

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO

Cabinet
19 September 2023

Report Title: Progression of the Shared Prosperity funded and supported project to deliver a Homeless Hub

Submitted by: Service Director – Regulatory Services

Portfolios: Community Safety, and Wellbeing & Finance Town Centres and Growth, and One Council, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: Town

Purpose of the Report

To give an update on progress with the development of the Shared Prosperity funded homeless hub and to request Cabinet authority to enter into legal agreements and contracts to acquire, renovate, fit out, and manage a suitable property once identified.

Recommendation

That Cabinet:

1. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the portfolio holders for Community Safety and Wellbeing and Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and One Council, People and Partnerships to enter negotiations to acquire (purchase or lease independently or with partners) a property for the homeless hub and complete any related property transactions.
2. Delegate authority to the Service Director / Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to submit a planning application for any changes required and secure any related permissions in relation to the homeless hub if necessary.
3. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to procure and award contracts necessary for any building alterations necessary for the future use of the homeless hub.
4. Delegate authority to the Service Director in consultation with the portfolio holders for Community Safety and Wellbeing to procure provision for the operation of the homeless hub up to 2025.
5. Continues to receive such updates on the Homeless Hub, including proposals for operation beyond the current 2025 funding provision.

Reasons

The Shared Prosperity Fund Board have approved capital and revenue funding to develop a Homeless Hub for Newcastle-under-Lyme.

In line with cross government strategy, we aim to end rough sleeping in the borough by 2025 wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief and non-recurrent and we have therefore embarked on an ambitious stepped approach to achieving this.

This supports homeless individuals who are some of the most dis-advantaged in society and the furthest from mainstream services.

1. **Background**

1.1 A business case and bid were developed to fund a Multi-Agency Assessment centre with Accommodation (Homeless Hub) and this received approval from the Shared Prosperity Fund Board. This recognised that homeless individuals are some of the most dis-advantaged in society and the furthest from mainstream services.

1.2 The Homeless Hub will:

- Provide safe, secure emergency accommodation to ensure “no-second night out” and provide an immediate space off the streets while investigations and referrals are done.
- Provide an environment where agencies can be available to support individuals without the need for an appointment (often a barrier to engagement).
- Provide access to Department for Works and Pension, Citizens Advice Bureau, rough sleeping services, housing providers, probation, adult social care, homeless healthcare, drug and alcohol services, etc.
- Develop relationships / trust for ongoing referrals for support, advice, medical appointments, developing paths to move on into non-emergency accommodation to continue the support.
- Offer showers and a laundry, a place to be clean and warm.
- Offer advice and support to overcome financial problems, secure job opportunities, and sustain tenancies and local affordable homes.
- Offer emergency accommodation during severe weather.
- Be a one stop shop to support all those that are vulnerable; including families to get the right help and support during current climate (cost of living).

1.3 The benefits to the wider community will be:

- Reduce perceived and actual anti-social behaviour in town associated with rough sleeping.
- Potential to increase footfall into town as people see reduced anti-social behaviour,
- Supporting businesses who are impacted by this cohort not being adequately supported and housed.
- Improved health of the rough sleeper cohort and impact on long term health conditions,
- Reduce impact on Police, ambulance, and hospital as rough sleepers are high users.
- Remove current reliance on expensive bed and breakfast for emergency accommodation which is a barrier to engagement, is isolating and fuels the revolving door of individuals between bed and breakfast and rough sleeping.

1.4 The Shared Prosperity Fund Board have approved £695,000 capital and £260,000 revenue funding for the project. In addition, the shared Prosperity Fund has also allocated £160,000 funding secured for a night shelter 2023 – 2025 which will be put to the project. Grant funding is also available from the Rough Sleeper Initiative and possibly the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol, once the facility is operational. Detailed financial information is available in section 8.

2. **Issues**

Property Acquisition:

- 2.1 A key step in the project is acquiring the right property. The purpose of the hub is to provide a place for people who would otherwise be in the Town Centre or surrounding area to go. It will be open during the day (in contrast to most other current support services) and so can be a place to direct rough sleepers from the town. The funding plan includes security to ensure standards of behaviour are maintained. The location is key to the success of the project.
- 2.2 Investigations are ongoing to establish a property for the homeless hub to either purchase or lease. Having the right permission in place allows the Council to respond to opportunities and negotiate quickly and to then progress to refurbishment within the Shared Prosperity Fund delivery requirements.
- 2.3 Investigations and working with partner organisations are key to this area of work. Opportunities may arise through this investigation period to combine the grant with partners to achieve a facility with greater benefits than the individual elements could provide.

Operation of the Hub:

- 2.4 Funding for the operation of the hub has been secured from the Shared Prosperity Fund for April 2023 to March 2025. This will include staffing and security for 24 hours a day.
- 2.5 The on-going running costs of the hub (utilities, cleaning, maintenance etc) are also covered within the funding. The delivery costs are included in the funding up to 2025. The exact specification for this will be developed once the property is acquired.
- 2.6 Until 2025, there are two options for the operation of the hub, these include:
 - a) NULBC managed and operated through direct employment of staff on temporary contracts for the staffing and internal property management
 - b) Procure the staffing and property management of the homeless hub.
- 2.7 Post 2025 there are a range of options for the future operation of the hub, such options include:
 - a) Leasing the property to a third party to manage and operate the hub – initial enquiries to possible providers has received a positive interest for future engagement.
 - b) Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding bid in 2025 for the continued operational costs of the hub.
- 2.8 Experience and knowledge will be gained through the first years to determine the appropriate route for future operating models. A further report will be brought to Cabinet in due course.

