

Rough Sleeper funding and activities

SYNOPSIS

This report seeks to provide Committee with information on current rough sleeper issues within the Borough; to seek approval for the use of grant funding provided in relation to Rough Sleeping within the Borough; and to seek approval for the use of General Fund reserves to fund capital expenditure to create a night shelter within the Council’s housing stock, to be managed by a third party.

1. Relevant Background Details

In September 2017, OCPC approved a Rough Sleeper Policy with the stated aim of ending rough sleeping within the Borough. The causes of rough sleeping are of course complex, and achieving the stated Policy aim is a clear challenge for the Council. Council Officers, primarily within the Housing Options and Neighbourhood Warden teams, have worked hard to engage with rough sleepers and support them into settled accommodation. Despite this, and in common with both the country and countywide experience, numbers of rough sleepers have continued to rise:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	2	10	9	10	6	4	28
% Increase/ Decrease	-	+400%	-10%	+11%	-40%	-33%	600%

Naturally, the headline figure for CBC of an increase of 600% (from 4 to 28) between 2017 and 2018 is concerning, but there is context to that increase. In 2017, Corby Nightlight was open on the night of the count, which meant their guests were not counted, as not technically “rough sleeping”. Perversely, this low figure placed the Council in a worse position in bidding for funding as we were unable to evidence an issue. In 2018, Nightlight was not open, hence the increase.

Most recently, the closedown of the Corby Nightlight winter night shelter has seen the following outcomes achieved in an intensive period of work with residents of the shelter prior to its closure on 28 April 2019:

HOUSED	19
INELIGIBLE	5
ENGAGING & REQUIRING ACCOMMODATION	1
FAILING TO ENGAGE / REFUSED HELP	9
TOTAL	34

OCPC may be pleased to note that the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is being reviewed and updated (this is being led by CBC in conjunction with the other three local authorities within the proposed North Northamptonshire unitary area) and will be submitted for Committee approval in September 2019. In advance of this, the Council is leading on the creation of a Rough Sleeper Strategy Delivery Group (CBC, statutory agencies, CCG, NCC, volunteer groups, faith groups) to ensure partners are collaborating and coordinating their rough sleeper activities with a first meeting of the Group planned for late June 2019. As at 02 June 2019, it is believed there are around fifteen persons rough sleeping within the Borough.

2. Report

The Government has announced a number of rough sleeper initiatives and made available funding for local authority bids. The Council has bid for funding from the Cold Weather Fund; Rough Sleeper Initiative Fund; and the Rapid Rehousing Pathway. This report will discuss the outcome of each in turn.

Cold Weather Fund

This was a successful application – following a period of severe weather, where CBC accommodates rough sleepers regardless of priority need, the Council can apply for a refund of up to £4,000 in respect of the expenses it has occurred.

Rough Sleeper Initiative funding (RSIF)

This was a successful application based on the “Housing First” model with a total one-off award of £115k. This model aims to accommodate rough sleepers, with support following on from that, rather than attempt to resolve social issues whilst rough sleepers are “on the street”. There were two elements to the Council’s bid, tabulated below for Committee consideration:

	Description	Amount awarded
1	Professional support (e.g. consultancy) for the set up and running of a new 24/7 shelter in Corby to provide emergency first stop housing for rough sleepers. Emphasis on LGBTQ+, non-recourse to public funds, ex armed forces and other vulnerable groups	£50k
2	Operational delivery of the Housing First Model through outreach support and co-ordination of housing resources. a) 1x post Outreach Worker (to enable more rough sleeper engagement with the Council) – hosted by Housing Options b) 1x post Move-On Coordinator (housing support role facilitating moves into permanent accommodation) – hosted by 3 rd party 2x £30k for salaries; £5k for equipment/mileage.	£65k

This report therefore seeks OCPC approval for the addition of a temporary post to the establishment for twelve months (2a above). Due to the funding being a “one-off”, a temporary post is felt appropriate. This report also seeks Committee approval for the appropriate amendments to budgets to reflect the funding award, and to proceed with invitations of “expressions of interest” in relation to point 1 and 2b above. The criteria used in the award of the funding will be aligned to the Council’s corporate aim of ending rough sleeping in the Borough and, depending on Committee’s decision, may overlap with the

expressions of interest sought in relation to the management of the night shelter proposed below.

