

# Portfolio Holder decision record sheet

**Name of decision maker:** Councillor Margaret Griffiths

**Portfolio:** Housing & Regeneration

**Date of Portfolio Holder decision:** 31 May 2019

**Title of decision:** Homeless Prevention - Street Outreach

**Part II:**

**Part II reason:**

**Background to report:** (this will be sent to members in the initial notice email so they know the content of the decision)

Homelessness has continued to increase in Dacorum and changes in legislation mean we must work in partnership, to prevent and tackle homelessness. With our commitment to achieving a gold standard service, we can help to keep people in safe, secure and affordable homes. Using the five commitments set out in the strategy, we can capture the difference, we as a housing service, along with our partners make to people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.

In Dacorum, preventing and tackling homelessness is more than addressing peoples housing situation. It is about helping them to fulfil their potential and live a quality life. Our vision is to create a borough where homelessness is not an option. We will work together with our partners to help every person that is homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to gain the right skills and resources to improve their lives and 'get back on track'. To deliver this vision it is essential that we work with our residents to create strong and vibrant communities that enjoy safe and clean environments. We will continue to provide good quality affordable homes, particularly to those in need and ensure the economic growth and prosperity of our borough so our residents can support themselves. As a Council we will explore how we can create more efficient and modern services, so those who need help, can access it through multiple channels.

Within our 2016-2020 Homelessness Strategy, we have committed to understanding both the needs and the experiences of people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Taking this informed approach, we can develop preventative approaches and reduce the number of people becoming homeless in Dacorum. To achieve this, one of the activities undertaken, is for the service to scope out and consider delivery of an outreach and Housing First model, to support people with complex needs experiencing homelessness into accommodation and eradicate rough sleeping by developing a No Second Night Out model.

The service has submitted a bid to Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government for grant funding via the Rough Sleeper Initiative, a targeted £45m Rough Sleeping Initiative fund was announced in September 2018 for local authorities to be used in 2019-20. This included an £11m fund to support areas outside the initial 83 local authorities who were supported in 2018-19. Proposals for this funding were submitted to MHCLG in February 2019 by local authorities, which were reviewed by a moderation panel. Following this robust process, Dacorum have been awarded £200,000 for the 2019-20 period.

**Decision made and reasons:**

1. Due to the specialist nature of the homeless support requirements, to approve an exemption to the Council's commissioning & procurement standing orders and award a contract directly to Hightown Housing Association, without the need to carry out a competitive tendering process.
2. The award of grant funding to Hightown Housing Association will enable delivery of Street Outreach functions, by recruitment of 2 FTE dedicated outreach workers and the delivery of enhanced Housing First project in partnership with St Albans District Council and in line with the bid submission to MHCLG.
3. The reason for awarding the grant to Hightown Housing Association is because they are a recognised specialist provider of housing related support to: complex clients, clients with learning disability and mental health needs, homeless households via current street outreach projects and management of the homeless hostel in St Albans. There is no other experienced provider in

