



Proposal Title	Review of Voluntary Sector Grant to Homelessness Prevention services
Proposal No.	NH-2019-20-013
Proposal Type	Service Delivery
Directorate	Neighbourhoods
Service Area	Strategic Housing Services

Recommendation

- 1.1 Members are asked to consider the proposal to Reduce Voluntary Sector grant to Homelessness Prevention services for consultation as part of the Savings Programme 2019/20 – 2020/21.

Reason for Recommendation

- 2.1 To support the Council's requirement to deliver a balanced budget for 2019/20.

This is likely to have the least impact upon agencies that deliver front line services to vulnerable households and will allow agencies some certainty about future funding from the council for the next 2 years.

Key Points for Consideration

3.1

Overview of the proposal

Brentwood based at Middleton Day Centre and Petrus Community are commissioned by the council to provide crisis intervention and support for households at risk of homelessness. They currently receive an annual contribution of £65,700 and £144,720 respectively.

The proposal is to achieve an annual saving of £4,000 from voluntary sector grant funding for each of the 2 years and the amount of reduction represents just less than 2% of the annual award made to each agency.

The council recognises that any reduction in funding for frontline homelessness services is likely to impact adversely but it is envisioned that a decision to achieve a modest reduction now will enable the agencies affected some re-assurance of continuity of funding for the next 2 years.

4.1

Overall Impact of the proposed change

The council is aware that both agencies have experienced previous cuts to funding and similar to other council commissioned services there has been no additional uplift in grant allocations for many years.

Both agencies provide quarterly returns to reflect a range of activity related to homelessness and health interventions.

In each case, the activity and outcomes reported by each of the agencies has contributed to the quarterly performance indicator we are required to provide the MH CLG. More importantly they enable the council to meet the needs of a high number of people that otherwise may impact upon statutory services.

The reduction in funding may lead to a reduction in service delivery and is likely to undermine their ability to sustain services longer term.

4.2

Impact on affected service

Households that are unable to access support from Brentwood and Petrus Community may impact on statutory services. Additionally, although both services support a wide demography of households, a significant proportion of people the services support have previously been homeless or are at risk of sleeping rough or are vulnerable.

The council's ability to achieve statutory and strategic need to prevent homelessness may be undermined.

Savings total

2019/20 £4,000

Background

The Voluntary Sector Grants (VSG) are long standing arrangements to support key agencies that enable the council to meet statutory and strategic requirements in relation to homelessness prevention. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act has placed additional requirements upon the council and the impact upon statutory services has been felt through an increase in the activity undertaken.

Brentwood based at Middleton Day Centre is commissioned to deliver crisis support and homelessness prevention interventions. They provide quarterly returns to reflect a range of activity related to homelessness and health interventions.

Petrus Community receive funding to support the activity undertaken at The Petrus Hub on George Street. Similar to above they are commissioned to deliver crisis support and homelessness prevention interventions. They provide quarterly returns to reflect a range of activity related to homelessness and health interventions.

In each case, the activity and outcomes reported by each of the agencies has contributed to the quarterly performance indicator we are required to provide the MH CLG. In the last 2 years we have reported +1,800 homelessness prevention cases, of which circa 1,000 were reported from data provided by Brentwood and Petrus.

Alternatives Considered

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

1. To increase the reduction to achieve greater savings

Any increased reduction in funding that is currently proposed is likely to have a greater impact on each of the services ability to assist the council. Both Brentwood and Petrus Community has experienced cuts to VSG funding in previous years but have striven to maintain services at the same level. It is unlikely that this could continue with any further loss of funding. Attracting and retaining appropriately qualified staff to work in an already challenging environment is an issue for both organisations and both are sustained through the use of peer mentors and service user training programmes. There would likely be a reduction in service and access for vulnerable people and as such the ability of the council to achieve timely interventions for people at risk of homelessness will be diminished.

2. To seek to achieve savings elsewhere

There is a requirement for Neighbourhoods to make savings and as such all

budgets must be considered including those that may have an adverse impact upon vulnerable people. It is considered that this modest saving can be achieved without significant impact upon the services ability to continue to support vulnerable people in the community.

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

Costs and Budget Summary

- 5.1 The saving proposal is less than 1% of the total budget for the area of service affected. Table 1 provides details of the to Reduce Voluntary Sector grant to Homelessness Prevention services

Table 1

	Savings 2019/20 £k		Savings 2020/21 £k		Total savings £k	
	On-going	One off	On-going	One off	On-going	One off
Employees						
Other Costs	4				4	
Income lost (<i>show as a minus</i>)						
Net savings	4				4	
Additional income generated (<i>show as a positive figure</i>)						
Total savings	4				4	
Implementation costs						
Total savings less implementation costs	4				4	

Risk and Policy Implications

- 6.1 Risk Implications

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

6.2 Voluntary Sector Impact –

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

- Risks in reduction of access to interventions and services for homeless people, people at risk of homelessness and rough sleepers
- Voluntary sector services less able to support the council in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping in the Borough
- Increase in number of people at risk of sleeping
- Undermining the partnership that the council has developed with voluntary sector.

6.3 Legal Implications

6.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.4 Equalities Impact

6.4

The following equality/community issues arise from the issues raised in this report as set out below:

All sectors of the community can be affected by Homelessness and although the demographic continues to broaden to include people from all parts of the community, vulnerable people are still the highest portion of people that are at risk.

Both services work with excluded client groups including those that are excluded from other provision within the Borough. Both 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 detailed Equality Impact Assessment is provided at Appendix 1.