Budget forecast based on above

	2019/20	2020/21
RSIF	£115,000	-
Expenditure	£90,000	£25,000

Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding

The Council submitted a bid for conversion costs for Dorking House, a former Safe Haven temporary accommodation property on the Kingswood estate that had become vacant.

It is a large unit, created through a previous conversion of separate dwellings (82, 98 & 100 Dorking Walk) into one large unit and a small flat, originally for a homeless hostel called Dorking House. This closed in 1995 and re-opened in 2002 as a “User Support Service”, which converted to the “Safe Haven Project” in 2006. This project provided a supportive environment for individuals over the age of 18 years (living or residing in Northamptonshire) who had short term or enduring mental health problems or who deemed themselves in crisis. There was room for short term overnight stays if necessary but this was not its main purpose. Since November 2016 the property has been vacant.

In terms of other properties within the Council’s housing stock, Dorking House is unique as it is already substantially converted into a suitable property. There are no other properties within the Council’s commercial property portfolio that are vacant and suitable for conversion. Cannock Road gymnasium was previously proposed as a night shelter and the property remains suitable for this, but conversion works were estimated at £600k when this was being looked at by Corby Nightlight; it could be noted that the gym would be suitable for conversion into four dwellings and is being scoped for inclusion into the Council’s Housing Development Programme.

Dorking House can be remodelled into 3 self-contained units:

1. A 16 bed dormitory style night shelter that has 5 separate dorm rooms, an office and female/male bathing facilities and.
2. A 3 room flat with 2 double rooms and 1 single room, shared kitchen and bathroom facilities and office space.
3. A 2 room flat with 1 double room and 1 single room and shared kitchen and bathroom facilities.

There is also some external space, including 3 gardens and a balcony.

The plan is to have a flexible offer that will deal with immediate homelessness to resolve or prevent rough sleeping and have a medium solution of more independent housing where support can be put in place to deal with issues that prevent service users from sustaining their own tenancies.

Service users would be on the following pathway:

1. Night shelter – triage and assessment/support – the “First Stop”
2. Shared flats – move-on, supported shared accommodation – the “Second Stop”
3. Move on into permanent accommodation: private rented sector or social housing

Following a technical appraisal and consultation with the Private Sector Licensing and Planning teams, it was felt there were few barriers to the conversion works. Additionally, the Council’s own in-house Repairs and Maintenance Team would be able to undertake the conversion works and the works can be done with the potential for re-conversion into dwellings at a future date. Given the need for the shelter to be operational for winter 2019,

with a target of 31 October 2019, a planning application has been made, pending Committee approval.

It is felt a third party management organisation would be best placed to deliver the management of the accommodation, and the Council would require them to demonstrate they were self-sustaining (the Council would only levy a peppercorn rent on no more than a five year term to assist this) through the invitation of expressions of interest.

Regrettably, the bid was unsuccessful, with the feedback being that other projects were preferred with a sooner start date (it is predicted the works would be complete by 01 October 2019).

It is likely a third party would be deterred from managing the project if it was required to make capital investment into the building. Given the potential of this building, and the stated policy aim of ending rough sleeping, OCPC may wish to consider the use of £130k of General Fund reserves to deliver this project.

Budget forecast based on above

Capital works	2018/19
Building works – internal conversion	£50k
Kitchens and bathrooms	£32.5k
Fire Safety works	£18.5k
Security and CCTV	£5k
External works	£15k
Professional fees	£9k
Total	£130k

3. Options to be considered (if any)

In relation to the RSIF, as this is an award of funds based on the criteria quoted in the application, options are limited in respect of the use of the grant funding. However, in relation to the Dorking House conversion, OCPC may not wish to pursue the conversion to a night shelter and supported shared accommodation. The property could be converted into: one x three bedroom house, one x 2-bedroom flat, and one x 1-bedroom flat, and let as part of the Council's housing stock at an affordable rent.

Alternatively, OCPC may wish to proceed with the conversion works in part (for example, of the shared supported accommodation but not the night shelter). Committee may also want to consider managing the accommodation in-house, although may be mindful not only of the budgetary pressure this may cause, but of the reluctance of rough sleepers to engage directly with the Council (a third party providing the management reduces this).

