

## **HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report To:** Cabinet  
5 July 2016

**Subject:** INVESTMENT PLAN TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS 2016/2020

**All Wards**  
**Portfolio Holder for Planning: Councillor B Phillips**

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### **1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 This report presents an Investment Plan to help prevent homelessness in Hambleton for the period of 2016/2020. It seeks approval to invest £69,980 per annum for the next four years and to draw down a further £16,000 from already allocated 'one off funds' for three years from April 2017 for this purpose.
- 1.2 The Council has been in receipt of Homelessness Grant of about £70k per annum for many years. In 2013/14 Homelessness funding was no longer paid as a ring fenced grant and instead funding is provided within the overall Department of Communities and Local Government grant funding for the Authority however, the Government has encouraged local authorities to ensure it reaches front line services. Therefore, the Investment Plan to Prevent Homelessness is funded as part of the Council's revenue budget. A Homelessness Investment Plan was approved by the Council in 2013 which supported this approach but this has now expired and a new plan is recommended for approval.
- 1.3 The Council is managing the number of homeless presentations it receives through a focus on homelessness prevention. This work has delivered better outcomes for clients and led to a decrease in the requirement to retain dwellings for temporary accommodation from 19 to 11 units in the last 2 years reducing costs to the Council.
- 1.4 Homelessness law changed in 2012 to enable local authorities to discharge their homelessness duties by offering suitable accommodation in the private sector. Private sector housing has become an increasingly important tool for discharging the Council's homelessness duty. In 2015 the Council appointed a part-time private sector worker who has strengthened links with private sector landlords, finding accommodation for 55 people through negotiation and the use of bonds from the prevention fund.
- 1.5 The Homelessness Strategy 2015/2020 identifies the prevention of homelessness as being a key priority over the next five years. Actions to support this priority include provision of bonds and rent in advance, the relaunch of the Private Landlord's Forum, production of leaflets/guidance for landlords and tenants, support to the Citizen's Advice Bureau for professional debt advice, continuation of Rough Sleeper support and no Second Night Out funding, funding the Choice Based Lettings scheme and assistance in the allocation and management of the new Home of Multiple Occupation (HMO) and in similar future projects.
- 1.6 In order to address homelessness issues and ensure delivery of the priorities of the Council's approved Homelessness Strategy 2015/2020 it is proposed that an Investment Plan is agreed and implemented.

1.7 Critical elements of the Investment Plan include:

- Supporting current staff resources to ensure that customers receive a good and responsive service
- Continued support for a dedicated part time private sector worker. This post is currently funded on a fixed term basis for 2 years from April 2015 from a one off staff saving and funding provided via the County Homelessness Group. This sub regional funding will cease in April 2017 and further funding needs to be secured if the Council is to continue with this resource. This funding is proposed to be taken from the already allocated One-Off Fund of £55,050.
- Continued provision of a homelessness prevention fund to assist customers with bonds and to cover the costs of the properties leased from Registered Partners as temporary accommodation.

**Homelessness Investment Plan**

**Homelessness Budget**

	<b>Investment required 2016/17 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>	<b>2018/19 £</b>	<b>2019/20 £</b>
Housing Options Advisor – including on costs and redundancy provision	31,870	31,870	31,870	31,870
Net contribution to Rural Housing Enabler post*	500	500	500	500
Homelessness Prevention Fund	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
CAB Financial Inclusion Project	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Safe and Sound Homes	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Contribution to Choice Based Lettings infrastructure	3790	3790	3790	3790
Promotional material for private sector work	3340	3340	3340	3340
<b>Total per annum</b>	<b>£69,500</b>	<b>£69,500</b>	<b>£69,500</b>	<b>£69,500</b>

\*Contribution to Rural Housing Enabler is £6500 per year but the Council recoups £6000 per year administration charges for employing staff on behalf of the North Yorkshire, York and East Riding Housing partnership.

**One Off Fund (already allocated)**

<b>Investment required</b>	<b>2016/17 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>	<b>2018/19 £</b>	<b>2019/20 £</b>
Private sector worker	-	16,000	16,000	16,000

1.8 The Investment Plan will be monitored through the Strategic Housing Service Plan and through the annual monitoring of the Homelessness Strategy.

**2.0 LINK TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:**

2.1 The Council's main priority for homelessness is homelessness prevention and this is a priority upon which Homelessness Strategy is predicated. The Investment Plan will ensure that sufficient funding and resource is available to deliver this work in a targeted way. The continuation of the work of the Private Sector Worker will also enable the Council to make the best possible use of the available housing stock.

**3.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:**

3.1 The risk in not approving the recommendations is as follows:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Implication</b>	<b>Prob*</b>	<b>Imp*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Preventative action</b>
A key priority of the Homelessness Strategy- Preventing Homelessness may not be fully implemented as funding will not be ring fenced for key elements of prevention work	Customer service will be negatively impacted and the number of homeless preventions will decrease. The Council's ambition of Gold Standard will be jeopardised	3	4	12	Support continued provision of a Homeless Prevention Fund.
The Housing Options Team will not have a dedicated Private Sector Worker	There will be a negative impact on the good work that has been done in the past year which could result in demise of the Private Sector Landlord Forum, less private rented properties being made available and a lack of expert advice and information being available to tenants and landlords.	3	4	12	Continue to allocate funding to this post, subject to annual reviews.

3.2 The risk in approving the recommendations is as follows:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Implication</b>	<b>Prob*</b>	<b>Imp*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Preventative Action</b>
The budget allocation decreases or ceases	Insufficient funds are available to deliver all the elements of the Investment Plan	3	4	12	The budget allocation is reviewed each year. If the budget declines there will be a need to prioritise which elements of the Investment Plan are to be implemented. If budget funding ceases substantially or entirely there would be a need to cease the programme early or apply to the One-Off Fund for top up if the work remains a priority.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

4.1 Overall the financial impact of the 'Investment Plan to Prevent Homelessness' will be as follows:-

<b>Financial Impact</b>	<b>2016/17 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>	<b>2018/19 £</b>	<b>2019/20 £</b>
Total cost of homelessness prevention plan	<b><u>69,980</u></b>	<b><u>85,980</u></b>	<b><u>85,980</u></b>	<b><u>85,980</u></b>
Financed by revenue budget	<u>69,980</u>	<u>69,980</u>	<u>69,980</u>	<u>69,980</u>
Contribution from the already allocated "one off fund" (subject to annual review)	=	<u>16,000</u>	<u>16,000</u>	<u>16,000</u>

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 There are no legal implications regarding this report.

#### **6.0 EQUALITY/DIVERSITY ISSUES**

6.1 This Investment Plan will increase choice and access to housing for customers in our communities. It will also assist those on lower incomes for whom access to housing in the private rented sector would otherwise be difficult, because of the savings required to cover the costs of bonds and payment of rent a month in advance.

#### **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

7.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet approves and recommends to Council that:-

- (1) Members approve the proposed Investment Plan set out in paragraph 1.7 of this report; and
- (2) £16,000 be transferred from the already allocated budget of £55,050 from the 'One-off Fund' annually for three years from April 2017 to fund a dedicated part-time private sector worker subject to yearly review.

MICK JEWITT

#### **Background Documents**

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