



Thursday, 14 November 2024

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Rough Sleeper Initiative update

Report Author

Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing)

 sarah.mcqueen@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a comprehensive update on the future of the Change 4 Lincs team who are our rough sleeper initiative team hosted by South Kesteven. This report presents the future plans for our response to rough sleeping

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the latest update regarding the future of the Change 4 Lincs team

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Connecting communities
Housing
Effective council

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no financial implications arising from directly from this report, which is for noting.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy s151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report, which is for noting.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Change 4 Lincs is an initiative which has been set up to tackle rough sleeping across 4 local authority areas: South Kesteven District Council, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council
- 2.2 The team is hosted by South Kesteven District Council and was created by each district contributing their Rough Sleeper Initiative funding. The team was launched in October 2020 and funding is secured until March 2025.
- 2.3 The team consists of 8 team members who provide an outreach service, support service and access into the private rented sector. The team is managed by our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Manager but managers from the other three districts also provide support to help shape the service.
- 2.4 Regular Change4Lincs Strategic Partnership Meetings are attended by the district leads and operational meetings are held with the officers to discuss and plan actions for specific cases. This allows for the progress of the initiative to be reviewed, and feedback to be received from the partners.
- 2.5 Rough sleepers can be referred to Change 4 Lincs by each Local Authority Housing team as well as by the general public where a rough sleeper has been

spotted. The team then seek to visit the rough sleeper onsite to capture all relevant information, discuss their options and help to formulate a support plan

- 2.6 The support provided by the team is bespoke for each client dependent upon their needs. Support includes assistance with budgeting, benefit claims, signposting to mental health services and substance misuse services.
- 2.7 This is a transitional support service with the clear aim of supporting clients back into settled accommodation.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Change 4 Lincs was launched in 2020 and in 2022 the Council was awarded a 3 year allocation of Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to run the scheme until March 2025.
- 3.2. However, the Council has faced significant challenges in its commitment to deliver an effective service to a wide geographical area.
- 3.3. The outreach service is a key challenge. The Change4Lincs team travel across all 4 districts to visit rough sleepers where a referral has been received. The funding must cover the cost of travel which creates a significant budget pressure.
- 3.4. The Change4Lincs team is hosted by SKDC, good communication and frequent operational meetings have been developed with the other district councils, however the team does not have the opportunity to develop working relationships with the Housing Option teams at the other district councils to the same degree as they do at SKDC.
- 3.5. A further challenge is the cost of nightly accommodation as the team have some very complex cases so sourcing permanent accommodation can be challenging. This resulted in a high number of placements for long periods of time which caused significant overspends in 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 3.6. In 2023/24 the service model was amended to focus on the support element rather than the accommodation offer which enabled the Council to recover the overspends from 2021/22 and 2022/23. This has resulted in the Council having sufficient budget in 2024/25 to enable short term accommodation placements to be provided on a discretionary basis.
- 3.7. Despite having this dedicated team in place, over the past few years there has been a gradual increase in the number of rough sleepers across all districts which

is consistent with national figures. The following tables shows the number of rough sleepers between 2017 and 2023.

District	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
South Kesteven	4	3	7	5	2	7	9
North Kesteven	1	2	1	1	0	1	2
South Holland	5	6	12	6	5	7	10
West Lindsey	0	1	1	1	2	2	6

- 3.8. The Council would like to move away from the Change4Lincs model and explore opportunities to utilise future RSI funding to create a bespoke service for the district which would meets the needs of Rough Sleepers and improves integration with the Housing Options team. The team would continue to work alongside Lincolnshire District Council colleagues which would ensure that best practice continued to be shared. desire
- 3.9. The future of the RSI funding and not yet been announced by Central Government which creates challenges when planning future service delivery. The 4 district councils included in the Change4Lincs Partnership have therefore been developing plans on the assumption that the current funding structure will be extended for a further 12 months.
- 3.10. If this is the position, then SKDC will still receive the funding as the approved accountable body and confirmation would be required from government regarding the underlying cancellation to enable to funding to be distributed between the District Councils.
- 3.11. Update will continue to be provided to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding future funding and the Change4Lincs Initiative.