4. Issues to be taken into account:-

Policy Priorities

Corby Borough Council has committed to its Corporate Service Plan. The use of the funding is consistent with achieving ambitions around the theme of *Promoting Healthier, Safer and Stronger Communities*. The Council is committed to homelessness prevention and eliminating rough sleeping.

Financial and Best Value

These are contained within the report. The expenditure will be contained within the £115,000 RSIF. The works to Dorking House will be funded by drawing down £130k from General Fund reserves to support the capital expenditure. This will come from the medium term

financial reserve of £6.5 million referred to in the budget monitoring report elsewhere on this agenda.

Risk

The proposed use of the RSIF is consistent with the criteria for its award. It is likely that recruitment to the temporary posts referred to will be achieved. Similarly, it is likely that voluntary and/or charitable organisations will express interest in governance support, hosting a post and/or running a night shelter. Robust, sustainable business plans supported by effective governance arrangements will be required to provide assurance of third parties to deliver to the Council's aims and objectives.

The works will be delivered in-house, with a business case provided by the Repairs and Maintenance Team. The project will be managed by the Housing and Neighbourhood Service's Departmental Management Team.

Legal and Data Management

The Council's Homelessness duties are primarily defined by the Housing Act 1996 with additional duties from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The relationships with third parties who are delivering services for the Council will be contractual defined. A privacy impact assessment has been completed and assessed as having no significant issues - a Data Sharing Agreement will be completed as part of the contractual relationship.

Performance Information

Homelessness performance, including rough sleeper numbers, is reported through returns to central government and through the Council's performance management framework. Any third parties who are delivering services for the Council will be required to supply appropriate performance information.

Sustainability

No negative issues identified.

Human Rights/Equalities

Assessment attached. The Council seeks to ensure that these activities do not discriminate on any grounds.

Community Safety

Police comment on the property layout and design will be sought. CCTV will be provided as part of the capital works.

5. Conclusion

Corby Borough Council is committed to ending rough sleeping in the Borough. These recommendations cover a range of activities that seek to ensure an appropriate response to the current challenges to delivering an end to rough sleeping, bearing in mind a best value approach to the use of the Council's resources and of government funding.

Recommendation

The Committee:-

- i) notes the information provided on current rough sleeper issues within the Borough;
- ii) agrees to the proposals for the use of the £115k Rough Sleeper Initiative Fund and the changes to budgets accordingly;
- iii) agrees to a temporary increase in establishment of one post for 2019/20 and 2020/21;

- iv) agrees to the allocation of £130k from the General Fund reserves for the capital works to Dorking House and to continue with the appropriate planning and licencing applications; and
- v) agrees to the invitation for expressions of interest in relation to:
 - a. funding to support governance arrangements
 - b. hosting a Move-On Coordinator; and
 - c. the management of a night shelter

Background Papers

None

External Consultations

The Kingswood Neighbourhood Association has been approached for comment and invited to view the property.

List of Appendices

Appendix One: Copy of Equalities Impact Assessment

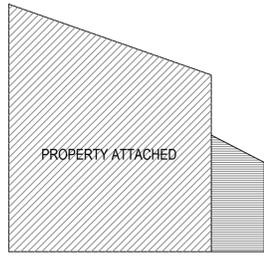
Appendix Two: Dorking House conversion floor plans

Officer to Contact

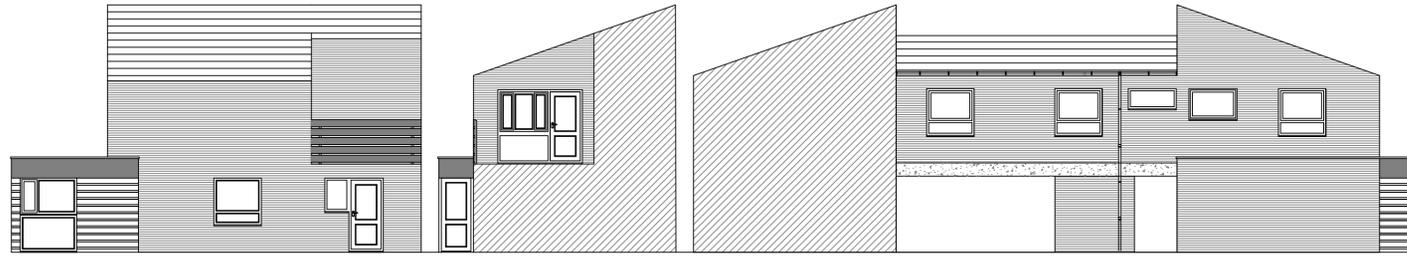
Andrew Cotton, Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, 01536 464003.



