

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

8 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER - FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY AND HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT SPEND PLAN

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform Cabinet of the development of a Housing Support Programme Strategy;
- Provide information and seek endorsement of the Housing Support Grant Spend Plan for 2022-23 as set out in **Appendix 1**.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**: -

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study, and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications, and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy, and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human, and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

3.1 The Welsh Government Housing Support Grant (HSG) came into being in April 2019 following the Welsh Government funding flexibilities pathfinder project. It brings together three former grants - Supporting People Programme, Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant.

3.2 The HSG is an early intervention grant programme to support activity which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.

- 3.3 HSG Practice Guidance requires local authorities to develop a four-year Housing Support Programme Strategy (HSP Strategy). This Strategy encompasses the requirement set out in Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 for a Homelessness Strategy.
- 3.4 In addition to a HSP Strategy local authorities are also required to develop a HSG Delivery Plan, which should include the following headings:
- Introduction
 - Delivery Priorities
 - Stakeholder Engagement
 - Local Commissioning Plan
 - Local Spend Plan
 - Equalities Impact Assessment
 - Annex A: Homelessness Statutory Duties
- 3.5 Following the publication of the draft Welsh Government budget, local authorities are given an indicative HSG allocation and are required to submit to Welsh Government a draft HSG Spend Plan, part of the wider HSG Delivery Plan referred to at 3.4. After consideration of draft Spend Plans offers of grant are then made, following the publication of the final Welsh Government budget.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 Following the announcement of the Welsh Government's draft budget on 20 December 2021 the Minister for Climate Change agreed indicative HSG allocations for three years from 2022-23. Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) indicative HSG allocation from Welsh Government for 2022-23 is £7,833,509.33. This indicative allocation is the same as the allocation in 2021-22. The indicative allocation is also the same for 2023-24 and 2024-25, with no proposed year on year increase.
- 4.2 It should however be noted that the allocation of £7,833,509.33 does represent an increase of £1,878,966.49 (32%) from the allocation in 2020-21. The increase in HSG funding was as a result of an additional £40m being allocated to the total HSG budget by Welsh Government. The increase is intended to help to deliver the transformational change required to achieve the goal of ending homelessness in Wales.
- 4.3 A draft HSG Spend Plan, as set out at **Appendix 1** has been submitted to Welsh Government. The Spend Plan has been developed with consideration of ongoing strategic planning with a range of stakeholders. The projects funded through the plan seek to support the aims and objectives as set out in BCBC's Homelessness Strategy 2018-22 and the priorities set out in BCBC's current HSG Delivery Plan, as reported to Cabinet on 6 April 2021. The initial findings of a recent Homelessness Review have also fed into the development of the HSG Spend Plan as referenced below.
- 4.4 BCBC are also in the process of developing its first Housing Support Programme Strategy. Meeting the requirements set out at 3.3 of the report, a HSP Strategy,

once adopted, will meet the statutory requirements for a Homelessness Strategy and as such will replace BCBC's current Homelessness Strategy 2018-22.

- 4.5 As part of the work in developing the HSP Strategy a Homelessness Review has been undertaken. This has included a comprehensive assessment of a range of data sets to form a Needs Assessment. In addition, a wide range of stakeholders operating across the county borough of Bridgend have been engaged with through a combination of semi structured individual and group interviews, as well as an online questionnaire. Through at least one of these methods the following stakeholders have been engaged with:
- Bridgend County Borough Council Housing Solutions & Housing Strategy Team
 - Bridgend County Borough Council Senior Management & Cabinet Member for Well-being and Future Generations
 - National Probation Service and members of Bridgend MAPPA planning group
 - South Wales Police
 - V2C Housing Association
 - Linc Cymru Housing Association
 - Wales & West Housing Association
 - Hafod Housing Association
 - Bridgend County Borough Council Social Services (both Adult and Children's Services Teams)
 - Bridgend County Borough Council Prevention and Wellbeing Team
 - Bridgend County Borough Council Education and Family Support Team
 - Members of Bridgend Community Safety Partnership
 - Bridgend VAWDASV Partnership and members of Bridgend MARAC
 - Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board
 - Individuals with lived experience
 - Service providers commissioned by Bridgend CBC through the Housing Support Grant funding programme
 - Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations
 - Bridgend Citizen's Advice Bureau
- 4.6 Cabinet will be presented with a draft HSP Strategy, prior to public consultation, however the initial findings of the Homelessness Review have also fed into the development of the HSG Spend Plan.
- 4.7 The HSG Spend Plan set out at **Appendix 1** reflects the cost of current commissioned contracts BCBC has in place with third sector support providers, and also internal services delivered by BCBC.
- 4.8 The Spend Plan commits to increased resources for projects which support the Authority in tackling homelessness. The demands on homelessness services have been ever increasing in recent years, with homelessness applications to BCBC increasing by 61% between 2016 and 2021. The increase in demand on temporary accommodation services has in particular been stark and significantly impacted by legislative change from Welsh Government, relating to the definition of 'priority need' as set out in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