3. Proposal

3.1 That Cabinet:

1. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the portfolio holders for Community Safety and Wellbeing and Finance, Town Centres and Growth, and One Council, People and Partnerships to enter negotiations to acquire (purchase or lease independently or with partners) a property for the homeless hub and complete any related property transactions.

2. Delegate authority to the Service Director / Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to submit a planning application for any changes required and secure any related permissions in relation to the homeless hub if necessary.
3. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to procure and award contracts necessary for any building alterations necessary for the future use of the homeless hub.
4. Delegate authority to the Service Director in consultation with the portfolio holders for Community Safety and Wellbeing to procure provision for the operation of the homeless hub up to 2025.
5. Continues to receive such updates on the Homeless Hub, including proposals for operation beyond the current 2025 funding provision.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1 The Shared Prosperity Fund Board have approved capital and revenue funding to develop a Homeless Hub for Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 4.2 In line with cross government strategy, we aim to end rough sleeping in the borough by 2025 and have embarked on ambitious stepped approach to achieving this. Ending rough sleeping is defined as rare, brief and non-recurrent.
- 4.3 This supports homeless individuals who are some of the most dis-advantaged in society and the furthest from mainstream services.

5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The project is approved under the Shared Prosperity Fund and is time limited. Work has been undertaken to identify the hubs needs and the ways that this can be delivered. The options are to:
 - a. Progress as proposed and move to acquire a property, refurbish it and operate as a homeless hub.
 - b. Not progress the homeless hub via the Shared Prosperity Fund.
 - c. To utilise the shared prosperity fund alongside other funding to acquire a property, refurbish it and operate a homeless hub as part of a wider scheme.
- 5.2 Considerable work has gone into developing the Shared Prosperity Fund bid and spend of the grant, which will address a major gap in current service provision and will establish a route to achieving Government goals on ending rough sleeping. To not progress at this stage is a wasted opportunity in not using external funding and in not being in a position to achieve national targets.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 This proposal requires the acquisition of a suitable property, at the right costs, to enable the project to proceed.

6.2 This proposal is expected to require the Council to renovate and refurbish a property to make it fit for purpose as a homeless hub, obtaining the necessary permissions for the works and use of the building.

6.3 The proposal requires activities for managing a homeless hub and running day to day activities.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The location of the Homeless Hub is intended to be accessible for all who need the facility.

7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the funding. This identified a positive impact due to the project providing accessibility to services for disadvantaged individuals.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The project requires expenditure of the Shared Prosperity Fund for which the Council is the accountable body. The Shared Prosperity Fund Board will receive regular updates on the project.

8.2 Shared Prosperity Fund Board have approved capital and revenue funding for the project. The funding is as follows:

Source	Capital		Revenue	
	23/24	23/24	23/24	24/25
Shared Prosperity Fund Board – Homeless Hub	695,000		130,000	130,000
Rough Sleeper Initiative (not specified Capital or Revenue)			26,000	30,000
Shared Prosperity Fund Board – Cold night shelter			80,000	80,000
SWEP			5,000	5,000
TOTAL	695,000		236,000	240,000

8.3 Of the UKSPF £955,000 funding, £942,802 remains having spent on completing model premises design services and staff time.

8.4 The project requires internal resource and expertise through the acquisition, renovation and operation of the hub. This would include resources from property, legal,

procurement and facilities management in respect of identifying, acquiring and renovating a property and the associated contracts. Where this cannot be delivered in-house the cost of external support will be covered through the project funding.

- 8.5 In relation to the ongoing maintenance, management and operation of the hub, this would include resources from facilities management and Regulatory Services. Where this cannot be delivered in-house the cost of external support will be covered through the project funding.
- 8.6 The project will enhance the Council's property portfolio as it involves acquiring a property and making fit for purpose as a homeless hub.
- 8.7 The running costs for the homeless hub have been secured until the end of the financial year 2025. There are a number of options for the future operating model which are detailed in para 2.7.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 The main risks are summarised as follows:

- 9.2 *Unable to deliver the Shared Prosperity Fund project* – consequences are loss of investment and no improvement of facilities for vulnerable local people. Control measures include project governance processes, project approval processes and the actions of the project sub group in managing delivery of the project and associated risks and issues.
- 9.3 *Unable to acquire a suitable property and/or location for delivery of the Homeless Hub* – consequences unable to deliver the project, loss of investment in assets, no improvement in facilities for vulnerable local people. Control measures include project governance processes, project subgroup in place to manage delivery, site investigations being undertaken, legal advice on land and issues.
- 9.4 *Unable to acquire a suitable property for delivery of the Homeless Hub within the grant funding and timescales* - consequences unable to deliver the project, loss of investment in assets, no improvement in facilities for vulnerable local people. Control measures include further consideration of Council funding to enable delivery.
- 9.5 *Cost of inflation* – consequences, unable to deliver the full scope of actions as set out in the Shared Prosperity Fund, lesser outcome for vulnerable local individuals. Control measures, cost control within project specification, prioritisation of actions, project governance processes, project subgroup in place.
- 9.6 *Financial sustainability of the Homeless Hub* – consequences, unable to deliver services to vulnerable local people as planned, failure to deliver full objectives of the Shared Prosperity Fund, partial or full closure of the hub. Control measures, business plan to set out how the hub is to be run and opportunities for creating income.

10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**

10.1 Delivery of the homeless hub will contribute to the following UN Sustainability Goals.



11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This is a key decision as it involves expenditure of more than £100,000.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Cabinet 19.07.22 [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#)

12.2 Cabinet 18.10.22 [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Contract Award](#)

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 n/a

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 n/a