

# Public Document Pack



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5 March 2019

Dear Councillor

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a meeting of the **HOMELESSNESS PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** will be held in the HMS Tracker Room at these Offices on Wednesday 13 March 2019 at 4.15 pm when the following business will be transacted.

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Kate Batty-Smith on 01304 872303 or by e-mail at [democraticservices@dover.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@dover.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Batty-Smith", written over a white background.

Chief Executive

## Homelessness Project Advisory Group Membership:

P M Beresford (Chairman)  
J S Back  
P M Brivio  
M D Conolly  
B Gardner

## AGENDA

1 **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To note appointments of Substitute Members.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of business to be transacted on the agenda.

4 **MINUTES** (Pages 4-7)

To confirm the attached minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 18 December 2018.

5 **HOMELESSNESS PERFORMANCE REPORT** (Pages 8-9)

To consider the attached report.

6 **ROUGH SLEEPING INITIATIVE - BID UPDATE** (Page 10)

To consider the attached report.

7 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC** (Page 11)

The recommendation is attached.

MATTERS WHICH THE MANAGEMENT TEAM SUGGESTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE AS THE REPORT CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED WITHIN PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS INDICATED AND IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE PROPER OFFICER CONSIDERS THAT THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THE EXEMPTION OUTWEIGHS THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN DISCLOSING THE INFORMATION

8 **PROJECTS UPDATE** (Pages 12-14)

To consider the attached report.

9 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN** (Pages 15-16)

To consider the attached report.

**Access to Meetings and Information**

- The provisions of Part VI of the Local Government Act 1972, The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 do not apply to meetings of this Advisory Group so as to require its meetings to be open to the public.

Notwithstanding the above, the Council will, whenever possible, conduct meetings of the Advisory Group in public in furtherance of its commitment to openness and transparency. However, there may be occasions on which the nature of the business to be transacted requires members of the public to be excluded from the meetings or parts of them.

- All meetings are held at the Council Offices, Whitfield unless otherwise indicated on the front page of the agenda. There is disabled access via the Council Chamber entrance and a disabled toilet is available in the foyer. In addition, there is a PA system and hearing loop within the Council Chamber.

- Agenda papers are published five clear working days before the meeting. Alternatively, a limited supply of agendas will be available at the meeting, free of charge, and all agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed and downloaded from our website [www.dover.gov.uk](http://www.dover.gov.uk). Minutes are normally published with the agenda for the next meeting. All agenda papers and minutes are available for public inspection for a period of six years from the date of the meeting.
- If you require any further information about the contents of this agenda or your right to gain access to information held by the Council please contact Kate Batty-Smith, Democratic Services Officer; telephone: 01304 872303 or email: [democraticservices@dover.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@dover.gov.uk) for details.

Large print copies of this agenda can be supplied on request.

Minutes of the meeting of the **HOMELESSNESS PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Tuesday, 18 December 2018 at 2.03 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor J S Back

Councillors: P M Beresford  
P M Brivio  
M D Conolly  
B Gardner

Also Present: Councillor K E Morris  
Mr James Moorhouse (Porchlight)

Officers: Director of Finance, Housing and Community  
Head of Strategic Housing  
Housing Options Manager  
Senior Housing Options Officer  
Democratic Services Officer

29 APOLOGIES

It was noted that there were no apologies for absence.

30 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that there were no substitute members appointed.

31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

32 NOTES

The notes of the meeting held on 9 August 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33 ROUGH SLEEPING REPORT

The Housing Options Manager (HOM) introduced the report and advised that this year's rough sleeper estimate had been based on the number of rough sleepers counted during a sweep carried out by Porchlight during the week before 22 November, as well as on information received from other agencies. This year's return was twenty rough sleepers, an increase of seven on the previous year's total, mirroring a county-wide trend. It was clarified that, unlike Canterbury, Thanet and Maidstone, the Council had not been invited to bid for additional funding from the Government due to its relatively low number of rough sleepers.

Referring to page 4 of the report, the HOM advised that, whilst the Council had been unsuccessful in its bid for 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' funding, it was being considered for three other funding streams. Whilst Canterbury had the highest number of rough sleepers, this probably reflected the fact that it was a city with better facilities.

