

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 4 September, 2017

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services

Section 180 - Voluntary Funding for Homelessness Outcomes

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Cabinet with details of the outcomes achieved by Council funded voluntary sector homelessness schemes which assist the Authority to prevent homelessness and to discharge its statutory duties.
2. To seek approval to continue to support services that positively impact on the lives of those affected by homelessness through Section 180 funding.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the outcomes achieved by the projects managed by the Tabernacle Home Access Team and Llamau.
2. That the Director of Environment & Housing be authorised to pay Section 180 funding to the Tabernacle Home Access Project (£5,000) and Llamau's JIGSO Project and Supported Lodgings Project (£18,000) for the financial year 2017/18.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To ensure that Cabinet is fully informed of the important role these projects play in supporting the Council's homelessness service.
2. To ensure the continuation of the Section 180 schemes detailed.

Background

3. Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 empowers local authorities to give assistance by way of a grant or loan to voluntary organisations who assist homeless clients on matters relating to homelessness within their area. For example providing advice for young vulnerable people and giving bonds to people to access private rented sector housing.
4. It is a requirement of Welsh Government that support services be included within Supporting People Programme (SPPG) and that Section 180 funding must only be provided to agencies who fall outside the criteria for SPPG funding.

5. Since 2005/06 the Council has provided Section 180 funding to the Tabernacle Home Access Project and Llamau who both provide additional homelessness prevention services to homeless people in the Vale.

Relevant Issues and Options

6. Given the continuing introduction of Welfare Reform measures and the introduction in April 2015 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, homelessness presentations are increasing. This is due to the duty on the Council to provide advice, assistance and support to all eligible households who have a housing need and who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days of their presentation. Therefore the Council increasingly needs to explore alternative delivery models to assist in discharging its duties which include developing and continuing partnerships with the voluntary sector.
7. Tabernacle Baptist Church Home Access was first established in 1993 and continues to provide valuable housing advice to potentially homeless households. This excellent work is also recognised and supported by Welsh Government. In 2016/2017 the project received 97 new referrals for housing assistance and continued to support a further 105 existing clients. Throughout the last financial year 84 bonds were being managed of which 12 were new bonds issued during the year, 3 were for households with children, 7 were to single households and 2 were to couples without children, thus further relieving the demands on the Council's Housing Solutions Service and resources.
8. Since 2005/06 the Council has provided Llamau with a grant of £12,000 per annum in support of their JIGSO Project which provides mediation and support to young people and families in crisis. Historically, the Council has also provided £6,000 annually towards a furniture scheme which assists the Vale's homeless young people to access basic home furnishings in order to set up their new home.
9. In 2014/15 Llamau requested that out of the total £18,000 funding the £6,000 formerly used for the furniture scheme be transferred to their very successful Supported Lodgings Project because of the preparatory work required for the pending new homelessness prevention duties. This was agreed and led to a significant increase in the temporary accommodation resources available to the Council which assisted in the alleviation of Bed & Breakfast use.
10. Due to the success of this service, it was agreed that this £6,000 grant continue to be provided for the Supported Lodging Scheme for future years.
11. Llamau in partnership with the Housing Solutions and Vale Children Services Team assist the Council in meeting the requirements of the Southwark Judgement by ensuring that young people in the Vale of Glamorgan continue to receive the best and most appropriate support and assistance. The Southwark Judgement is case law that obliges children's services to provide accommodation and support to homeless 16 and 17 year olds.
12. A steering group made up of officers from Housing, Housing Solutions, Social Services, Youth Offending Service, Llamau & Gwalia has been created to develop and monitor the services. This group identifies and find solutions for gaps in provision to ensure the young people of the Vale have the tailored support needed to help them to manage the diverse range of challenges they experience. An action from the group was to develop a specific Young Persons Accommodation Panel. This group now exists and meets every 4 weeks to map and discuss the young people currently

accommodated, new referrals and the accommodation resources available that includes the Supported Lodgings Scheme.

13. The Supported Lodgings Scheme continues to be an essential support and accommodation resource which provides appropriate temporary accommodation. It ensures that both housing and life skills support is available to help prepare the young people for independent living. Although the initial target was to secure 30 supported lodgings units a lower demand for placements has meant it has been revised and the need is now to maintain the total number of units at 24 made up currently of 22 occupied units plus 2 maintained for emergency presentations.
14. Despite the slight reduction in the number of supported lodgings units required to manage demand across the Vale, a reduction in the Council's contribution would not be justified as £18,000 is only a contribution towards the full costs of the management of the scheme as well as towards the excellent mediations services the Llamau provide the Housing Solutions Service. The cost of providing these services is a lot higher than the current S180 contribution the Vale of Glamorgan provides.
15. The continued support of these organisations and services helps prevent additional caseloads for Council staff and provides specialist, bespoke advice and support services to residents of the Vale of Glamorgan.
16. The new Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 placed a duty on the entire Council to ensure that people in need of care and support receive the right help at the right time to improve their well-being and protect them from harm. This means identifying and assessing children who need care and support as early as possible, helping them to use the strengths in their families and resources in their communities to provide help and support, and intervening at a stage which prevents needs becoming critical. In addition, as Corporate Parents of children who are looked after, it is the Council's responsibility to keep them safe, to make sure their experiences in care are positive, and to improve the access they have to opportunities for them to succeed in life.
17. The Corporate Strategy & Action Plan for Children & Young Persons a collaborative approach to improve the general well-being of children and young people who, for whatever reason, need care and support. The on-going support of our partners is vital to the success of the Strategy particularly around the provision of suitable affordable housing options. The S180 Funding assists both Llamau and Tabernacle Home Access Teams to create these additional housing options for some of the more vulnerable households in the Vale.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

18. The funding for the Tabernacle Baptist Church Home Access Scheme and the Llamau Projects is included within the Council's Funding estimates for 2017/18.
19. The provision of the Section 180 funding to voluntary organisations will enable the costly statutory obligations to be delivered in a more cost effective way.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

20. The Section 180 funding will promote community stability ensuring that the Council is able to utilise a range of tenure options across the Vale of Glamorgan and particularly in areas of high demand.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

21. The provision of the Section 180 funding to voluntary sector organisations will enable the Council to fulfil its statutory homelessness duties set down in Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Crime and Disorder Implications

22. The development of effective homelessness services across the Vale of Glamorgan will positively impact on the lives of those threatened with homelessness, and to help to protect the most vulnerable from crime.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

23. The provision of Section 180 resources to the voluntary sector partners will enable the Council to ensure its statutory homelessness service complies with the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which is focussed on addressing one of the most acute forms of social exclusion in Wales.

Corporate/Service Objectives

24. This report is consistent with the Corporate Plan 2016-2010;
Wellbeing Outcome 1: An inclusive and safe Vale
Objective 2: providing decent homes and communities

Policy Framework and Budget

25. This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

26. No members were consulted as there are no proposals within this report that would affect a specific ward.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

27. Homes & Safe Communities

Background Papers

Part 2 Housing (Wales) Act 2014

Vale of Glamorgan Local Housing Strategy 2017-2020

Vale of Glamorgan Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2015-2018

Corporate Strategy & Action Plan for Children & Young Persons who need care & Support 2016-2019

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Officers Consulted

Committee Reports

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