

Appendix 1: Streets to Home Service – Discussion paper

1. Proposal:

Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council will (subject to member approval) align agreed elements of their budgets relating to adult homelessness and take a collaborative approach to jointly developing a 'Streets to Home' service.

- The specific themes within the Streets to Home proposals are outlined at section 4 of this paper but there are some overarching principles to also emphasise; these are as follows:
- Providing a single commissioned Streets to Home service will provide longer term funding for the holistic effort to tackle rough sleeping – at present we have a myriad of grants, commissioned services and third party funded services supporting this effort
- A single service approach should, in turn, should lead to a more cohesive and less duplicated effort
- The operational service will be able to function more responsively to an agreed strategic approach
- This proposal is not just about funded services; it also aims to set the focus for the way in which volunteer services can support the effort – during the Covid-19 lockdown period and beyond, volunteer services demonstrated the critical part they can play in preventing rough sleeping rather than dealing with its consequences.
- The Streets to Home service proposals are not motivated by the need to make cuts; they are designed to achieve better outcomes for users of the service. More detail on funding is provided at section 6 below.

2. Background:

The next few years pose significant challenges and opportunities in the area of designing and commissioning housing and support services for people whose homelessness is a more complex problem than just the need for accommodation. The context is the familiar one of having to do more with the same resources, but it is also different in that there appears to be a growing realisation that 'business as usual' – essentially the progression model taking a rough sleeper from streets to assessment centre, to hostel, to 'move-on' accommodation and, finally, into a tenancy - is failing to resolve the street homeless problem and that we need to consider different ways to do things.

Hostels have helped plenty of people find a route out of homelessness, but for many of the most challenging single homeless people, hostels may provide only a partial or temporary fix leading to repeat homelessness and the frustrating continuing presence on the streets of people known to be in accommodation. Many rough sleepers refuse hostel accommodation outright.

The City and County Councils are working together to develop a sustainable Housing First offer for Cambridge City, building on an existing pilot. Once established, Housing First will be able to provide an alternative to traditional hostel accommodation for some of the City's more complex rough sleepers.

In addition to Housing First, the City Council is also piloting a range of novel approaches. Plans are now well-advanced to establish an initial batch of 21 modular homes on several sites. Another scheme will see an initial offer of five three-bedroom general needs properties in low demand given over as shared accommodation to pairs of former rough sleepers who have expressed a preference to be housed together. In addition a major new initiative is underway to procure many more privately-rented homes for rough sleepers supported by the recent welcome increase in the local housing allowance and an upward revision of the maximum top-up available under the Council's HB Plus scheme. In addition, a recent grant application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has secured funding to allow the City Council to guarantee rents to private landlords for one year for 20 self-contained one-bedroom flats.

Relative to overall local provision, the number of rough sleepers housed under these novel schemes will initially be modest: hostels will continue into the mid-term to provide support and accommodation for the majority of those in Cambridge who are single and homeless. The development of these new approaches will mean that some people may be able move directly from the streets into their own home without an intervening period in a hostel. It also has the potential to reduce the length of time people spend in hostel accommodation before moving into a home of their own - be that a privately-rented home, a socially-rented home or one of the aforementioned novel solutions.

These changes - while foreshadowed by developments in recent years and especially the government's pledge to end rough sleeping by 2027 – have been endorsed and enormously validated by the recent effort to get “everyone in” in response to Covid 19.

3. Covid 19:

We are all very aware of the impact that the Covid 19 pandemic has had on the country as a whole, but also particularly on the rough sleeping community. The steps government and local authorities have taken to accommodate those on the streets in emergency accommodation in response to Covid 19 means that high numbers have engaged with services in a way not seen before. Though complex and costly, this has also presented an unprecedented opportunity to help us turn the tide on rough sleeping.

The Covid crisis has highlighted the value of current services in supporting vulnerable homeless people, but has also shown us that there is scope to do things differently, and we want to make sure we capture this learning and use it to inform our service re-shaping work.

