



Financial Year	2016/17
Proposal no.	EE119
Directorate	Neighbourhoods
Service Name	Strategic Housing
Area of Service	Strategic Housing

<b>Savings Programme Pre-consultation Report</b>			
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Reduction of Voluntary Sector Grant payments for Homelessness Service</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Neighbourhoods	<b>Author:</b>	Donna Bowler
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment	<b>Author Telephone:</b>	01706 924849
<b>Type of Consultation</b>	Service Delivery with <b>no</b> Workforce Implications	<b>Author Email:</b>	donna.bowler@rochdale.gov.ukl

## **1 Recommendations**

1.1 It is recommended that members consider the proposal to reduce Voluntary Sector Grants (VSG) currently administered by Strategic Housing Services to Brentwood (Middleton Day Centre), Petrus Community, Sanctuary Trust and Rochdale and Oldham CAB by 10% in order to achieve savings of £30k.

### **Reason for recommendation**

1.2 In order to contribute to the Council's savings requirement it has been necessary to examine all areas of service. The Council would continue to support each organisation in the positive impact they make on communities, and continue to assist them in seeking alternative funding sources.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Preventing Homelessness and assisting households that are at risk of becoming homeless to prevent them from becoming homeless is the key priority of Rochdale Borough Council's Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016. This Strategy is currently in the process of being refreshed but Homelessness Prevention will continue to be the primary focus of the Strategy for the next 3 years. The Council has a good track record in assisting households by preventing them from becoming homeless and this record of achievement is based around a strong partnership approach.
- 2.2 Under current Housing Legislation, 1996 Housing Act Part VII, and the Code of Guidance 2006, Councils have a statutory duty to have a strategy to prevent homelessness in their district. This means providing people with the ways and means to meet their housing and any housing related support need. However, the Guidance allows Councils the flexibility to decide how this is best met within their district and the statutory duty of the Council is not directly affected by this proposal.
- 2.3 The Council has commissioned both preventative and crisis intervention services from Petrus Community, Brentwood, Sanctuary Trust and CAB for a number of years via Voluntary Sector Grants agreements, (VSG). The three services affected by this proposal contribute directly to the Councils performance prevention performance indicator that we provide to the Department of Local Government and the Communities, (DCLG), on a quarterly basis.
- 2.4 Three organisations are currently grant-funded by the Council and Public Health. This reduction would apply to the total grant as detailed in the table below.

	<b>Total Grant 2015-16 (£)</b>	<b>Proposed 10% reduction (£)</b>	<b>Proposed total funding 2016-17 (£)</b>
Brentwood	73,000	7,300	65,700
Petrus	160,800	16,080	144,720
Sanctuary Trust	20,000	2,000	18,000
CAB	50,000	5,000	45,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>303,800</b>	<b>30,380</b>	<b>273,420</b>

- 2.5 Services are measured on a number of Housing and Health related performance outcomes and a brief description and outcomes for 2014-15 some of which are described in paras 2.5.1 – 2.5.3.

### 2.5.1 Brentwood Middleton

The table below shows 2014-15 performance set against agreed targets. Numbers of households accessing the service and receiving support – mainly single homeless – has exceeded target figures. The service currently operates 5 days per week and provides both crisis drop in and a range of activities. The service is a main referral agency for the Food bank in Middleton and enables people to access advice and support at the same time. The service is currently undergoing a review and partly in response to previous reductions to funding, is moving towards a more formalised approach that may reduce open access.

Number of households assisted

<b>Brentwood</b>	<b>Target 2014-15</b>	<b>Activities for Year 2014-15</b>
Preventing Homelessness	200	563
Supporting Rough Sleeper	45	65

### 2.5.2 Petrus Rochdale

The table below shows 2014-15 performance against targets. The funding that Petrus receives under pins the activity at The Hub on George Street which is the main access point for people seeking support. The service currently operates 5 days a week and although does provide some crisis drop in, most of the activities are centred on a diverse programme of training, vocational and health related activities. The service is also commissioned by Police Crime Commission to provide female only services for recent offenders.

Number of households assisted

<b>Petrus Rochdale</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Activities for Year</b>
Preventing Homelessness	340	398
Supporting Rough Sleeper	40	98

### 2.5.3 Sanctuary Trust

This service provides an 8 bed emergency accommodation for people at risk of sleeping rough and those that are often excluded from other services. Referrals are made via the Homelessness services and will accommodate both single male and females. Demand for this service has been high in year 2014-15 as reflected in the table below.

