to their borough to provide a floating support worker within the Housing Options Team to support the large numbers of household presenting as in housing need with a mental health issue with referrals into appropriate support services.
- (9) One area (Thanet) has proposed that funding is used for a temporary Winter Shelter in the area. No property or capital funding has been identified for this proposal.

4 Rough Sleeping Levels in Kent

- (1) During the Core Strategy Group Meeting held in June 2014, meeting attendees were asked to supply most recent data regarding rough sleeping numbers in each area. The provided data is supplied below in Table 2:

Table 2

District	Rough Sleeper Numbers
Ashford	'Patchy' (no data provided)
Canterbury	22
Dartford	12
Dover	5
Gravesham	1
Maidstone	No Response
Sevenoaks	2*
Shepway	8
Swale	5*
Thanet	14
Tonbridge & Malling	7
Tunbridge Wells	9
Total Rough Sleepers	71

** These districts have proposed alternative priorities to the rough sleeper proposal favoured by the majority of other partners, as detailed later in this report.*

- (2) The Kent Community and Rehabilitation Company (CRC) has provided data to identify the number of 'No Fixed Abode' cases in Kent. This figure currently stands at 128, although it is expected that there will be some duplication with the data provided by district and borough councils.

- (3) The needs data supplied by the local authorities identified that most rough sleepers have additional support needs, predominantly substance misuse including street drinking and mental health needs.

5 Relevant priority outcomes

- (1) The priority outcomes of the existing entrenched rough sleeper service are:
- a. a reduction in the levels of rough sleeping in Kent and where possible, reconnect rough sleepers from out of Kent to their areas of origin.
 - b. a reduction in the incidences of repeat homelessness
 - c. a reduction in health inequalities through improved access to both emergency and planned health care including improved access to mental health services, thereby reducing the rates of suicide and death by indeterminate causes
 - d. a reduction in crisis admissions to hospital
 - e. widen choice in housing and support
 - f. promotion of more stable lifestyles, social inclusion and community cohesion
 - g. promotion of opportunities to services users to access training education and employment opportunities including volunteering and direct employment
 - h. promotion of capacity building through peer support in order to enable service users to be empowered to move on from housing-related support and contribute to Kent's future prosperity

6 Delivery timescales

- (1) Rough sleeper provision in Kent could be delivered by existing service providers through variations to current contractual arrangements.
- (2) By not requiring a full procurement process the enhanced service would be deliverable in a short time frame, subject to consultation with the appropriate service providers.

7 Consultation

- (1) All 12 Kent district and borough councils were consulted to provide both needs data as to the level of rough sleeping in each area, and proposals for service models to address the need.
- (2) Participants were given 1 month to compile data and respond to the request for information.

8 Financial Implications

- (1) The scope and scale of any enhancement delivered to support rough sleepers will be dependent on the level of funding allocated, and would be time limited to the duration of any funding arrangements.
- (2) Preliminary projections indicate that a model of 'sit up' beds and intensive support to rough sleepers would cost in the region of £3,500 per client. There is likely to be an increased draw on the rent deposit scheme already distributed to districts and boroughs, of which large proportion remains unspent in some areas.

9 Risks

- (1) The risks are minimised through having services delivered by existing, tested service providers as an enhancement to current service provision.
- (3) Delivery will be monitored through existing performance and contract monitoring arrangements.

10 Legal Implications

- (1) The current contracts held with service providers allow for variations to be made to the scope of the service without undertaking a full procurement process.

11 Equality Impact Assessments

- (1) Any provision commissioned to support the needs of this client group will be required to work appropriately with all areas of the rough sleeping community, including supporting those who may be otherwise disadvantaged from accessing services.

12 Sustainability Implications

- (1) Commissioned Services remains committed to ensuring environmental sustainability of the services it commissions. As any provision would be an enhancement to existing contractual arrangements service providers would be required to extend their sustainability arrangements to this area of their business.

13 Conclusion

- (1) The consultation undertaken with District and Borough partners has identified the need for enhanced provision around the support and accommodation needs of rough sleepers across the County.

14 Recommendations

- (1) To utilise available funding to continue the 'Hostels Plus' model introduced in 2013/14 to provide additional short term bed spaces for rough sleepers all year round
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