During this period volunteer services demonstrated their worth more than ever; providing an impressive coordinated effort to support people in their accommodation and prevent a return to rough sleeping. It is important that we build on this work; the voluntary sector offer would be hugely valuable in complementing the commissioned service and provide additional resource/support.

4. Developing a ‘Streets to Home’ service:

The intention in developing this service will be to deliver a model that helps us reduce the number of people on the street, and increase the number of people with support needs able to live in their own stable accommodation. The ‘Streets to Home’ approach should;

- ensure each individual has a lead professional to support them through the stages of their journey out of homelessness
- operate across the traditional ‘street / home’ service boundaries
- offer flexible, personalised support, planned with the individual
- be adaptive and proactive in their support offer

- ensure access to ongoing support for as long as it is needed
- be focussed on tenancy attainment and then tenancy sustainment;
- be skilled at facilitating access to specialist support (such as drug and alcohol services) at the point it may be needed;
- develop strong partnerships with other local non-commissioned and voluntary groups in order to maximise the opportunities for clients and minimise duplication
- build on the successes achieved during the Covid 19 pandemic, by refocusing volunteer-based services on sustaining those in accommodation and delivering fewer services to those on the streets

5. Contract arrangements:

The contract arrangement for the 'Streets to Homes Service' can not be determined until there is a clear understanding of what the final model might look like and how the alignment of funding and delivery would work.

Consideration also needs to be given to how co-location could support integration of services delivered through existing statutory arrangements e.g. the Housing Advice Hub and Dual Diagnosis Street Partnership (DDSP) elements.

Various options will be considered such as having different contract 'lots' to cover different aspects of the new service. However, it is unlikely that the current arrangement of having a multitude of different contracts in place would be the preferred option going forward.

The minimum contract period will be 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2. However, as this is a large and complex service, the councils will consider whether a longer term contract would be more appropriate.

6. Funding:

The funding for delivering the new model would be provided using existing budgets which the County and City Councils are currently spending on rough sleeping, homelessness and related services. There are no cuts planned beyond those the County have already outlined in its Housing Related Support Review and the figures provided below represent the minimum annual amount committed for the duration of the contract.

Based on current projections, the anticipated level of pooled funding available for delivering this new model could be around £1.67m. Around £1.07m from the County Council and around £600k from the City Council. Some of the City Council's existing Homelessness Prevention Grant programme will be diverted into the commissioning of the Streets to Home service but the Council will still run an annual Homelessness Prevention Grants programme worth around £315k per annum

7. Referral and Pathway arrangements:

It is important that those accessing services can do so quickly and easily. We accept that a single point of access to services may be counterproductive in some situations, and therefore we would seek to develop a route with a general point of access alongside promotion of a single assessment approach. This would enable a consistent assessment approach to be taken for those who would be better served by an 'in situ' assessment.

In developing Streets to Home, we are seeking to move away from a linear pathway which anticipates that the majority of people will follow a set path on their journey out of homelessness.

Instead we want to encourage a flexible system that can facilitate access to services at the point which is best for the individual, taking account of their needs and circumstances and, wherever possible, allowing them to choose the option that is best for them.

8. Scope of the service:

The diagrams below (*Fig 1 & Fig 2*) illustrates the range of services that would potentially be delivered through the 'Streets to Home' model and what a new pathway could look like.

Whilst the 'Streets to Home' model will bring together a range of commissioned services, we fully acknowledge that there will continue to be other things provided by the wider voluntary sector which sit outside of this.

Our expectation would be that the Streets to Home service worked in partnership with local voluntary sector organisations, and supported them in developing initiatives that could support and complement the commissioned offer.

9. Consultation.

The following organisations and agencies were consulted in the development of the proposed service:

- Riverside Care and Support.
- Jimmy's Cambridge
- Change, Grow, Live.
- Wintercomfort For the Homeless
- Counting Every Adult
- Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- It Take a City
- Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project
- Cambridge Co-Production Group
- Cambridge Cyrenians
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust

These organisations represent the current main providers of services to local homeless people and include input from service users.