Number of people accommodated

<b>Sanctuary Trust</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>total</b>
Number of People accommodated	283	49	332
Number referred to gateway services	32	17	49

#### 2.5.4 Rochdale and Oldham CAB

This service provides specialist advice, support and advocacy for households at risk of homelessness as a result of mortgage default including representing households at Court. Households access the service by direct referral, referral from Homelessness services or via Court. Although there has been a downward trend in households at risk from mortgage default, the service has still supported a significant number of households.

Number of households assisted 2014-15

<b>CAB</b>	<b>Outcome for year</b>
Homelessness Prevented	116
Households assisted in Court	58

2.6 By limiting reductions in funding to 10% it is envisaged that these services will be able to continue to provide an effective service albeit that there may be some reduction in the numbers of people that can access and be supported by each of the services.

2.7 This proposal recognises the value and effectiveness of continuing to adequately resource preventative services in that the true costs of not preventing homelessness on individual households and the public purse far outweighs any short term saving that may be achieved by a greater reduction and demonstrates the council's continued commitment to work with the voluntary sector and to support vulnerable households across the Borough.

### 3 Financial Implications

The saving proposal is 10% of the total homelessness grants.

3.1 Table 1 provides details of the proposal to save £30k in year 2016/17 by reducing Voluntary Sector Grant payments to Petrus Community, Brentwood (Middleton Day Centre), Sanctuary Trust and CAB.

	Savings 2016/17		Savings 2017/18		Total savings	
	£k		£k		£k	
	On-going	One off	On-going	One off	On-going	One off
<b>Total savings</b>	<b>30</b>				<b>30</b>	

### **Financial and potential staffing impact on another internal service?**

3.2 There is no financial or potential staffing impact on another internal service.

## **4 Asset implications**

The following asset implications arise from the issues raised in this report as set out below:

4.1 Brentwood (Middleton Day Centre) is based at 155 Long Street, Middleton. This property is owned by the Council but leased back to Brentwood by way of a peppercorn rent. Since 2013, Brentwood has been responsible for day to day repairs and maintenance of the building. The property is in reasonable condition and has been adapted over the years to meet the needs of the diverse client group that use the building and the complimentary services such as Renaissance and Big Life that also operate regularly within the building. The building is subject to building control and is in a conservation area. Brentwood meet current costs of building upkeep and running costs out of their current grant allocation.

## **5 Voluntary Sector impact**

The following Voluntary Sector impacts arise from the issues raised in this report as set out below:

5.1 Both the Council and service users are reliant upon the services and support provided through our partnership working with the voluntary sector. The Council has a commitment through the Borough of Rochdale Compact to continue to support local services and to involve them in the development and provision of services for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness. The Council will continue to work with each of the services affected to ensure that any detrimental impact upon service users is minimised and to provide support in the future development of each of the services.

## **6 Consultation**

6.1 The Council will consult broadly across all sections of the community including those groups that are most likely to be directly affected by the proposals. The Council will keep to its commitment under the Borough of Rochdale Compact to consult with the staff, volunteers and service users of each of the voluntary sector organisations in relation to the impact of the reduction in funding.

6.2 The council will consult with elected members and ward members in the areas that the services operate and a wide range of stakeholders including the Homelessness Strategy Board and the Borough of Rochdale Homelessness Action and Information Network, (BRHAIN).

6.3 The Council will consult directly with each of the services affected and will encourage each of the services to facilitate comment from current service users.

The proposal will be placed on the Councils website to enable people in the wider community to view and to provide comment or feedback.

6.4 Further detail and timetable for the how the council will provide opportunities for consultation is included in the Consultation plan in Appendix 3.

## 7 Alternatives considered

The following alternatives considered as part of this proposal are set out below:

7.1 Members could decide not to take the proposal forward and identify alternative savings proposals.

7.2 Members may choose to achieve the same saving by re-apportioning the proposed reductions in grant funding to each of the 4 services affected based upon the level of risk that it may represent to each of the services.

7.3 It is clear as stated in para 8 below, that both Brentwood and Sanctuary Trust services rely almost exclusively on the support they receive from the Council in order for them to continue to operate the current service level. Although all three organisations and the people using each of the services are likely to be adversely affected, the effect of any reduction in income to Brentwood and Sanctuary trust will be far greater than any reduction in grant to Petrus. Similarly, Rochdale and Oldham CAB receive additional funding from the Council through a contract to provide Advice services. Members may wish to consider an alternative proposal as set out in the table below.