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<p>Dacorum delivering such functions across St Albans and Dacorum, as this is a dual project, we require an organisation with experiencing in managing existing functions and partnership arrangements.</p>
<p><b>Reports considered: (here reference can be made to specific documents)</b></p> <p>Homeless Link report Grant funding submission to MHCLG</p>
<p><b>Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders consulted:</b></p> <p>Fiona Williamson, Assistant Director, Housing</p>
<p><b>Monitoring Officer comments:</b></p> <p>The Council should ensure that any conditions relating to the grant funding are complied with. Prior to awarding the grant to Hightown Housing Association, a service level agreement should be entered into detailing how the grant is to be utilised.</p> <p><b>Deputy Chief Financial Officer comments:</b></p> <p>DBC received a grant of £200k from MHCLG and the proposal is to allocate £100k to Hightown Housing Association for Housing first related work and £100k to Hightown Housing Association for outreach work to complex clients.</p> <p>These proposals are in line with the grant conditions and hence the grant can be fully utilised to fund these proposals.</p>
<p><b>Implications:</b> The project involves directly working with homeless clients who are extremely complex in nature, presenting with challenging behaviour, which may pose risks to potential staff and the community. The project will need to ensure that it has actively considered the approach and engagement. A community Impact Assessment will be required.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> There may be delays in relation to recruiting to key roles, delaying the development of the project. Dacorum and SADC are working closely with Homeless Link for specialist guidance to mitigate risk. Additionally risks can be posed with managing such complex project working with clients of dual diagnosis and other secondary behaviours/health issues. It will be crucial to ensure that robust risk assessment processes are in place to manage staff safety. Reputational risk and managing community perception will be a critical function of managing a project such as Housing First and it will be important that organisationally all agencies undertake effective communication and community engagement.</p> <p><b>Value for money:</b> Hightown Housing Association, currently deliver similar services to that which is proposed and are competitively placed in the market in respect of salary expectations for staff. Rough Sleeper Initiative funding is provided directly from MHCLG and the partnership of Dacorum and SADC are working closely to ensure that the project is delivered within the funding provided and without further demand on existing budgets. Consideration will also be given as to how the project can be sustained post expiration of the funding.</p>
<p><b>Options considered and reasons for rejection:</b></p>
<p><b>Portfolio Holder's signature:</b></p>
<p><b>Date:</b></p>
<p><b>Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards</b></p>

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Committee:
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<b>For Member Support Officer use only</b>
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Date decision record sheet received from portfolio holder: 26/09/19
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Date decision published: 03/10/19	Decision no: PH/024/19
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Date of expiry of call-in period: 10/10/19
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Date any call-in received or decision implemented:
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## Background

1. Dacorum Council have undertaken a street homeless count in the last three years due to increasing numbers of street activity and rough sleeping in our area. In 2018 we estimated that the numbers sleeping rough in Dacorum on any given night, could be as high as 17 individuals, this was intelligence gained from statutory partners and other local agencies.
2. The Strategic Housing Service continues to work closely to address rough sleeping and prevent homelessness in the borough; our 2016-2020 strategy demonstrates a commitment to eradicating rough sleeping and delivery of a Housing First model, which was approved by Cabinet in 2016.
3. To inform our approach to tackling rough sleeping and street activity we appointed Homeless Link, who are homelessness specialists to undertake consultancy and provide guidance on how Housing First could be delivered in Dacorum, this document is attached with the report.
4. The Homeless Forum has worked closely with our partners to address rough sleeping issues and this has included, campaigns and joint community 'outreach' operations undertaken by the Police, DENS and Dacorum staff. This has enabled us to develop a proposal for a project, which we will support us to provide more robust support for those at risk of entrenched homelessness and rough sleeping.
5. Dacorum have worked closely with our neighbouring authority St Albans and District Council (SADC) I, with whom we share a boundary, which often means that some clients approaching as homeless move across both districts. Through joint working Dacorum have led on a proposal to MHCLG to develop a Housing First project and requested £150,000 to enable both authorities to do this.
6. When considering the proposal MHCLG raised concerns that Dacorum doesn't have a dedicated Street Outreach Worker function and stated that this must be in place in order for us to effectively manage a Housing First project, as a result MHCLG awarded £200,000 of RSI funding. MHCLG have advised that it expects Dacorum to ensure that it has in place two dedicated Outreach workers to support project delivery and the proposal is that Hightown would undertake recruitment from their pool of specialist staff, this is a function that they directly manage for SADC.
7. To ensure that our project is cohesive, we have also presented at the Dacorum Strategic Network, which is led by the Leader of the Council, Andrew Williams, and Chief Executive, Sally Marshall. The Strategic Housing Service was approved a further £17,500 from Performance Related Grant funding to support this project and enable funds to be used to recruit a Community Drug & Alcohol worker. This role will be vital in supporting the Outreach team to deliver an effective service in partnership with other local agencies.

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8. Following recruitment of the dedicated Street Outreach Workers, the remaining RSI funding, will be used to recruit a Housing First Project lead who will co-ordinate the project across Dacorum and St Albans. This is a complex project requiring multi-agency involvement and a number of new processes, policies and supporting infrastructure to be put in place and workers will require funding that remains to support these functions and clients effectively.