- 4.9 On 23 March 2020 (at the start of the Covid 19 pandemic) the Authority were providing temporary accommodation to 74 households. On 4 February 2022 the Authority were providing temporary accommodation to 197 households (an increase of 166%). 72% of the 197 accommodated on 4 February 2022 were single person households.
- 4.10 Increased resources to increase the availability of temporary accommodation and vital support to those accommodated in temporary accommodation is key to supporting the Authority in meeting the demand on services and to ensure those who are homeless are supported to ensure their experience is as rare, brief, and non-recurrent as possible. Examples include:
- the allocation of resources to the Authority's Alternative to Bed & Breakfast project. The project provides suitable temporary accommodation to those, who would otherwise likely be accommodated in Bed and Breakfast. The project has already grown significantly since originally being commissioned in 2018 and additional resources will support further growth in the coming years.
 - a range of support projects which tackles the on-going complexities of homelessness and the ability to support individuals with higher support needs for those who are often unable to access mainstream services. These individuals are some of the most vulnerable in society. Projects include floating support; mediation services for young people etc.
 - regional partnership working and the continuation of funding for a Regional Health Outreach Team will enable continued specialist mental health and substance misuse provision, which is delivered in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board on an outreach basis.
 - resources to tackle street homelessness through BCBC's Housing First provision which is key in the provision of longer-term support to those with multifaceted support needs.
 - Extra care services, such as telecare and alarm services within sheltered accommodation, static and dispersed refuge units for domestic abuse and supported accommodation for people with learning difficulties.
- 4.11 The Housing Support Programme Strategy will be produced with the views of key stakeholders and service users themselves and will evidence the strategic priorities to tackle homelessness and housing support needs for complex and vulnerable people going forward. Information and evidence gathering is taking place currently and Cabinet will receive a future report on the draft Strategy for approval.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected

characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The report contributes to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsive Wales

7.2 The five ways of working have been considered in the preparation of this report and are summarised below:

- Long term – HSG funded services will support individuals to meet their short-term support needs, with the aim of delivering long term positive outcomes, supporting individuals to achieve their goals and aspirations,
- Prevention – HSG services are preventative in nature and are designed to reduce the burden on more costly interventions,
- Integration – HSG funded services support economic, social, and cultural outcomes, both at an individual level and in wider communities.
- Collaboration – BCBC effectively engages with a range of internal and external partners on a local and regional basis,
- Involvement – As part of ongoing strategic planning BCBC Housing engages with a diverse range of stakeholders including service users and those with lived experience.

7.3 It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications directly from this report. The spend outlined in the HSG Spend Plan at **Appendix 1** matches the indicative grant offer from WG and is committed and commissioned in line with BCBC's Contract Procedure Rules.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Note the content of this report;
- Endorse the Housing Support Grant Spend Plan for 2022-23.

Carys Lord
Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change
8 March 2022

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Background documents:

None

Appendix 1 – Housing Support Grant Spend Plan 2022-23

Spend Plan Category	Units	Annual Value
Rapid Rehousing / Housing Led Service	15	£175,727.77
Rapid Rehousing / Housing Led Service	12	£80,000.00
Floating Support – Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	10	£16,833.43
Floating Support – Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	200	£427,388.57
Floating Support - Mental Health	80	£128,117.08
Floating Support - Substance misuse and/or alcohol issues	40	£64,058.54
Other General - Other	0	£44,732.73
Permanent Supported Accommodation - Learning Disability	24	£416,029.00
Non Statutory HSG Related Posts	0	£43,535.11
Floating Support Generic	20	£36,069.01
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Mental Health	12	£234,087.00
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Mental Health	4	£95,818.00
PRS Access Scheme	0	£41,045.48
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Young People	8	£69,260.00
Permanent Supported Accommodation - Learning Disability	34	£649,576.44
Floating Support - Mental Health	10	£35,712.00
Floating Support - Mental Health	10	£36,492.34
Floating Support - Substance misuse and/or alcohol issues	10	£36,492.33
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Young People	6	£50,960.00
Permanent Supported Accommodation - Learning Disability	28	£532,347.20
Alarm Services - Other	34	£2,624.36
Floating Support - Older People	120	£379,984.00
Alarm Services - Other	23	£2,398.58
Floating Support - Young People	15	£33,276.43
Refuges - Female	18	£169,368.84
Mediation Services	15	£33,276.43
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Young People	8	£53,587.50
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Young People	13	£210,750.74
Permanent Supported Accommodation - Learning Disability	16	£295,054.40
PRS Access Scheme	162	£126,020.00

Alarm Services - Other	665	£18,030.00
Activities Designed To Promote and Publicise Compliance with Housing		£12,137.84
Other General - Other	0	£20,000.00
Floating Support - Generic	330	£420,712.90
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Generic	11	£77,032.79
Emergency Accommodation Provision	3	£136,170.00
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Generic, Intensive Needs	15	£120,870.00
Rough Sleeper Outreach Service	10	£33,660.00
Floating Support - VAWDASV	54	£109,908.00
Floating Support - Generic	80	£78,376.00
Floating Support - Ex Offender	60	£92,337.00
Floating Support - Generic	30	£78,750.00
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Generic, Intensive Needs	23	£289,583.68
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Generic, Intensive Needs	16	£359,955.00
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Generic	49	£212,785.02
Floating Support - Young People	25	£59,061.38
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Substance Misuse and/or Alcohol Issues (Dry Accommodation)	5	£68,586.42
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Young People	38	£475,782.76
Temporary Supported Accommodation - generic	6	£35,000.00
Temporary Supported accommodation - Generic, Intensive Needs	5	£291,926.90
Temporary Supported Accommodation - Substance Misuse and/or Alcohol Issues (Wet Accommodation)	5	£291,926.83
Alarm Services - Other	123	£8,850.75
Alarm Services - Other	218	£21,442.75
		£7,833,509.33