	<b>Total Grant 2015-16 (£)</b>	<b>Proposed reduction (£)</b>	<b>Proposed total funding 2016-17 (£)</b>
Brentwood	73,000	3,650	69,350
Petrus	160,800	20,350	140,450
Sanctuary Trust	20,000	1,000	19,000
CAB	50,000	5,000	45,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>303,800</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>273,800</b>

**This is based upon a 5% reduction in grant for Brentwood and Sanctuary trust, and 12.66% reduction in grant for Petrus.**

## **8 Risk Assessment Implications**

The following risks arise from the issues raised in this report as set out below:

- 8.1 There is an overall risk that a reduction in funding to each of the services affected may result in a reduction of services that are available to people at risk of homelessness or sleeping rough or that are homeless or sleeping rough. The potential impact on each service and the risks that arise are likely to be different as described below.
- 8.2 There is some risk that the services may struggle to accommodate further cuts and will have to reduce the service.
- 8.3 Sanctuary Trust is unlikely to generate any additional income from within their organisation to offset any loss of funding and there may be some adverse effect upon the service and service users. This will result in a higher threshold and may mean that some high risk service users may not be accommodated.
- 8.4 The Council will continue to work with these organisations and has assisted them in accessing additional one-off funding.

## **9 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The Council must comply with the commitments given in the Borough of Rochdale Compact to provide at least 90 days' notice of a reduction in funding and consult with staff, volunteers and service users and meet with the organisations to consider ways of mitigating the impact of the reduction in funding.

## **10 Personnel Implications**

- 10.1 The proposals outlined within this report will not have any personnel implication for the council's workforce.

## **11 Equalities Impacts**

### **Workforce Equality Impacts Assessment**

- 11.1 There are no workforce equality issues arising from this report.

### **Equality/Community Impact Assessments**

- 11.2 The following equality/community issues arise from the issues raised in this report as set out below:
- 11.3 Although homelessness can affect any household in the community, people with complex dependencies, excluded households and those living in areas of deprivation are disproportionately represented amongst those most at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping. See also appendix 1.

## Appendix 1

Financial Year	2016/17
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Service Name	Strategic Housing
Area of Service	Strategic Housing

### **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR SAVINGS PROPOSALS**

1. Please state the name of the officers leading the EIA
Ian Jolley Strategic Housing Services
2. Who has been involved in undertaking this assessment?
Adult Care Services Safer Communities PHE Riverside Housing Rochdale Boroughwide Housing
3. What is the scope of this assessment?
People at risk of homelessness Homeless people and people at risk of sleeping rough Households that access the Middleton Foodbank
4 a). What does the function currently do? b). Describe the needs which this service meets?
a). The proposal is to reduce funding to the following services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brentwood (Middleton Day Centre)</li></ul>



This provides a range of crisis interventions, advice and support for people at risk of homelessness or are sleeping rough in the Middleton area. It also provides advice and support for households accessing the Middleton Foodbank including an assessment of need. It is also an access service into a range of health and vocational related activities and opportunities as well as providing a venue for complimentary services

- Petrus Community  
This funding contributes to the services provided at the Petrus Hub on George Street, Rochdale. This provides a range of crisis interventions, advice and support for people at risk of homelessness or sleeping rough. It is also an access service into a range of health and vocational related activities and opportunities as well as providing a venue for complimentary services
- Sanctuary Trust  
This funding supports the provision of 8 emergency overnight bed spaces at The STEP in Rochdale for people that would be at risk of sleeping rough. It also acts as a gateway to other accommodation and support services.

b). Despite broad commitment to preventing homelessness and the promotion and development of the wider prevention agenda across the Borough, there is still a significant demand for support and assistance from households at risk of homelessness. For many households homelessness or the threat of homelessness may be a once in a lifetime event, but there are many people whose vulnerability places them at disproportionate risk. This includes households from the most deprived wards in the Borough that are likely to have more than one unmet need or factor that contribute to them being at risk of homelessness including, unemployment and unemployability; poor life skills; lack of family or network support; mental or physical ill health; substance misuse and recent offending behaviours. These services are inclusive and provide access to support and accommodation for people that are often excluded from other services.

All 3 services contribute to the Councils Homelessness Strategy to prevent homelessness.

5. What proposed changes do you wish to make?

The proposal is to limit a reduction of funding of VSG so as to limit any adverse impact upon current and future service users.

6. Who are the key stakeholders who may be affected by the proposed changes?

Adult Care Services

Renaissance and other substance misuse services

Housing Providers

PHE

7. What impact will this proposal have on all the protected groups

**Race Equality**

Brentwood and Petrus Hub operate an open door policy which tends to break down barriers, this also allows for frequently hard to engage service users an access to advice, advocacy and support without the need for an appointment. People accessing this service are sometimes excluded from other services or do not access services until in crisis. Sanctuary Trust operates an inclusive policy and accepts and support individuals from all ethnic groups.

