



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Executive Member for Customer Services  
29 January 2021

Decision to be made on or after  
8 February 2021

Key Decision: Yes

Ward(s) Affected: All

## **Collaboration Agreement to deliver Housing Related Support**

### **Report by the Director for Communities**

#### **Executive Summary**

##### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress made since the reduction in the West Sussex County Council (WSCC) housing related support budget from £6.3million to £4.6 million in 2019/2020 and then to £2.3 million in 2020/21.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval from Members to enter a collaboration agreement with WSCC and other Districts and Borough Councils in West Sussex to commission a Housing Related Support Service.

##### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive Members are recommended to:
  - i) Approve that the Councils enter a collaboration agreement with WSCC and other Districts and Borough Councils in West Sussex to commission a Housing Related Support Service.

- ii) To release the agreed budget to commission a joint Housing Related Support Service with WSCC and other Districts and Borough Councils in West Sussex

### **3. Background and Context**

- 3.1 In September 2018, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) announced that it would cut its budget for housing related support from £6.3million to £4.6 million in 2019/2020 and then to £2.3 million in 2020/21.
- 3.2 A Task and Finish Group, involving all districts and borough councils in West Sussex and WSCC, was set up with stakeholders and housing related support services providers to mitigate the impact of the cuts and ensure appropriate support continued to be available to the most vulnerable.
- 3.3 The Task and Finish Group commissioned SNOOK in 2019 to work with key stakeholders and service users to better understand the housing related support needed within the County and help inform commissioning priorities given the limited funds available.
- 3.4 Following consultations and workshops with a wide variety of service providers, service users, Council services and other stakeholders, SNOOK produced a report and a set of principles for commissioning future support services that West Sussex District and Borough Councils and WSCC have agreed. This report was deliberate and agreed by the Task and Finish Group.
- 3.5 The Task and Finish Group worked with WSCC to ensure housing related support services which were flagged as essential continued to remain funded. These services include accommodation based services for rough sleepers, Young Person and Adult Supported Accommodation.
- 3.6 Ensuring people receive the support they need to continue to sustain their homes and prevent homelessness is part of our commitment under Platform 2 of Platforms for our Places and the Councils' Housing Strategy 2020 - 2023 to build upon our prevention agenda through engaging a wider set of partners and ensure prevention and early interventions where needed.

## Issues for consideration

- 4.1 Based on the commissioning principles and the outcome of the consultation undertaken by SNOOK, the Task and Finish group has worked to create a new service that will provide tenancy sustainment support to vulnerable people living independently, regardless of the tenure of their accommodation or their age.
- 4.2 Most of the current services that support independent living are tied to specific accommodation under long time arrangements. This removed the flexibility required to support people across different tenures. Furthermore, some of these services were not scalable. The amount and type of support vulnerable people need varies based on their needs at a point in time. For instance, people moving into independent accommodation for the first time or leaving hospital or going through a crisis may require intensive support for a period, which will then reduce as they become more stable. At a point they may no longer need such support but the option to re-access such support should always be available if the need arises. Such an arrangement creates the flexibility needed to target the right amount of support where it is needed and also reach more people.
- 4.3 The need for a new type of service has become apparent following the increasing number of households in temporary accommodation and supported housing across all District and Borough Councils in West Sussex who need to be resettled into independent permanent accommodation and supported to sustain such accommodation to prevent them becoming homeless again. Helping households across all tenures sustain their homes is even more relevant now as the impact of COVID-19 causes more households to face increased risk of homelessness.
- 4.4 Though the services are commissioned jointly with WSCC and other Districts and Borough Councils in West Sussex, the contracts are packaged separately for each district and borough, with Adur and Worthing being a joint contract. This arrangement allows all districts and boroughs to benefit from the WSCC's experience in commissioning housing related support contracts and also ensure that providers do not simply choose the areas they find attractive, leaving other areas without the services needed.

- 4.5 WSCC will hold the contract with all districts and boroughs represented on the contract management panel.

#### **4. Engagement and Communication**

- 5.1 The new Housing Related Support Service is informed by the work by SNOOK, which involved extensive engagement with service users, community support groups and service providers.
- 5.2 The Task and Finish Group have involved service providers and social housing providers in discussions on the design of the new type of service.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The costs of commissioning this service are built into the councils budgets set aside to mitigate impact of the WSCC budget decisions on supported housing, in particular duty to prevent and relieve homelessness. Consequently, the cost of the proposed contract payments of £50,000 per Council per year can be met from within the Councils' budgets.

#### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force on 3 April 2018. It places new legal duties on housing authorities, with a focus on preventing homelessness. The most significant change is that anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness is able to access support, regardless of their priority need status.
- 6.2 Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 continues to place a duty on every local housing authority to consider housing conditions in their district and the needs of the district with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation.
- 6.3 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 6.4 s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation

- 6.5 Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 6.6 s1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 confers power on the Council to enter into a contract for the provision of making available assets or services for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the Council.
- 6.7 When entering into a public contract, the authority is required to comply with the Councils' Contract Standing Orders found at Part 4 of the Councils' constitution. Where the Contract is an above threshold contract for goods and/or services as defined by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 any procurement exercise to contract for those goods and services must be conducted in accordance with those Regulations which is retained law by virtue of s29 of the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020.

### **Background Papers**

- [Design Principles for Commissioning](#)
- [Housing Strategy](#)
- [Platforms for our Places](#)

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

- Housing of all types and tenure, supports the economy of our places, enabling inward investment as well as providing safe and secure places for our communities to live and work from.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

- There is a growing understanding of the health and social impacts of poor housing and at its extreme, the impacts of homelessness can be significant for individuals and families. Adur and Worthing Councils seeks to minimise these impacts through our work to identify and support individuals and communities at risk of homelessness and prevent this wherever possible. The redesign of support services to a tenure neutral, flexible support service that can provide support to individuals covering low - to high and complex needs support these aims.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

- The work undertaken by SNOOK considered equality issues. A wide variety of households who fall under the protected characteristics group and the services that support them were involved in the service design.
- The new service will be more accessible to vulnerable people especially those in the protected characteristics group.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

- The redesigned service will allow for more flexibility in working with those who may have a history of complex behaviors and/or ASB to access and sustain suitable accommodation.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

- Matter considered nothing to report

### **3. Environmental**

- Matter considered nothing to report

### **4. Governance**

- Housing Strategy 2020-2023: Enabling our Residents to thrive in their own home
- Platforms for our Places: Strategic influencing and Systems Leadership - developing our key relationships and partnerships
- Quarterly contract management meetings with providers and WSCC.

- Quarterly performance reporting.
- Allocation of support hours by Districts and Boroughs.
- Reporting to Strategic Housing Group.