

Appendices

None

**CABINET REPORT****Report Title****Funding for Emergency Nightshelter****AGENDA STATUS:****PUBLIC**

Cabinet Meeting Date:	19 October 2016
Key Decision:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Chief Executive's
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Ward(s)	Castle

1. Purpose

- 1.1 On 8 June 2016, Cabinet approved '**Together we change lives**', the borough's Multi Agency Strategy for ending the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton.
- 1.2 One of the 10 priorities in the Multi Agency Strategy is to establish a temporary nightshelter that will provide emergency shelter for people who are sleeping rough, or are at risk of sleeping rough, in Northampton until the Street Outreach Workers are able to help them resolve their housing problems and/or move into supported housing.
- 1.3 Although Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & Wellbeing and subject to due diligence and the production of a detailed business case signed-off by the Section 151 Officer) to establish an emergency nightshelter, the revenue costs incurred in running the nightshelter will require changes to the Council's 2016/17 General Fund Budget.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the progress that has been made to establish a nightshelter in the town and to approve changes to the Budget.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves capital expenditure of up to £100,000 to support the refurbishment of the nightshelter, using the Council's capital resources approved by Council in February 2016; and
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the one-off supplementary estimate for revenue costs of £160,000 to fund the nightshelter until September 2018, as set out in Paragraph 4.2.6, and for these costs to be funded from housing reserves approved by Council in February 2016.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 On 5 February 2016, the Council's Housing & Wellbeing Service and Community Safety Team hosted a half day Workshop to kick-start the development of a 3 year Multi Agency Rough Sleepers Strategy that will not only help rough sleepers to leave the streets and rebuild their lives but also tackle the main causes of rough sleeping.
- 3.1.2 Everyone attending the Workshop agreed that the problem of rough sleeping can only be resolved if all services and organisations work more effectively with one another, deliver a consistent message and actively encourage rough sleepers to engage with housing and support providers and leave the streets. They also agreed that, although much more needs to be done to help people sustain their tenancies, an emergency nightshelter is required (at least in the short-term) to accommodate rough sleepers.
- 3.1.3 On 24 March 2016, a team of 32 volunteers took part in Northampton's Rough Sleepers Count, covering all of the wards in the borough between Midnight and 3.00am. Although it was too unsafe for the volunteers to enter the derelict St Edmund's Hospital site to check for rough sleepers, they observed a total of 21 people (19 men and 2 women) 'bedded down' in the borough.
- 3.1.4 On 29 April 2016, the Council organised a second half day Rough Sleepers Strategy Workshop that showcased the innovative and inspiring work of the Council's new Street Outreach Workers, provided details of the town's plans for a temporary nightshelter and considered the themes, priorities and actions for the new Strategy.
- 3.1.5 The Multi Agency Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 8 June 2016 and launched at a Rough Sleepers Workshop on 13 July 2016.
- 3.1.6 Everyone has agreed there is a need for all services to be a lot more persistent and assertive in their work with people who are sleeping rough and to make it clear that, when the nightshelter opens, there will be no need to sleep rough in Northampton.
- 3.1.7 On 27 September 2016, the Council's Planning Committee approved a temporary change of use for the former British Rail Sports & Social Club in St Andrew's Road, Northampton. The premises can now be used as a nightshelter, each day between the hours of 9.00pm and 9.00am, for a period of up to two years.

3.2 Issues

The need for an emergency nightshelter

- 3.2.1 Although improvements are already being made to the way in which services and organisations work together to tackle, prevent and reduce rough sleeping in Northampton, there are currently far too many people sleeping rough in the town to accommodate all of them in Oasis House or the other supported housing schemes.
- 3.2.2 At present, the Council's Street Outreach Workers do not have access to an emergency shelter, so they are unable to provide an immediate housing solution for someone they find sleeping rough, or at risk of having to sleep rough, if there are no vacancies in Oasis House (which has 48 flats) or another supported housing scheme.
- 3.2.3 Until the Multi Agency Strategy starts to have a marked and sustained impact on the number of people who become homeless and the speed with which people are able to move on (in a successful, planned way) from Oasis House and other supported housing schemes, most of the people who are sleeping on the streets will have no option but to continue doing so until suitable accommodation becomes available.
- 3.2.4 Recent improvements in the sharing of intelligence has made it easier for the Street Outreach Workers to find and make contact with most homeless people within a few days of them first sleeping rough. This early contact – before the person's self-esteem and physical and mental health deteriorates – is essential, not just for their health and wellbeing but also for achieving an early resolution of their housing problems.
- 3.2.5 The provision of an emergency nightshelter will play a significant role in helping to end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton. It will also ensure that, when someone is sleeping rough, or is at risk of sleeping rough, they can be offered a place to stay that is safe, warm and dry while they engage with the services and organisations best placed to assess and address their housing and support needs.