Staff at each of the organisations is trained in cultural and ethnic awareness and provide access to specialist support around issues such as language and food requirements where appropriate.

All services have provided support for a diverse range of households including establish communities and new and emerging communities in the Borough including Refugee and Asylum households and Migrant workers.

**Disabled People**

Services support people that present with a range health related issues including in some cases disabilities, mental ill health, mobility issues and general poor health.

Mental Ill health both diagnosed and undiagnosed is prevalent amongst services users using both services.

Services advocates, advises and supports numerous individuals often with multiple mental health issues and these services are often the only agency service users are not excluded from due to the nature of their challenging behaviour.

Staff at the Hub and Brentwood take the lead in supporting these individuals directly with housing, benefits, legal and personal safety issues. This initial support can be the difference between maintaining mental wellbeing or individuals slipping through the socio economic net and into further despair. This can manifest itself in varying ways, depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicide attempts etc. In recent years there has been an increase in numbers of individuals accessing these services that have diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health problems.

**Carers**

The Hub provides group activities which assist service users with learning disabilities. This indirectly provides carers with mini respite sessions and a chance to have some time to themselves. Petrus and Brentwood also assist individuals with support and advocacy surrounding benefits, housing, legal issues and accessing care agencies. This can help to provide support and reduce the stress and workload of full time carers. As well as assisting the service users directly Petrus can provide emotional support to the carers themselves and help them to be referred to their own support services including Carer break and Respite North West and link them in with various counselling organisations.

The STEP provides emergency accommodation for some people that may have been made homeless as a result of family breakdown and indirectly provides some respite as it is likely

that some people return to the family home. Similarly, the service provides a gateway to more appropriate support services.

### **Gender**

Women Offenders- The Hub provides specifically tailored holistic groups for female offenders in conjunction with the probation service; this is aimed at reducing crime in the borough while often offering an alternative to a custodial sentence or as part of the requirements of their licence. The removal of the service may result in an increase on offending behaviour within the borough of Rochdale and increased pressure on courts, police and statutory services

Both services offer appropriate staffing for gender specific issues and Petrus run structured workshops based around health and wellbeing.

The Hub provides support for street workers and offers support and advice regarding risk, sexual health, and substance misuse and harm minimisation. Petrus has also worked with these individuals when they have been physically attacked and can offer crisis intervention and a place of safety. Any loss or reduction of this service could see an increase in violence and sexually transmitted diseases. People requiring this service would have to be signposted to alternative services.

Petrus offer support where both males and females can come and speak to us about domestic violence issues, we work closely with a number of different agencies and can help support service users through this process.

Brentwood provides services for both males and females. It is recognised that single females at risk of homelessness or sleeping rough are more likely to have complex needs and be excluded from other services. Brentwood provides a place of safety for females at risk of homelessness and are excluded from other services to receive targeted advice and support. Brentwood staff advocates and liaise on behalf of women at risk and enable them to access services that will enable them to maintain safe accommodation and live independently.

### **Age**

All 3 services are accessible to any individual over the age of 18 and there are no upper age criteria. There are large numbers of people aged between 18-35yrs accessing these services as this group have been adversely affected by welfare reform. This age group are being disproportionately affected by benefit changes, unemployment and fewer housing options and at heightened risk.

Petrus has close links with Age Concern and local sheltered housing companies and have staff members fully trained in the range of benefits available to older people (e.g. pension credit and attendance allowance). The Hub offers a range of structured activities that are accessible to older people.

Brentwood service users represent the full adult age group although there has been an increase in younger people accessing the service in the last 12 months.

### **Armed Forces and Ex-Armed Forces Personnel**

All 3 services are accessible to Armed forces and Ex Armed Forces personnel and include this

as part of any formal assessment arrangements that they have in place for people accessing their services. Brentwood, Petrus and Sanctuary trust are all aware of some of the issues faced by Ex Armed Forces personnel and the disproportionate number recorded as homeless or sleeping rough.

All 3 services are aware of the commitment that the Council has made through the Forces Compact to support members of the armed forces and ex-armed forces personnel.

### **Religion or Belief**

All 3 services operate an open door policy and will support individuals of all religious persuasions and faiths.

