

Housing First – Interim Report

**To:**

Executive Councillor for Housing, Housing Scrutiny Committee, 21/06/2022

Report by:

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Wards: All

Non-Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Housing First is an approach to helping rough sleepers to leave the streets which differs from other, longer-established approaches in a number of respects.
- 1.2 Cambridge City Council, in partnership with the County Council, agreed to set up and jointly fund a Housing First pilot in the city. The pilot would be assessed in two stages: an interim report carried out at a mid-point in the scheme and a later independent report once the scheme had been running for a sufficient length of time to allow a full appraisal. This is the mid-point report.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Consider the attached report and note its interim findings; and
- 2.2 Note the recommendations for further examination, the most important of which are set out at 3.4 below.

3. Background

3.1 The Cambridge Housing First (HF) project was launched early in 2019. A project group of officers from County and City Councils agreed:

- the direction the project should take;
- how and by whom it should be managed and overseen;
- what the criteria for acceptance onto the programme should be;
- the target for the number of homes that should be gained over the life of the project; and,
- how many people should be assisted in the pilot phase.

Implementation of HF was delayed by Covid, hence the appearance now, rather than earlier, of this interim progress report and evaluation.

3.2 The interim report:

- says what HF is and how it differs from other measures to deal with homelessness and rough sleeping;
- provides a short account of the development of the local project;
- details the type and number of homes procured so far for scheme;
- summarises how the project has been funded and how it is staffed and managed;
- details the number of people assisted to date and who these people are (illustrating this with some case studies at Appendix 3);
- makes a preliminary assessment of how well the local scheme is working relative to other approaches; and
- suggests some areas that might fruitfully be explored in the detailed independent review that will follow.

3.3 The report's more important interim findings include:

- that direct City Council funding is relatively modest at £60,000 per annum;
- that the great majority of the funding (totaling £233,250 in 2021-22) derives from separate bids made by City and County Councils into the government's rough sleeper initiative (RSI); and
- that of 14 homes acquired to date under the scheme, eight have been City Homes' properties with housing associations playing only a minor role.

3.4 The report suggests that the following items should be key for the full review to examine:

- Does Housing First (HF) provide a demonstrably better solution for long-term rough sleepers than other approaches.
- If HF can be shown to be more successful, can it be said what elements of the HF approach make the difference, and can these elements be duplicated in other non-HF services.
- Does HF2 (as described in the report) make a measurably better impact on tenancy sustainment than HF1 and, if not, should HF2 be continued.
- Should there be no further HF units on new-build sites.
- Subject to agreement with County Council partners, should the Cambridge HF service be taken in-house by Cambridge City Council or alternatively be integrated into the new Streets to Home service.

Implications

a) Financial Implications

None other than those mentioned at 3.3.

b) Staffing Implications

None

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

None.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

No positive or negative impact identified.

e) Procurement Implications

None.

f) Community Safety Implications

None.

4. Consultation and communication considerations

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Housing First in Cambridge – Interim Report June 2022

6. Inspection of papers

If you have a query on the report please contact James McWilliams,
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