The number of people sleeping rough

- 3.2.6 Based on all of the intelligence – and the daily advice surgeries and twice-weekly outreach sessions undertaken by the Council's Street Outreach Workers – it is estimated that there are currently around 15 people sleeping rough in Northampton (compared to around 25 in February 2016) and that, of these, around half are unemployed European migrants who are failing to exercise their treaty rights.
- 3.2.7 Furthermore, of the 21 people found 'bedded down' during the Rough Sleepers Count on 24 March 2016, it is believed that only 4 are now sleeping rough in Northampton.
- 3.2.8 Although planning consent has been given for the nightshelter to accommodate up to 20 homeless people, moving residents on quickly will ensure that the number of people sleeping in the nightshelter continues to be manageable and a lot less than 20.
- 3.2.9 For many people, the nightshelter will provide them with an invaluable 'stop gap' that meets their immediate needs when they have become homeless at very short notice and while they are helped to make their own arrangements. For others, it will provide somewhere safe to stay while they await an offer of accommodation in Oasis House or one of the other supported housing scheme in Northampton.

Conversion and refurbishment of the nightshelter

- 3.2.10 The Council acquired the former British Rail Sports & Social Club, as a strategic purchase, to support its longer term plans for promoting Northampton's heritage and improving the local area as an important gateway to the town.
- 3.2.11 In order to make effective use of this empty, derelict building and help end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton, it has been agreed that it will be converted and refurbished in a manner that enables it to be used, for a temporary period, as an emergency nightshelter for people who would otherwise need to sleep rough.
- 3.2.12 Structural and drainage surveys have been carried out on the property and, although these show no immediate cause for concern, the building needs to be refurbished and brought up to date to ensure that it is safe, habitable and compliant not just for its intended use as a temporary nightshelter but also for any future short-term use.
- 3.2.13 The planned works include a rewire, gas and heating compliance, fire alarm and smoke / heat detection and minor building works. The required works will be carried out by the Council's approved contractors in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 at a cost of between £70,000 - £100,000.
- 3.2.14 Funding for these building works (which include a contingency of £30,000) has already been approved by the Council's Capital Programme Board, and the project costs have been absorbed by the Housing & Wellbeing Service.
- 3.2.15 Given the very low number of females that sleep rough, personal safety considerations and the need for on-site shower facilities, it has been decided that the nightshelter will only provide emergency shelter for homeless men. Alternative arrangements are being made to ensure that there is no need for women to sleep rough in Northampton.
- 3.2.16 Discussions have taken place with Historic England and the proposed internal and external works do not require Secretary of State consent. The external works of ground vegetation clearance and tree pruning are also free of restrictions as no digging or ground disturbance will take place.

Offers of public support for the nightshelter

- 3.2.17 Since the publication of '**Together we change lives**', a large number of local people, groups, organisations and businesses have offered their help with the refurbishment, decoration and furnishing of the nightshelter. As well as offering their time, they have offered to donate building materials, whitegoods, bedding and toiletries.
- 3.2.18 A number of businesses have offered to release some of their staff to assist with the refurbishment and decoration of the nightshelter – and to work on special projects in Spring Boroughs – as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programme.
- 3.2.19 Although the Council must undertake the compliance and safety works itself, the generosity of local people, groups, organisations and businesses offers an opportunity to set up and run the nightshelter in a way that inspires people to get involved and work together to make a real difference and end the need for people to sleep rough.
- 3.2.20 It is hoped that, by involving the community in the 'challenge' of creating a nightshelter and improving the neighbourhood by November 2016 will strengthen the sense of 'community' and inspire people to take part in other challenges in the future.