The HOM advised that the Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) had been triggered for three nights, with four people accommodated during that time in nightly-paid accommodation. The maximum number accommodated in the winter shelter to date had been eleven. It was hoped that at least one or two of these rough sleepers would engage with Porchlight with a view to resolving their problems.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

#### 34 PRESENTATION BY PORCHLIGHT

Mr James Moorhouse advised Members that Dover was currently carrying a vacancy for its one outreach worker which it was hoped would be filled shortly. Outreach workers went out on the streets in the early morning to deal with welfare issues and inform people about the support available. Many homeless people did not choose to live on the streets but were unable to cope with everyday life because of alcohol or drug addiction. Some viewed life on the street as 'better' because it meant that they did not have the responsibilities or pressures associated with 'normal' life. Porchlight's aim was to get them into supported accommodation and linked up to welfare services. As there was a long waiting list for Fern Court, the supported accommodation in Dover, privately rented accommodation was also used. Universal Credit had made the situation worse because rent was no longer paid direct to landlords. It was also sometimes difficult to engage with social services. Where people had no particular link to the area, they were encouraged to go home or to relocate to places with more plentiful accommodation such as Durham and Birmingham.

In response to Councillor J S Back, Mr Moorhouse surmised that Dover's position at the end of the train line and being a port explained why some people with no local connections chose to stay here, particularly those coming back from, or thinking of returning to, Europe. The HOM commented that the same faces turned up regularly, and one or two would probably never be helped.

Mr Moorhouse advised that Porchlight was a charity funded by grants and monies raised by its fund-raising team. It had recently won a contract with Kent County Council to provide services for homeless people in mid and east Kent. He emphasised the importance of preventing people going onto the streets as a result of losing their tenancy. The HOM added that East Kent Housing now had a greater focus on trying to prevent tenancy arrears/evictions.

It was agreed that the presentation be noted.

#### 35 HOMELESSNESS PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Senior Housing Options Officer (SHOO) presented the report, advising that twenty applications had been received in November. Although there had been twelve acceptances in the same month, the figures were not necessarily related as the acceptances could relate to applications received before November. Referring to page 7 of the report, she advised that work was being done to address the number of private sector tenancies being brought to an end. There was evidence that this was mainly due to landlords wishing to sell properties rather than increasing the rent. In respect of page 8 of the report, the SHOO explained that an accounting error had led to the November figure for rent arrears being wrong. This had now been corrected. The figures for temporary and interim accommodation for November 2018 were lower than for November the preceding year. This indicated

that Council staff had understood the legislation and implemented it effectively; this had not been the case with some other local authorities.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

36 HOMELESSNESS SERVICE OVERVIEW

The HOM introduced the report which updated Members on actions taken since the homelessness audit conducted earlier in the year. Of the 23 recommendations made by Audit, fifteen were fully completed, five partially completed and three outstanding. The majority of areas originally given limited assurance had now received reasonable assurance. It was recognised that the Housing Options Officers (HOO) had heavy caseloads compared with their peers in other authorities. However, the employment of two apprentices allowed HOOs to focus on the investigative and relief elements of their casework. The SHOO advised that it was proposed to change some of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) reported to the Group since the current KPIs did not reflect legislative changes nor recommendations made by Audit. In summary, the Director of Finance, Housing and Community reported that the Council was offering a good service in terms of protecting the homeless, but was not doing so well on debt recovery.

In response to Councillor M D Conolly, the HOM advised that body cameras were not worn by staff visiting people's homes. The Director of Finance, Housing and Community commented that filming in someone's home would require permission and could prove counterproductive. Following a recent incident, Officers were considering whether the Whitfield reception should be redesigned. However, it was recognised that a balance needed to be struck between staff safety and public access.

It was agreed to recommend: (a) That the proposed changes to the Key Performance Indicators be approved.

(b) That the report be noted.

37 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business on the grounds that the item to be considered involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

38 PROJECTS UPDATE

The Head of Strategic Housing (HSH) presented the report which outlined progress on a number of housing projects. In respect of the social lettings agency, it was hoped to meet Ashford Borough Council shortly to try to develop a more realistic proposal.

Councillor J S Back expressed concerns at slow progress and suggested that the housing projects should be split up. The HSH advised that there was a cost advantage in developing all three sites together and procuring project management services for all three. These were substantial projects which needed to be delivered in a way that did not leave the Council open to risk or liability. The sites would need to be surveyed before procurement of the design and build contracts. It was therefore likely to be twelve months before Officers were ready to seek planning

permission. The Director of Finance, Housing and Community advised that a report would go to Cabinet in January which, if approved, would kick-start progress on the development of the Triangles site. The HSH clarified that the site adjoining the Ark in Dover was better suited to prefabricated units due to the limited parking. As a result of property purchases and refurbishment, 42 properties would be in the Council's direct ownership by the end of the year.

The meeting ended at 3.27 pm.

Homelessness Performance ReportFebruary 2019Key Performance Indicators

The figures show the position as at the end of February 2019.

