

CABINET MEETING – 14 MARCH 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Homeless Support Hub

Author(s):

Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

Purpose of Report:

To seek approval to award grant funding to the Salvation Army to facilitate the creation of a multi service support homeless hub and service centre.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to: -

1. approve the development of a joint working partnership with the Salvation Army in the creation of a new homeless support hub; and
2. approve in principle the award of grant funding to the Salvation Army from the approved Inspiring Future capital programme to enable the development of a new city multi service support homeless hub and the actual costs to be reported at a future Cabinet for consideration.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Cabinet approved the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028 on 16th March 2023 and then approved the Homelessness Action Plan on 7th December 2023 which outlines the need to have comprehensive response and support for those people sleeping rough, homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The provision of a Homeless Support Hub within the city has been identified as a valuable service in response to those homeless and sleeping rough. The Homelessness Health Needs Assessment identified the Homeless Support Hub as a key point of service access and support for those homeless and was highlighted to support their well-being.

The Homeless Support Hub currently in operation in the city is delivered by Oasis Community Housing, this service has been supported by the Council through a grant award up to the end March 2025. This provision although vital has always been agreed as short-term solution and it is well understood that a more comprehensive and holistic provision for the long term is required, which is why the opportunity to support the Salvation Army to create a new Homeless Support Hub within their existing building at Swan Lodge is an ideal opportunity to look at a long term homeless provision with multi service delivery and partnerships.

As the grant award will be over £50,000 Cabinet approval is required under the Council's constitution.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

To continue with the existing Homeless Support Hub provision with Oasis Community Housing was considered and rejected as the breadth of support services needed in the future Homeless Support Hub could not be accommodated within the existing premises in a way that would provide the long-term aspirational services that needs to be delivered to ensure those presenting as sleeping rough and homeless can get all support in one point of access.

Impacts analysed;

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes/~~No~~

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes/~~No~~

Is it included in the 28-day Notice of Decisions? Yes/~~No~~

HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT HUB

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to award grant funding to the Salvation Army to facilitate the creation of a multi service support homeless hub and service centre.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to: -
 1. approve the development of a joint working partnership with the Salvation Army in the creation of a new homeless support hub; and
 2. approve in principle the award of grant funding to the Salvation Army from the approved Inspiring Future capital programme to enable the development of a new city multi service support homeless hub and the actual costs to be reported at a future Cabinet for consideration.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Cabinet approved the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028 on 16th March 2023 and then approved the Homelessness Action Plan on 7th December 2023 which outlines the need to have comprehensive response and support for those people sleeping rough, homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 3.2 The approved Homelessness Action Plan through the Health Needs Assessment identified a key area of focus was “Improving access to services” and the proposed Homelessness Hub will be a direct response to the finding of the Health Needs Assessment.

4.0 Delivering on Strategy

- 4.1 As part of the Homeless Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy the Health Needs Assessment was undertaken by Public Health to understand the health issues and challenges faced by those sleeping rough or experiencing homelessness. The Health Needs Assessment highlighted the need to review current arrangements and opportunities to create regular one-stop-shop opportunities that the homeless community can access on a drop-in basis. This should offer a breath of health-related services, advice and support. Opportunities for this include things such as Mental health support, wound care, sexual health advice, smoking cessation advice and programmes,

dentistry and nursing care, substance misuse and alcohol treatment and recovery services.

- 4.2 The Health Needs Assessment also highlighted the need to “Involving people with lived experience at all stages” and formalise regular engagement with the homeless community, through existing or new networks. The proposed Homelessness Hub will ensure that structured arrangements are in place to engage and enable those with lived experience to directly contribute and shape future services, decision making and investment focus which are aligned to those affected by homelessness and meet their needs.
- 4.3 The health inequalities faced by those sleeping rough and experiencing homelessness are significant. The Homelessness Support Hub is an opportunity to enable the delivery of a range of health, well-being, training and skills, welfare and wider housing advice and support to enable those sleeping rough or homeless to access the support and advice they need to progress positively with their lives within a trauma informed care basis and promotes independence within a supportive environment.

4.4 Health strategy alignment

4.4.1 Sunderland continues to experience poor health outcomes around substance misuse and alcohol. An enhanced Treatment and Recovery service will help to deliver local Health and Wellbeing Board Priorities, Healthy City Plan and improve local Public Health outcomes which will support the objectives of Sunderland’s City Plan that by 2030 we will have:

- reduced health inequalities enabling more people to live healthier longer lives
- access to equitable opportunities and life chances
- high quality support and social care that enables those who need it to live the life they want to lead

4.4.2 In 2020 Dame Carol Black was commissioned by the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care to undertake an independent review of drugs to inform the Government’s thinking on what more can be done to tackle drug related harm. From Harm to Hope, the government’s 10-year drug plan followed the recommendations in Dame Carol Black’s report. To support delivery of this plan the government announced the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant to be used by councils to directly address the aims of the treatment and recovery. There are a number of critical targets within the Grant documentation that will have significant implications for all partners across the City involved in Drug and Alcohol services, including:

- a. a national target to increase the number of treatment places by 20%
- b. a national ambition to prevent nearly 1,000 drug deaths in the next 3 years
- c. reduce alcohol deaths

- d. by the end of 2024/25 there should be 'a treatment place for every offender with an addiction'
- e. increase access to residential rehabilitation over the course of the grant period - 2% of those in treatment