Staffing and operating costs of the nightshelter

- 3.2.21 Two full-time staff – a Co-ordinator and an Assistant Co-ordinator – will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the nightshelter and, complementing the work of the Council's Street Outreach Workers, they will be employed either directly by the Council or by another organisation and seconded to the Council.
- 3.2.22 The Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator will be supported by a large team of volunteers and a broad range of local services and organisations. Management of the nightshelter will be overseen by a multi agency Management Board that will be Chaired by the Council's Head of Housing & Wellbeing.
- 3.2.23 Although it is intended to encourage local residents and businesses to provide financial support for some of the operating costs of the nightshelter, this support is likely to relate to improvements to the comfort and enjoyment of the homeless people living in the nightshelter, rather than to the essential running costs of the building.
- 3.2.24 When the nightshelter is fully operational, consideration will be given to the merits and feasibility of it operating as a not-for-profit Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a view to it attracting grant funding towards its overall operating costs and, in doing so, reducing the size of the Council's financial contribution.
- 3.2.25 It is estimated that the cost to the Council of operating the nightshelter – including the employee costs, the business rates, the utilities, the cleaning, the repairs and maintenance and the insurance, etc – will be in the region of £83,200 per annum.
- 3.2.26 On the basis of this estimate – and assuming that the nightshelter is up and running by November 2016, the operating costs will be approximately £34,667 in 2016/17.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 Cabinet can choose to approve capital expenditure of up to £100,000 to support the refurbishment of the nightshelter and approve the one-off supplementary estimate for revenue costs of £160,000 to fund the nightshelter until September 2018 or:
- 3.3.2 Cabinet can choose to do nothing, but this will prevent the setting up of the nightshelter and undermine the delivery of the multi-agency rough sleeper's strategy.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The provision of an emergency nightshelter – a key element of the Multi Agency Strategy for ending the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton – is in line with Council policy and reflects the priorities in the Corporate Plan 2016-20.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 Since the publication of '**Together we change lives**', local people, groups, organisations and businesses have offered their help with the refurbishment, decoration and furnishing of the nightshelter. As well as offering their time, they have offered to donate building materials, whitegoods, bedding and toiletries.

- 4.2.2 A number of businesses have offered to release some of their staff to assist with the refurbishment and decoration of the nightshelter as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programme.
- 4.2.3 Although local residents and businesses will be encouraged to provide financial support for some of the operating costs of the nightshelter, this support is likely to relate to the comfort and enjoyment of the homeless people living in the nightshelter, rather than to the essential running costs of the building.
- 4.2.4 When the nightshelter is fully operational, consideration will be given to the merits and feasibility of it operating as a not-for-profit Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a view to it attracting grant funding towards its overall operating costs and reducing the size of the Council's financial contribution.
- 4.2.5 The business case and financial implications of establishing the temporary nightshelter for a period of up to 2 years have been produced and costed. The other project costs are being absorbed by the Housing & Wellbeing Service reserves.
- 4.2.6 Assuming that the nightshelter is up and running from November 2016 and that it operates until the end of September 2018 (when planning consent for a temporary change of use will expire), the total costs of refurbishing and running the nightshelter – including the employment of a full-time Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator – are expected to be as follows:

CAPITAL	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total
Conversion, compliance and refurbishment works	£100,000 ¹	£0	£0	£100,000
			TOTAL	£100,000

Note ¹ Includes contingency of £30,000

REVENUE	2016/17 (5 months)	2017/18 (12 months)	2018/19 (6 months)	Total
Employee costs	£27,500	£66,000	£33,000	£126,500
Utilities	£ 1,250	£ 3,000	£ 1,500	£ 5,750
Repairs, maintenance, cleaning and servicing	£ 4,167	£10,000	£ 5,000	£ 19,167
Office expenses	£ 500	£ 1,200	£ 600	£ 2,300
Waste disposal	£ 750	£ 1,800	£ 900	£ 3,450
Miscellaneous	£ 500	£ 1,200	£ 600	£ 2,300
TOTAL	£34,667	£83,200	£41,600	£159,467

- 4.2.7 It is proposed that the capital expenditure of up to £100,000 is met from the Council's capital resources and the revenue costs of operating the emergency nightshelter until September 2019 (around £160,000) are met from the Housing & Wellbeing reserves.