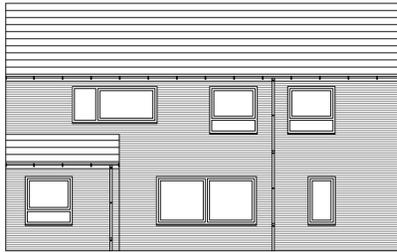
82 DORKING WALK EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION



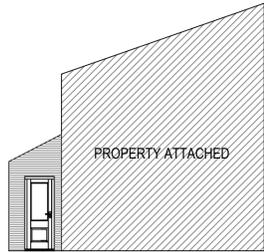
82 DORKING WALK EXISTING LEFT HAND ELEVATION



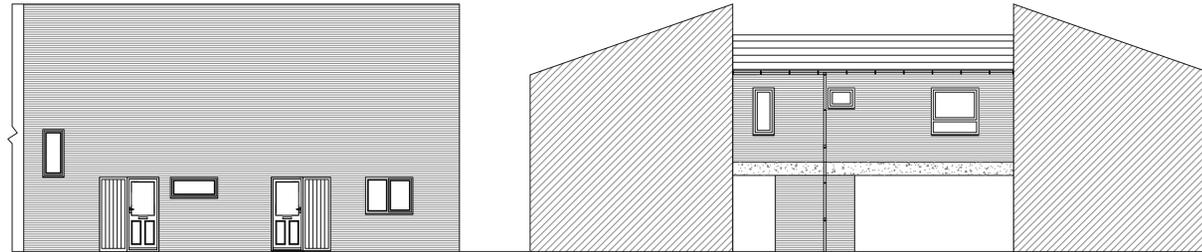
EXISTING ELEVATIONS OF No.98 & No.100 DORKING WALK



82 DORKING WALK EXISTING REAR ELEVATION



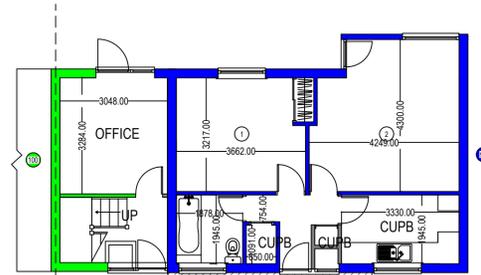
82 DORKING WALK EXISTING RIGHT HAND ELEVATION



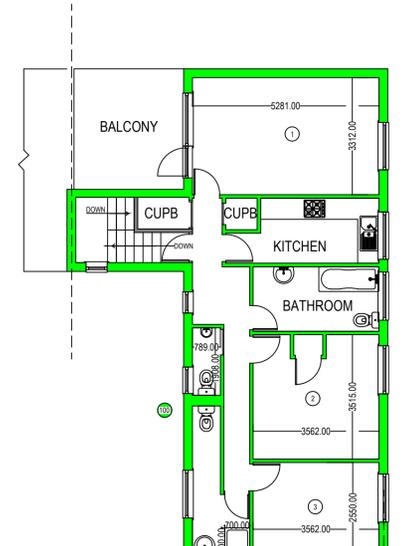
EXISTING ELEVATIONS OF No.98 & No.100 DORKING WALK