Fig 1

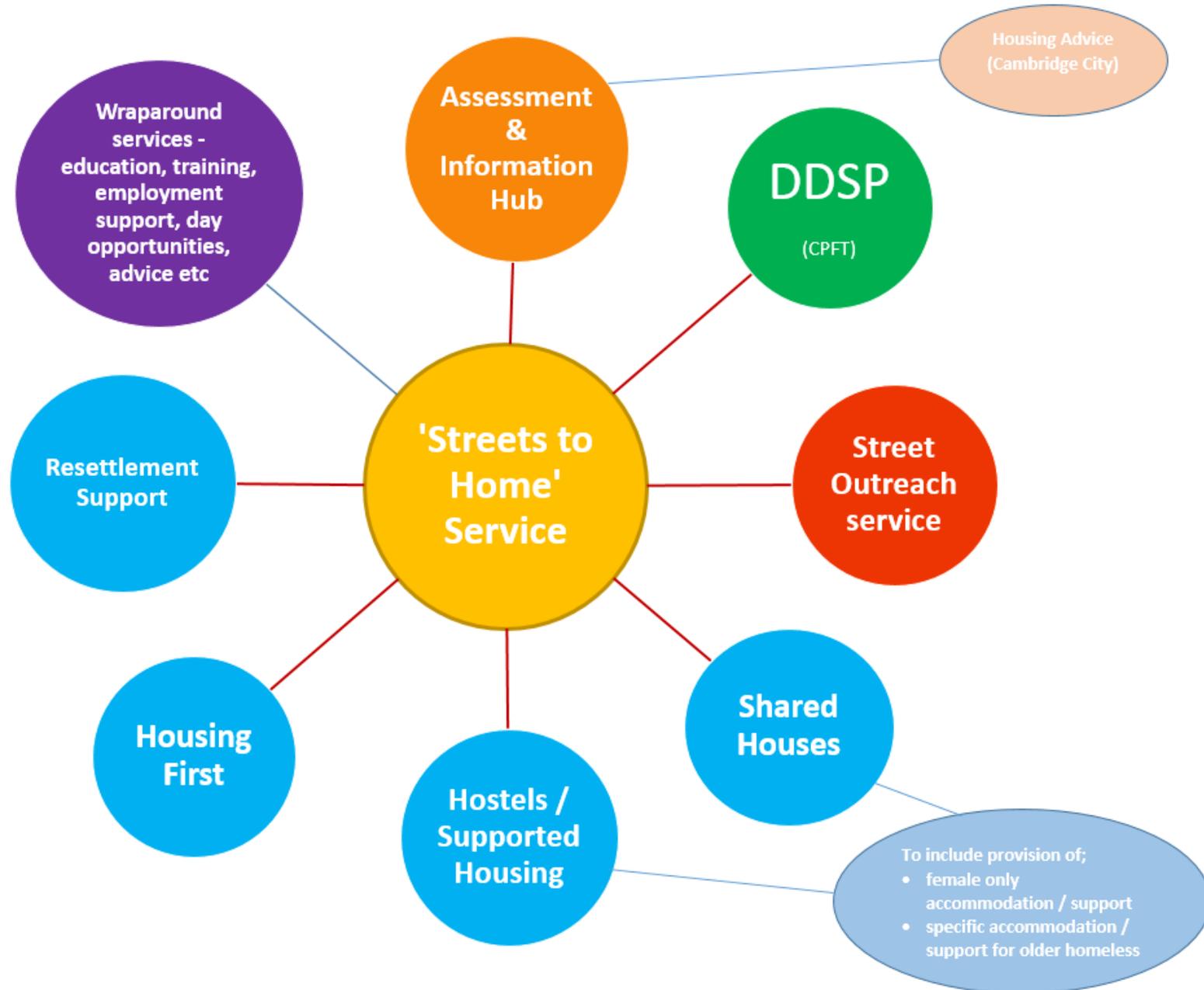


Fig 2

Cambridge City Accommodation Pathway for Rough Sleeper & Single Homeless Services