### **Sexual Orientation**

All services provide support to anyone at risk of homelessness or sleeping rough. Petrus Hub has good working links with local LGBT groups. LGBT users, especially younger people are at a heightened risk of homelessness as a result of family breakdown, loss of networks and possible harassment. Both services offer a place of safety for people at risk to access support and homelessness services.

### **Gender Reassignment**

All services provide support to anyone at risk of homelessness or sleeping rough. People undertaking gender reassignment may be at heightened risk of homelessness due to family breakdown, loss of networks or harassment. Both services offer a place of safety for people to access support and homelessness services.

### **Pregnant Women or Those on Maternity Leave or Those who have given Birth in the Previous 26 weeks**

All services are open to males and females and will provide support for any woman at risk of homelessness or sleeping rough irrespective of pregnancy or birth status. All services address safeguarding issues with regards the health and welfare of any child or adult. A proportion of female service users that access both services have complex needs and these services can play a significant role in supporting pregnant females that may be reluctant to engage in statutory services.

### **Marriage or Civil Partnership**

All services are open to males and females including single people, couples or groups. They provide support to anyone at risk of homelessness or sleeping rough.

## 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

### **What are the main conclusions and recommendations from this analysis?**

All 3 services work with excluded client groups including those that are excluded from other provision within the Borough. All 3 services have contributed to our corporate aim to prevent homelessness wherever possible and to promote sustainable independence. The services have supported the councils aim to prevent rough sleeping in the Borough and each of the services have proven to be successful in enabling some of our most vulnerable and excluded people to achieve productive and settle lifestyles.

The Council recognises the key role that these services have played and will continue to play in assisting us from preventing homelessness and supporting those at risk of sleeping rough.

It is therefore important that the Council continues to support each of these services through the continuation of VSG and to continue to work with them to identify and develop alternative funding streams.

The council will encourage closer working relationships between these 3 and other agencies across the Borough to look at how resources can be pooled or shared and how they can build upon the effective joined up working that is already in place.

### **9. In the box below please provide details of who you will consult with on the proposals, when you consult, and the methods which you will use to consult. In the box below**

#### ***The Consultation and Inclusion Methodology Used***

Consultation on these proposals will take place between 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and 8<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

Elected members/Ward Members – Consultation will take place through the formal Council consultation process.

Portfolio Holders Strategic Housing Services & Adult Care Services- Portfolio holders for SHS and AC are members of the Homelessness Strategy Board and will be consulted by report at a Joint Homelessness Strategy Board/Borough of Rochdale Homelessness Action and Information Network meeting.

Homelessness Strategy Board members - will be consulted by report at a Joint Homelessness Strategy Board/Borough of Rochdale Homelessness Action and Information Network meeting. This includes senior officer representation from Adult Care, Safer Communities, Children's Social Care and Public Health.

Financial Services & Legal services will be consulted as part of the formal reporting process.

Social Landlords – Rochdale Housing Initiative will distribute the proposal and will assist in

collating and feedback.

Brentwood, Petrus and Sanctuary Trust – will be invited to contribute to consultation process either directly to the author by way of email/letter or by meeting if requested.

Service users – Brentwood, Petrus and Sanctuary Trust will be encouraged to sign post service users to submit views either by email/letter or via the Council website. Service users can be provided by assistance from staff and volunteers to utilise onsite support or can be sign posted to use the Customer services based at Number 1 Riverside or local library facilities.

Wider Community – The proposal will be placed on the Council website

**10. Produce an action plan detailing the mitigation measures that you propose to put in place to address any adverse impacts.**

Mitigation Measure	Action	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date	Review Date	Evaluation Measure
Ensure that there is sufficient place of safety for any person at risk of harm during periods of severe weather.	Consult current service providers across the Borough and ensure that Homelessness services are able to refer those at risk to a place of safety.	Ian Jolley	12 <sup>th</sup> January	29 <sup>th</sup> February	Number of services agreed.
Ensure that households in Middleton are able to access the Foodbank	Identify a local organisation that has the resource and is able to undertake the assessment function	Ian Jolley	12 <sup>th</sup> January	29 <sup>th</sup> February	Partner agency identified

Ensure pathways to vocational and non-vocational training and support is available to excluded people in Middleton and Rochdale	Work with colleagues in Economic affairs as well as voluntary sector services to identify a pathway to alternative services and support	Ian Jolley	12 <sup>th</sup> January	29 <sup>th</sup> February	Partner agency identified
Strategic Housing Services will continue to support each organisation affected to seek alternative funding opportunities	Use Contract monitoring meetings to set up local action plan	Ian Jolley	January – March 2015	29 <sup>th</sup> February	Number of meetings held