Number of Homelessness Cases

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
<b>H1</b>	Number of homelessness applications	82	67	53	42	36	33	53	20	16	20	19
<b>H2</b>	Number of referrals in to the Authority	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	132 Oct to Dec	3	7
<b>H3</b>	Number of triage cases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	104	93
<b>H4</b>	Number of prevention cases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56	62	65
<b>H5</b>	Number of relief cases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	85	84	75
<b>H6</b>	Number of homelessness cases accepted	6	8	3	7	2	15	11	12	15	14	3
<b>H7</b>	Care flag alerts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2

**Key**

**Referrals** come in various forms – self referrals and /or agency referrals. The 132 for December do not necessarily directly equate to actual cases, as some of these may be duplicates sent in via various agencies.

**A triage case** is a case where a completed referral form has been submitted either as a self referral or an agency has completed and submitted it on a customer's behalf.

**A prevention case** is a case where we are working with the customer in their current accommodation and trying to ensure they remain there. We do this in a number of ways – applying for Discretionary Housing Payment to clear any rent arrears; negotiating with landlords or bailiffs where we can to extend the tenancy; negotiating with family to keep their children at home; etc.

**A relief case** is a case where the customer is now homeless. We have a duty to relieve that homelessness if the customer satisfies certain criteria. At this stage we would consider whether we have a duty to place them in temporary accommodation.

**Care flags** highlight cases where staff are required to take care when seeing a customer due to previous threatened or actual violence. This forms part of our risk assessment process to ensure staff safety is not compromised.

**Comments:**

The referrals are highlighted in the table below showing the various agencies for the month of December.

<b>Referral agency</b>	<b>No. of referrals October to December 2018</b>
Armed Forces	1
Prison	4
Social Services	25
Mental Health team	10
Probation Services	5
Local Authority	3
Other Housing Provider	31
Refuge	2
Substance Misuse Service	1
Porchlight	11
Sexual Health Service	1
Citizens Advice Bureau	2
Community Rehabilitation Centre	8
DWP	15
Floating Support	8
Faith Groups	1
College	2
GP/Hospital	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>

**Pam Millington**  
**Senior Housing Options Officer**  
**Tel: 01304 872202**

**Rough Sleeping Initiative – Bid Update Report**Rough-Sleeping Related Bids

We have recently been notified of the outcome of our two rough sleeping related bids.

Our bid to become an Early Adopter was unsuccessful. This bid was submitted by DDC in conjunction with the Dover Outreach Centre, Porchlight and our Community Safety Unit and was for funding to support the local establishment or enhancement of a Rapid Rehousing Pathway for rough sleepers.

However a second round of this funding has recently been released and we are looking to submit a joint bid for the areas in which Porchlight are Prime Contractor for homelessness services – Dover, Canterbury, Thanet and Folkestone & Hythe.

The Supported Lettings and Navigator elements of the bid fit in well with the Coaching model for their Kent Homeless Connect service and they have the management and support structures in place for these as well as further pathways for support to add significant value to a bid. Through a joint approach there would be the ability to look at some added value – for example, another landlord liaison role to cover East Kent.

Our alternative bid, submitted in partnership with Folkestone & Hythe and Thanet Councils for part of the £20 million Private Rented Access Fund was successful. This fund is focused on schemes that will enable better access and sustainment of tenancies for those who are, or are at risk of becoming homeless and rough sleeping. The award for 2018/19 is £63,250 and £308,000 in 19/20.

Dover is the lead authority for this bid and will be agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding with the MHCLG.

A further bid, in conjunction with Folkestone & Hythe Council and Porchlight was recently submitted. This bid is for a total of £179,217.48 and if successful will fund:

1 x FTE Outreach worker (Dover) - £39,608.74

1 x FTE Support Plus worker (Folkestone and Hythe) - £39,608.74

£20,000 access to Private Rented Sector (PRS) Rent Deposit Scheme (RDS) (Dover)

£20,000 access to PRS RDS (Folkestone & Hythe)

1 x FTE Mental Health specialist (Dover and Folkestone & Hythe) - £60,000

Progress reports will be given at future meetings.

**Contact Officer: Elly Toye, Housing Options Manager, Ext 42259**

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

NON-KEY DECISION

HOMELESSNESS PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP – 13 MARCH 2019

**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Recommendation**

The provisions of Part VI of the Local Government Act 1972, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 do not apply to meetings of this Advisory Group so as to require its meetings to be open to the public.

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On this occasion the public will be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business:

<u>Item Report</u>	<u>Paragraph Exempt</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Projects Update	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
Affordable Housing Delivery Plan	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Agenda Item No 8**

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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