4.2.8 As the provision of the nightshelter will assist everyone's efforts to tackle, prevent and reduce rough sleeping, its overall impact on town centre businesses and the cost of delivering public services (including homelessness, policing, community safety and enforcement) is likely to be positive.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The Council has wide and extensive powers to implement the proposals contained in this report through the General Power of Competence in the Localism Act 2011.

4.3.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced the requirement for housing authorities to take a preventative approach to homelessness.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 A full Community Impact Assessment has been completed for '**Together we change lives**', the Multi Agency Strategy for ending the need for people to sleep rough.

4.4.2 By improving the co-ordination and effectiveness of local services and organisations, and striving to end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton, the nightshelter will improve the wellbeing and life chances of people with protected characteristics, including homeless people and people with disabilities, and it will, therefore, have a positive impact on Equality and Diversity.

4.4.3 The development of this Strategy is part of the Council's commitment to improving communities and our town as a place to live. During all stages of this project, the Council will have due regard to its Public Sector Duty and will continue to work to tackle discrimination and inequality and contribute to developing a fairer society.

4.4.4 Although the nightshelter will only be able to accommodate homeless men, emergency shelter – in Oasis House, supported housing or Bed & Breakfast, as appropriate – will be offered to women who are sleeping rough if they require it.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 In February 2016 and April 2016, the Council hosted two half day Workshops to obtain the views of a wide range of stakeholders – including charities, faith groups, health and social care professionals, housing projects, advice and support providers, the neighbourhood wardens, the Police and the anti-social behaviour unit – on the causes of rough sleeping and the action that is required to help people off the streets and end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton.

4.5.2 Everyone who attended the Workshops was enthusiastic about the idea of adopting a fresh, multi agency approach to tackling, preventing and reducing rough sleeping, and of setting up a temporary nightshelter that has the capacity to offer all local rough sleepers emergency shelter until they are able to move into settled housing.

4.5.3 Local residents and stakeholders have been consulted in relation to the nightshelter's planning application. The Head of Housing & Wellbeing has briefed the local Ward Councillors and representatives of the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Forum.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The provision of a temporary nightshelter is one of the 10 strategic priorities in the Multi Agency Rough Sleepers Strategy approved by Cabinet on 8 June 2016 and will help meet 3 of the priorities in the Corporate Plan:

- **Safer Communities:** The nightshelter will help people (including rough sleepers, residents, shoppers, visitors and businesses) to feel safe and secure by reducing rough sleeping, begging and street drinking.
- **Housing for Everyone:** The nightshelter will end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton by providing people with access to a safe and secure home and helping people to achieve and maintain independence.
- **Working Hard and Spending your Money Wisely:** The nightshelter will actively promote collaborative multi agency working and, in doing so, it will help the Council to get the best from the resources available.

4.6.2 The nightshelter will also make a positive contribution to 2 of the 3 Business Development Priorities that support the Corporate Plan and help manage the Council's future financial challenges:

- **Empowering Communities:** The nightshelter will encourage communities to become actively involved in tackling homelessness and improving the neighbourhoods where they live in order to help make everywhere in Northampton a great place to live, visit, work, study and invest.
- **Partnership Working:** The nightshelter will help build strong and effective relationships between partners, based on a coherent, consistent and clearly defined approach to partnership working. As well as increasing efficiency and effectiveness, this will reduce duplication, deliver better outcomes and improve residents' housing, health and wellbeing.

Background Papers

'Together we change lives. Ending the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton'
(Multi Agency Strategy 2016-19)

Community Impact Assessment

Emergency Nightshelter Business Case

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The general exception process in Regulation 10 requires that where the publication of the intention to make a Key Decision under Regulation 9 is impracticable, that decision may only be made where the proper officer has informed the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by notice in writing, of the matter about which the decision is to be made. The Key Decision may then only be made after 5 clear days have elapsed following the publication of the notice given to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny.

Regulation 11 states that where the date by which a Key Decision must be made, makes compliance with Regulation 10 (the general exception process) impracticable, the decision may only be made where the decision maker has obtained agreement from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the making of the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.

Confirmation of this can be found at the link below:

<http://www.northampton.gov.uk/downloads/file/9224/special-urgency-notice--nightshelter--cabinet--19th-october-2016>