BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL

DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

NB Officers taking delegated decisions must ensure that they are fully conversant with the conditions applicable to the exercise of delegated powers by officers and in particular that the decisions are in accordance with the Council’s policies, powers and financial regulations.

Details of such conditions are to be found in the Council’s Constitution and in cases of any doubt advice must be sought from the Council’s Financial and/or Legal officers.

DELEGATED POWERS REFERENCE 12.10
(This reference can be found in the Council’s Constitution)

IS THE DECISION CONFIDENTIAL? NO

SCHEDULE 12A - PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Christine Staniforth has determined in preparing this Report that paragraph 1 applies.

Christine Staniforth view on the public interest test was NOT CONFIDENTIAL as the terms of winter provision are publicised.

Christine Staniforth felt that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

OFFICERS ADVICE:

There is no legal obligation for Local Authorities to provide emergency winter shelter for rough sleepers. However, homeless legislation, namely, the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, highlights winter provision as ‘good practise’ for all Local Authorities.

Guidance on Severe Winter Emergency Protocol (SWEP) indicates that provision should be put in place if the weather falls below freezing on 3 consecutive nights.

Government have indicated they wish to eradicate rough sleeping by 2017 and are encouraging all Local Authorities, via the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding, to provide shelter throughout the winter period.

In February 2018, a male who was rough sleeping passed away in the Bassetlaw District. The rough sleeper count in 2018 identified 13 rough sleepers, an increase of 3 on the previous year. This highlights the importance of winter shelter.

In 2018, shelter was provided at a Worksop Community centre with security guard provision for access. Although the facility was used, (maximum no. recorded was 9 persons), there was no availability for trained staff to be present. Therefore, the opportunity to engage was not utilised. This provision cost £28,000 from the Homeless Prevention Budget.

Investigative work has taken place to improve this provision for 2019. HOPE, based in central Worksop, is now under new management. The Chief Executive Officer is keen to build relationships and extend provision for rough sleepers.
HOPE are willing to offer up to 10 spaces, for 90 days, at a cost of £15,255. This would include cold food, bathroom facilities, and access to 2 fully trained staff who would assist in the engagement process and signpost to appropriate support services. The facility would be available from 7pm to 9am the following day. This would create a single service base for winter provision, in a central, accessible location with the opportunity to engage. Transport costs will be met for those who need to access the facility from Retford. This will provide an extended service for a cost saving of £12,745. The service would operate between 1st December 2019 and 31st March 2020 irrespective of the weather. The MHCLG have approved this as a viable option, supporting local services to improve the lives of the most vulnerable.

Housing Options has also investigated the possibility of using Derby Mission to provide this service, in partnership with local Churches. However, the cost of this was in excess of £48,000; volunteers would also be required, and local Churches were reluctant to commit.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

a) **For Service Users**

The winter provision will offer assistance to the most vulnerable occupants of the Bassettlaw District. It will enable the intervention of support services, offer assistance at source and may even prevent death.

b) **Strategic & Policy**

This provision supports the priorities within the Housing Strategy 2016 – 2019 and the Homeless Prevention Strategy 2017 – 2022.

c) **Financial plus Financial Reference – Fin. Ref.20/670**

There are financial implications from the cost of the provision; this can be funded from the Homeless Prevention Fund or Flexible Homeless Support Grant. In addition a funding bid will be submitted to the Government Cold Weather Fund for rough sleepers.

d) **Legal plus Legal Reference – Legal Ref. 127/10/2019**

There is no legal requirement to provide winter provision, however, it is good practise.

e) **Human Resources**

There are no human resource implications.

f) **Community Safety, Equal Opportunity & Environmental**

Community safety will be improved along with public confidence as the number of those sleeping rough will be reduced. This potentially reduces crime levels as rough sleepers are often the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of violent crime and assault.

g) **General Data Protection Regulations**

There is no data sharing implications; client details passed by HOPE will have a data declaration signed by the client.
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

1. Do not provide any cold weather provision for rough sleepers.

2. Offer occasional provision as per 2018 with security staff costing in excess of £28K.

3. Further explore the Derby Mission offer at a cost in excess of £48K.

4. Establish a partner arrangement with HOPE offering up to 10 spaces at a cost of £15,225 for 90 days (£5,075 per month), thus supporting local services, reducing costs and meeting the obligations within Homeless Legislation.

DECISION (With Reasons):

Option 4 – To establish a partner arrangement with HOPE offering up to 10 spaces at a cost of £15,225 for 90 days (£5,075 per month). This will ensure that local homeless services are supported, reduce costs and ensure that the Council is meeting its obligations within Homeless Legislation and best practice.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Housing Strategy 2016-2019 www.bassetlaw.gov.uk

SIGNATURE OF DECISION MAKER

DATE 9th October 2019

The signed original of this form must be sent to the Democratic Services Unit.

The author of this form should retain a copy for their file and send copies to:

- Monitoring Officer
- Section 151 Officer

Date received by Democratic Services Unit 15.10.19

Decision Number 73