

Guidance Note

Review of Move on and 'Pathway' provision in Southampton

Introduction

1. Prompted by the availability of Homes England funding – such as the 'Move on Fund' - SCC is now reviewing both current and future move on requirements in the city for the longer term, with a view to creating a better flow through commissioned (and non-commissioned) supported housing services.
2. This document is intended to function as both a 'Position Statement' and a steer for the desired direction of travel in this process up until March 2021, when the Move On funding initiative is scheduled to end. It therefore sets out basic principles by which the council can objectively justify its support for 'Registered Providers' and any other interested providers to deliver move on provision in the city on a fair and transparent basis.
3. SCC will now apply this structured approach towards all funding and provision opportunities - including charitable and other funding sources - to ensure that these are not merely opportunistic, short term expedients, but that they functionally interface with longer term strategic and commissioning/pathway aspirations for the city, in terms of sustainably meeting need. It is therefore unlikely that providers or initiatives that have seriously underperformed or failed to deliver in the past will be supported.
4. The underlying principles behind this document is that all current and new partner providers need to commit to complementary and collaborative working in the city as far as practicable, and that all relevant funding opportunities for move-on provision that arise, such as Home England's current 'Move-on Fund' and 'Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing Programme', should be proactively pursued.
5. However, SCC will assess all future bids and proposals by means of an internally constituted panel – the composition and nature of which will be confirmed at each appropriate time – and rate each submission in accordance with the context and criteria as set out and explained below. The need for a quick turnaround in this process is acknowledged.

Context

6. The main focus is to build on the existing successful provision for homeless families (temporary accommodation) and single homeless adults/young persons, or for analogous service users with low to medium needs.
7. In terms of the latter, and for ease of illustration, the phrase 'staged pathway' is where homeless service users move from assessment and intensive services (stage 1) into more independent accommodation (stage 2), and then into longer term independent accommodation (stage 3) which might be in the private rented sector or Social/Affordable Housing.
8. However, it must also be acknowledged that this linear approach may not fit all service users, as some will enter the process – and possibly remain for some time – at any of these

stages, and some might be ready to move straight from the assessment stage into more settled housing options without having to live in a hostel in the first instance.

9. As a pragmatic starting point, there are currently at least 155 homeless person bed spaces in the city across 4 hostels that are accessed via the Street Homelessness Prevention Team (SHPT). Of these – anecdotally - approximately 20% of occupants each year are probably ready to move into more independent living, and are therefore effectively ‘blocking’ this accommodation for others whose pathway needs are more suited to it, such as rough sleepers.
10. In principle, and aside from separate investigations into how the council and partner providers might match designated scheme voids to appropriate service users more efficiently, SCC therefore supports the development of up to 40 additional units of either shared or self-contained units each year. These new units will enable people to move through the pathway process from ‘stage 2 accommodation’ for example, and so enable others to move out of stage 1 accommodation, and so free this up for homeless persons.
11. Move on provision for other groups – such as mental health, LD, older and young persons – will need separate consideration, but again anecdotally, and purely as a pragmatic starting point, SCC would support the provision of up to an additional 20 units of move on accommodation, which might ultimately include a wide range of options specifically for care groups, as well as longer term independent accommodation which might also be in the PRS.

Provision Criteria

12. All move-on funding bids and/or pathway proposals must fit within the council’s suite of relevant strategies, such as:-
 - i. The adopted ‘Homeless Prevention Strategy 2018-2023’ - in particular, proposed schemes that “Maximise access to affordable and appropriate homes in the city throughinnovative opportunities to maximise homes in the city with a range of accommodation options to meet the diverse needs of our residents”
 - ii. Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2025 – eg proposed schemes that”support people to be more independent in their own home, and through access to their local community.....ensure that information and advice is coordinated and accessible.....and increase access to appropriate mental health services as early as possible and when they are needed” and include the appropriate level of support required.
13. In addition, proposals should
 - i. try to focus on strategic geographical areas in the city, while avoiding any over-concentration of similar schemes in the same localities
 - ii. have due regard to the sensitivities of neighbours and the general wellbeing of local communities eg by bringing ‘problematic’ former HMOs into use as better managed accommodation that meets Homes England/regulated standards,

- iii. avoid properties where the council has an over-riding strategic or operational interest, such as proposals to purchase houses which have previously been sold to occupants under Right to Buy legislation, or where the purchase might compromise wider regeneration proposals;
- iv. include evidenced-based need in relation to appropriate pathways for which the proposed scheme or initiative is intended to meet, clearly show how the needs of those within the accommodation will be supported, how the quality of the accommodation will be maintained over the appropriate period, and identify scenarios that meet specific need within this diverse range, such as shared household schemes that specifically cater for those service users whose long term needs are likely to remain better suited to a lesser form of independent living;
- v. normally avoid the risk of future additional revenue burdens on SCC eg by incorporating realistic exit/alternate use strategies in the event that relevant circumstances change, such as with housing benefit rules..
- vi. avoid over-reliance on maximum revenue generation (accepting that move on and temporary accommodation schemes often require more intensive – and therefore more expensive - housing management, and are therefore exempt from the usual benefit restrictions on rent levels) so that occupants rents and other housing costs, such as service charges, remain demonstrably reasonable throughout eg HB eligible rent and service charges remain within 125% of applicable LHA levels for non-commissioned ‘exempted’ accommodation, or within LHA levels for non-exempt accommodation where practicable;

Provider criteria

14. All current and future partner organisations must be prepared to ‘sign up’ to

- i. Allowing the council to carry out periodic property visits with due notice, and working with the council to jointly address any concerns arising from the condition of the property, scheme management, or from any support package deficiencies;
- ii. Collectively working together with the council over time to progressively quantify the range of move on accommodation needed throughout the city. Although this is challenging and unavoidably prolonged, it will better inform respective move on proposals going forward.
- iii. engender a genuine city-wide partnering approach to move on provision eg a continuing willingness to accept referrals from other providers or agencies in line with commissioning requirements (fully acknowledging that in context, providers are in competition to some extent, which may have unhelpfully worked against this principle of co-operation previously);
- iv. where appropriate, generally involve SCC at an early stage in the process, particularly where funding bids to Homes England are concerned, so that strategic fit, intended service users/support etc can be fully agreed in good time, and planning consent identified where relevant;

- v. reflect value for money in terms of the public purse eg only seeking available capital grant funding from SCC where this is demonstrably **essential** to achieve scheme viability in meeting a specifically defined priority need for the council - or exceptionally, as a modest incentive to encourage scheme location in a preferred area of operation eg SCC particularly wishes to encourage additional provision in the eastern parts of the city
15. In addition, all partners must be able to demonstrate an evidence-based track record of a successful, wider holistic approach to homelessness, into which new move on schemes or initiatives clearly complement, such as the substantive use of bond deposits to engage private sector accommodation and landlords, and reducing rough sleeping/begging through winter bed provision.

END

Version	Revision date	Expected revision date	Agreed on
1		March 2021	27.11.19

29 November 2019