

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>GRANT TO DOVER OUTREACH CENTRE FOR WINTER SHELTER PROVISION</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>4 January 2019</b>
<b>Decision to be taken by:</b>	<b>Councillor Pauline Beresford, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Elly Toye, Housing Options Manager</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor Pauline Beresford, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Executive Non-Key Decision</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	To assist the Dover Outreach Centre in providing a winter night shelter in Dover.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	That a grant of £10,000 to the Dover Outreach Centre be approved.

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 For the past 2 years the Dover Outreach Centre has provided a winter night shelter operating from December through to March the following year. The Centre is reliant on financial donations to cover the cost of running the shelter. The Council does not currently make a contribution, however the Chair of Trustees has recently submitted a request for grant funding of £10,000 to help towards the running costs.

## 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Dover Outreach Centre first opened its winter night shelter provision in December 2016 and this is its third year of operating. A total of six Dover churches make their premises available between December and February. Originally the shelter was only open on six of the seven nights a week, however this year they aim to open every night.
- 2.2 The shelter is mainly staffed by volunteers who receive relevant training. Last year 128 volunteers provided a total of 4,436 hours of service. They served 1,403 hot evening meals, 906 basic breakfasts and approximately 5,436 cups of tea and coffee.
- 2.3 People using the shelter are supplied with bedding and a camp bed if they want one. Some choose to use foam mattresses. All the bedding is stored by the Centre and transported to each venue.
- 2.4 The cost of running the shelter is funded solely from financial donations from churches, schools, DDC community safety team, Town Council, businesses, organisations and individuals in the Dover area. Donations of food, bedding, games, a TV/DVD player and clothing and personal items were also received.
- 2.5 The total cost of running the shelter last year was just under £22,000. The cost would be significantly higher if it wasn't for the voluntary help being given.

- 2.6 The Centre has calculated that the cost of operating the shelter this year will be around £32,000. This is due to the extended opening period and the need for an additional paid role that has been identified as being required.
- 2.7 It is generally recognised as good practice for councils to make an annual financial contribution towards the running costs of winter night shelters. Around Kent these contributions range from £4,000 to £20,000. Shelters tend to run on a very similar basis following a model introduced by Housing Justice, a National Homelessness Charity.
- 2.8 There is clear evidence to show that the Dover shelter has a positive social and financial benefit for the wider community. It enables agencies to engage with homeless people, helping them to re-assess their lives with the aim of them making a positive step back into employment and settled accommodation. In addition, it can reduce the risks and tensions sometimes associated with rough sleeping within the town (for instance, rough sleepers can often be prey to anti-social behaviour).
- 2.9 Dover District Council operates a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) during periods of sub-zero temperatures. Under this protocol the Council undertakes to provide emergency accommodation for the homeless. In the past the Council has been solely reliant on the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and hostels, but the recent operation of the shelter provides a more cost-effective alternative to helping support some of the most vulnerable people within our community.
- 2.10 Last year (2017/18), the night shelter was operational on 35 nights when SWEP had been triggered. On the basis of the night shelter capacity being 15 persons per night, this equates to a total of 525 spaces. Based on a typical cost of between £15 and £25 per night for other forms of accommodation, the use of the shelter has saved an estimated £7,875 to £13,125 in emergency accommodation costs.

### **3. Identification of Options**

- 3.1 Option 1: To pay a grant of £10,000 towards the cost of providing the winter night shelter.
- 3.2 Option 2: To reject the grant request.

### **4. Evaluation of Options**

- 4.1 Option 1: It is good practice for councils to support this type of provision and its operation has a clear financial benefit for the Council. There are also the wider social and community benefits outlined in the report.
- 4.2 Option 2: Although not paying the grant is unlikely to result in some form of winter night shelter being provided, it is important that the service continues to be financially viable and that resources are available to expand the service as described in the report.
- 4.3 Option 1 is therefore the recommended option.

### **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 The money has been budgeted for both this financial year and 2019/20.

### **6. Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Accountancy can confirm the budget of £10,000 and have no further comments to make. (BW)

- 6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications however in discharging their duties members reminded to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>

7. **Appendices**

- 7.1 None.

8. **Background Papers**

- 8.1 None.

Contact Officer: Elly Toye, Housing Options Manager