5.0 The Proposals

- 5.1 The Salvation Army currently use Swan Lodge as Emergency Temporary Accommodation for those who are homeless. The Salvation Army have worked well with the Council over many years and like the Council are committed to helping those homeless.
- 5.2 The Salvation Army and the Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA) that own the building have indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council in developing new innovative ways to provide accommodation, wider services and access to support for homeless people in the city.
- 5.3 The Salvation Army have indicated that they would be open to the development of Swan Lodge into a more holistic Homeless Support Hub.
- 5.4 Swan Lodge is a large building providing 65 units of accommodation and on the ground floor and basement has substantial space and meeting rooms that provide social areas, formal training rooms, creative areas, IT suite, counselling and support rooms, dining area and garden.
- 5.5 The ground floor and basement areas offer an opportunity to reconfigure the layout to achieve a new functioning access hub for those sleeping rough and homeless. The upper floors will continue to provide temporary accommodation.
- 5.6 The Homeless Support Hub currently in operation in the city is delivered by Oasis Community Housing, this service has been supported by the Council through a grant award up to the end March 2025. This provision although vital has always been agreed as short term. It is well understood that a more comprehensive and holistic provision for the long term is required, which is why the opportunity to work with the Salvation Army to create a new Homeless Support Hub within their existing building at Swan Lodge is an ideal opportunity to look at a long-term homeless provision with multi service delivery and partnerships.

6.0 Funding the proposal

- 6.1 All mechanisms are being explored for the funding of the project. The main areas of responsibility through initial discussions with SAHA is that SAHA will invest in the fabric and compliance of the building (lift improvements, boiler improvements, window replacements, fire safety improvements etc) and the Council will support the conversion of the ground and basement areas to facilitate the hub and wider service access points.

- 6.2 SAHA like the Council are now seeking their own internal approvals to proceed with the development to review the current building, its layout, compliance and improvements needs, future service needs and opportunities and funding requirements. Approval to proceed in working with the Council will be in place no later than the end of March 2024.
- 6.3 As proposals develop SAHA will identify the required investment needs for the improvement and compliance requirements and meet these from their own Asset Management Improvement programme.
- 6.4 The scope and opportunities of funding from the Council and wider partners is now developing. The Council has funding in place and included within the current investment plan within the Inspiring Futures Capital budget which would be used to support delivery of the capital element of the proposal. Alongside this through the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant further funding of £190,000 has been approved as part of the 2024/25 funding plan. This funding will allow the alignment of substance misuse treatment and recovery services within the hub.
- 6.5 Other sources of funding both capital and revenue are also under review with Public Health and wider commissioned partners and the ICB.
- 6.6 As the details of the proposal and designs begin to develop over the coming months more detailed costs will be known. It is proposed that a further report be presented to Cabinet outlining the detailed financial implications and future partnership proposals.
- 6.7 That the Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Dynamic City and the Director of Finance are authorised to review and sign off future investment proposals within current and partnership budgets and is paid to SAHA as a grant award once determined. The terms and conditions attached to the provision of the grant funding will also be determined by the Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Dynamic City and the Director of Finance.

7.0 Reasons for the Decision

- 7.1 Cabinet approved the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028 on 16th March 2023 and then approved the Homelessness Action Plan on 7th December 2023 which outlines the need to have comprehensive response and support for those people sleeping rough, homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 7.2 The provision of a Homeless Support Hub within the city has been identified as a valuable service in response to those homeless and sleeping rough. The Homelessness Health Needs Assessment identified the Homeless Support Hub as a key point of service access and support for those homeless and was highlighted to support their well-being.

7.3 The Homeless Support Hub currently in operation in the city is delivered by Oasis Community Housing, this service has been supported by the Council through a grant award up to the end March 2025. This provision although vital has always been agreed as short-term solution and it is well understood that a more comprehensive and holistic provision for the long term is required, which is why the opportunity to support the Salvation Army to create a new Homeless Support Hub within their existing building at Swan Lodge is an ideal opportunity to look at a long-term homeless provision with multi service delivery and partnerships.

7.5 As the grant award will be over £50,000 Cabinet approval is required under the Council's constitution.

8.0 Alternative Options

8.1 To continue with the existing Homeless Support Hub provision with Oasis Community Housing was considered and rejected as the breadth of support services needed in the future Homeless Support Hub could not be accommodated within the existing premises in a way that would provide the long-term aspirational services that needs to be delivered to ensure those presenting as sleeping rough and homeless can get all support in one point of access.

9.0 Impact Analysis

- (a) **Equalities** - An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
- (b) **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** – there are no foreseen risks to the privacy of the public.
- (c) **Reduction of Crime and Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion** – the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy and the Action Plan aim to ensure more inclusive arrangements within the city and its services for those homeless or at risk of homelessness and minimise those that sleep rough across the city.

10.0 Financial Implications

10.1 There are no direct financial implications relating to this report. However, a further report will be brought to Cabinet for approval once the overall revenue and capital cost implications are known.

11.0 Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- (i) **Legal Implications** – In accordance with Part 4, Section 7 of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules (FPR16 Payment of Grants and Benefits) approval of Cabinet must be sought before Chief Officers provide assistance to any third party by way of loan, grant or guarantee of over £50,000 to any one body in any one financial year.

The Council has considered the applicability of the provisions of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 ("the SCA") in respect of the financial assistance envisaged

by this report. As Salvation Army Housing Association is not engaged in economic activity in providing the homeless support hub in Sunderland and the grant is to be ringfenced for these non-economic activities they are not acting as an economic enterprise for the purpose of this grant which will therefore not fall as a subsidy pursuant to the SCA.