Consultation

7.1 The council will seek the views of all interested parties including stakeholders, services directly affected and service users that may be affected. This will be carried out through the BRHAIN partnership and the strategic lead for Homelessness will invite representatives from service users to meet to enable them the opportunity to provide their views.

7.2 The Council must ensure that it remains open minded throughout the consultation period to all alternative proposals and expressions of interest.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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8. n/a	
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Appendix 1

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Proposal Title: Review of Voluntary Sector Grant to Homelessness Prevention services

Stage 1: Initial Screening
Directorate: Neighbourhoods
Service: Strategic Housing Services
Officer completing EIA: Jolley
Other officers involved in completing EIA:
Date of Assessment: 28th June 2018
Name of policy to be assessed: Voluntary Sector Grants
Is this a new or revised policy? New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/>
What is the purpose of the policy? Reduce VSG to Homelessness prevention partners
Are there any other objectives?
Who is likely to benefit from the policy (key stakeholders)?
Is the policy relevant to equality? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(Answer yes if you think that the policy has equality considerations for example it has the potential to affect groups in different ways. If you have answered yes, proceed to question 1. If you answered no, move to the sign off section as no further assessment is required)</i>
What information do you have to inform this initial assessment?

What is the potential impact that the policy could have with regard to the protected characteristics?

(Identify whether the policy has the potential to impact in a positive or negative way or not at all. For negative impacts use the impact table to calculate a score based on the likelihood that an impact will occur and what the actual impact might be then determine whether it is a High priority (H), Medium priority (M) or Low priority (L))

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Impact Score (1-16)	Impact priority (H/M/L)	Neutral Impact
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy or maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving / ex serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Do any of your negative impact scores identify as high priority on the impact table?

Yes No

If you identify a negative impact as being **HIGH PRIORITY** you must complete a full EIA (stage 2 onwards)

4. How will you minimise/remove any negative impact that identifies as medium or low?

(Identify the actions that you will take to minimise or remove these negative impacts by completing an action plan as at Appendix 1)

5. Is a full EIA required?

Yes No

Lead Officer Signature:

Date:

Approver Signature

Date:

Stage 2: Full EIA

1. What data / evidence do you have to inform the EIA?

Age	Strategic Review of Homelessness 2015 RBC Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019 MH CLG P1E returns Performance Indicators
Disability	as above
Gender Reassignment	as above
Marriage or civil partnership	as above
Pregnancy or maternity	as above
Race	as above
Religion or belief	as above
Sex	as above
Sexual orientation	as above
Serving / ex serving members of the armed forces	as above
Carers	as above

2. What are the key messages coming from this data?

Homelessness can affect any member of the community and therefore potentially all groups are in scope.

3. What gaps are there in the data?

Services affected will be invited to provide feedback from service users that may be affected as part of the consultation process

4. What consultation feedback do you have to inform this EIA?

*Service Providers
Strategic Partners including BRHAIN*

Age	
Disability	

Gender Reassignment	
Marriage or civil partnership	
Pregnancy or maternity	
Race	
Religion or belief	
Sex	
Sexual orientation	
Serving / ex serving members of the armed forces	
Carers	
5. What is the overall impact that the policy is likely to have on different groups?	
Age	<p>Both 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Brentwood service users represent the full adult age group although they have seen a relatively high proportion of younger people new to the district as a result of acquiring leave to remain.</p>
Disability	<p>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.</p> <p>Mental Ill health both diagnosed and undiagnosed is prevalent amongst services users using both services.</p> <p>Services advocates, advises and supports numerous individuals often with multiple mental</p>

	<p>health issues and these services are often the only agency service users are not excluded from due to the nature of their challenging behaviour.</p> <p>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.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>Both 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.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	<p>Both 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.</p>
Pregnancy or maternity	<p>Both 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. Both 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. Research reflects that the life chances of young people and children can be detrimentally affected by periods of instability including homelessness or living in insecure environments. Brentwood links with the local Foodbank to provide support and help for households including pregnant women to access timely support.</p>
Race	<p>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</p>

	<p>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. Both 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.</p>
<p>Religion or belief</p>	<p>Both services operate an open door policy and will support individuals of all religious persuasions and faiths. The increasing diversity of the borough is reflected in the people that are accessing each of the services.</p>
<p>Sex</p>	<p>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</p> <p>Both services offer appropriate staffing for gender specific issues and Petrus run structured workshops based around health and wellbeing.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>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.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>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. RBC contributed to research undertaken by Albert Kennedy Trust that has identified young LGBT people at greater risk of harm and homelessness and this is reflected in the councils Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan.</p>
Serving / ex serving members of the armed forces	<p>Both 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 and Petrus are aware of some of the issues faced by Ex Armed Forces personnel and the disproportionate number recorded as homeless or sleeping rough.</p> <p>Both 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.</p>
Carers	<p>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.</p>

6. What are the conclusions from undertaking the full EIA?

Both services work with excluded client groups including those that are excluded from other provision within the Borough. Both 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 recognises the value of the voluntary sector partnership and recognises in the Homelessness Strategy 2016 -2019 the need to encourage and support closer working relationships between these 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.

7. Does the policy meet our equality obligations?

Yes No

Lead Officer Signature:	Ian Jolley	Date: 28th June 2018
Approver Signature		Date: 28th June 2018

Appendix 2

Consultation Action Plan

Proposal Title: Proposal to reduce Voluntary Sector Grants to Homelessness services

Type of Consultation:

Group affected	Method of consultation	Date (s) consultation activity to be delivered	Resource required	Venue	Targeted survey questions
All Groups	Council Website				
All Groups	Services affected will be asked to identify service users or their representatives to meet with RBC representative to discuss proposal	31 st July		TBC	