

REPORT TO PEOPLES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 7th September 2017

Report of: DIRECTOR

Title: SafeSleep 2016/17 and future plans for 2017/18 – INFORMATION ONLY

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Information only

1. What is the report about?

To provide members with review of the 2016/17 SafeSleep Shelter in Market Street, Exeter.

2. Recommendations:

The Executive note the contents of the SafeSleep report and the recommendations that will be used to inform future service delivery.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

The provision of the SafeSleep shelter attracted significant attention from the Public and media. This report highlights the successes and learning from the Shelter to inform future provision.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

The operational cost of SafeSleep was £60,000, although this does not take into account the cost of staff time in setting up rent accounts and processing Housing Benefit claims. The Council provides an annual budget contribution of £28,000 towards the scheme. The remaining £32,000 costs are met through rental income through housing benefit payments and grants from Devon County Council and the Exeter Community Safety Partnership. There is no recommendation to change the Exeter City Council budget contribution for 2017/18.

This year the service will be subject to a procurement exercise. The internal resources needed to monitor this and administer housing benefit to an external agency will be reviewed at the end of the scheme to compare to the 2016/17 experience

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no additional financial implications for the Council contained within this report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

Whilst there is no statutory duty to provide a winter shelter, there is government guidance about severe weather. The guidance advises that local authorities should have a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) for when there are 3 consecutive nights of sub-zero temperatures occur, or during times of wider extreme weather events. The Council uses Red / Amber weather alerts issued by Met Office to determine these thresholds. The guidance also highlights the option of extended winter provision. This is where a service is provided for a longer period to increase engagement and reduce the impact of services needing to respond at short notice. SafeSleep is an example of 'extended winter provision' as partners struggle to respond in an ad hoc emergency basis for SWEP. .

Moving forward we will be procuring this years' service in line with Council procedures, future years will be included within the future outreach contract which will be due to be procured in early 2018.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

No issues raised.

8. Report details:

Please see attached report from 2016-2017

Highlights:-

- SafeSleep opened on 21st December 2016 and closed after 90 nights on 20th March 2017.
- Safesleep provided 1909 bed nights of accommodation to 36 individual homeless women (25%) and 107 individual homeless men (75%).
- Occupancy averaged at 21 people per night with a recorded high of 31 and a low of 12.
- 78% of those accommodated had a Local Connection to Exeter (63%) or Devon (15%) 4 clients were non British EU Nationals
- Clients ranged in age between 17 and 73. With 76% of clients, where age was known, in the age range 18-44
- 65 clients (45%) achieved positive move on to more settled sustainable accommodation. 34 clients had negative outcome including returning to the streets, prison, hospital or death. 44 clients had unknown outcomes – predominantly moving out of area.

Lessons to be learned

The three most challenging aspects of delivering Exeter SafeSleep 2016-17 were:

- Failure to secure a venue for the service, with relevant planning consents until early December, after the project was due to have commenced. In future years a suitable building needs to be agreed no later than September allowing two month lead in to deliver a more effective service.
- Lack of onsite day facilities. This was not possible due to limits of the location and planning consents required. Ability to deliver some day services from a SafeSleep venue would increase client engagement, offer diversionary activity away from less positive behaviours, provide space for specialist agencies to come and engage with hard to reach clients and further contribute preservation of life and health during very cold weather. The additional benefit would also be that on site staff during the day could manage access for contractors and liaise better with services and delivery companies.
- Limited use of volunteers, again a feature of limited lead in time and changes in management of the Assertive Homeless Outreach Team, which occurred as the service was due to commence. Developing a good pool of trained and well supported volunteers would be an enormous asset to SafeSleep. With volunteers able to support staff with administration, housekeeping tasks and providing meals and also being able to work directly with clients through positive social activities, befriending and supporting. Volunteers are also valuable as a conduit for positive publicity across a wide cross section of society, creating further interest and buy in to valuable projects addressing key social challenges.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

Safesleep contributes towards the Corporate plan by meeting the following objectives:-

- Continuing to provide support to the community and voluntary sector to achieve a range of positive outcomes for our communities through co-design and co-delivery.
- Working with Partners to tackle rough sleeping
- Implementing homelessness Strategy
- Finding alternative models of temporary accommodation.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

There is a risk that future provision will not be viable due to lack of suitable venue or provider. The Housing Needs Team will continue to work with partners to secure viable options where appropriate.

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

SafeSleep is very much an inclusive service, it provides accommodation and support to people who do not usually receive services. The environmental and community safety impact was lower than the public had been concerned about due to the due diligence in the planning and management of the project.

12. Are there any other options?

No

Bindu Arjoon, Director

Report written by Chris Stocks, Housing Needs Strategy and Partnership Lead

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Exeter SafeSleep Project Report

Contact for enquires:

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