82 DORKING WALK PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION
ALL OTHER ELEVATIONS AS EXISTING

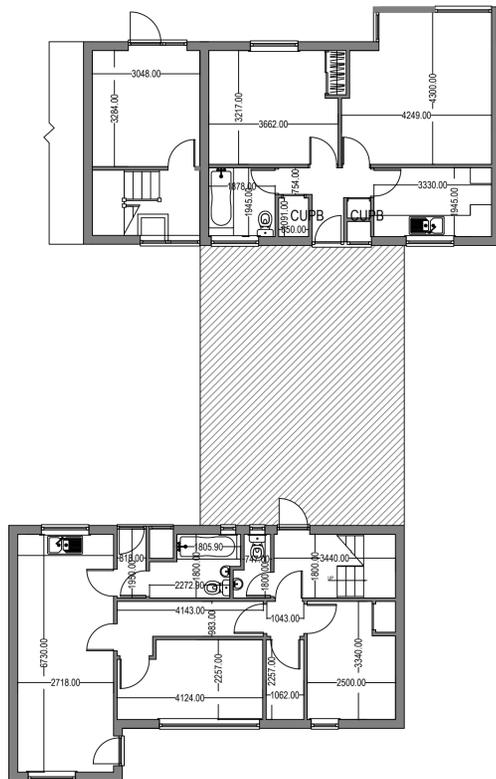


PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR

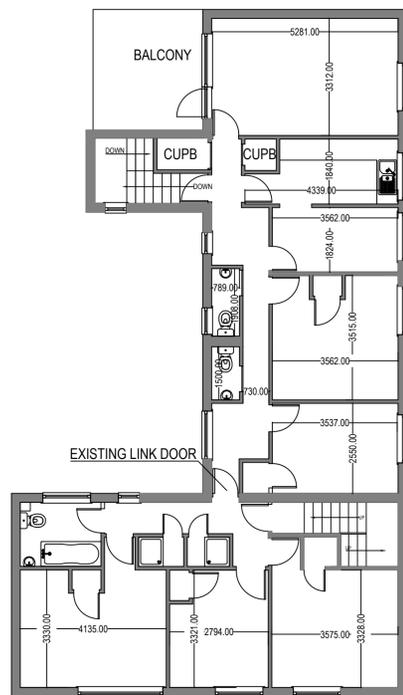


PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR FLOOR

- 82 DORKING WALK
- 100 DORKING WALK
- 98 DORKING WALK



82 DORKING WALK EXISTING GROUND FLOOR



82 DORKING WALK
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR
PLAN WITH
DOOR LINKING No.82 TO
No.100

Drawing: ELEVATIONS & FLOOR PLANS			Project: DORKING HSE CONVERSION
Date: 14/05/19	Drawn By: DH	Comp Ref:	 Fleming Road Depot, Earlstrees Industrial Estate, Corby, NN17 4SW
Scale: 1:100	Drawing No.: CBC - 01	Rev No.: 1	

Equality Questionnaire

This Equality Questionnaire must be completed to enable a decision as to whether a full Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out. For further information see the guidance notes.

Name of the policy, strategy or project:			
Use of Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding and conversion of Dorking House			
Department and Section:			
Housing and Neighbourhood Services			
Lead Officer:		Contact Details:	
Andrew Cotton		✉ andrew.cotton@corby.gov.uk	
1.	What is the main purpose of this policy/project? Eliminate rough sleeping within CBC: a. Use of RSIF b. Conversion and creation of a night shelter		
2.	Who are its beneficiaries? Rough Sleepers, the Council, partners.		
3.	Has consultation on the proposal been undertaken?	Yes	No
			x
	Who will be/has been consulted with: Discussion at Rough Sleeper Strategy Delivery Group in June planned		
4.	Has this consultation highlighted any negative impact?	Yes	No
			x
	If yes, please state the negative impact:		
5.	What systems are in place to monitor its impact? Data is held on rough sleepers in the Council's area. This allows reporting on equality issues. Third party management organisation will be required to hold data.		
6.	Does the proposal contribute towards one of the 3 aims of the General Equality Duty?	Yes	No
		x	
	Explain (general equality duties are listed at the foot of this form): The policy promotes positive action to overcome disadvantage and discrimination.		
7.	Which group is likely to be affected by the proposal? Explain how each protected characteristic is likely to be affected, or not as the case may be.		

		Yes	No	Comments (<i>include data source</i>)
Age			x	Balanced against housing need, it commits to long term provision of older persons accommodation
Disability		x		Rough sleepers are disadvantaged at accessing medical care. Incidences of mental health issues and substance abuse are known in the rough sleeper community.
Sex			x	
Marriage & Civil Partnership			x	
Pregnancy & Maternity			x	
Race			x	
Religion or Belief			x	
Gender Re-assignment			x	
Sexual Orientation			x	
Socio Economic		x		The Council's intention is to end rough sleeping through ensuring offers of accommodation and support
Community Cohesion		x		The Council's intention is to provide stable, long-term affordable housing
8.	What impact does the proposal have on the Equality Target Groups?	No Impact		Positive Impact
				x
<i>*Negative Impact or Impact Unknown will require a Full Impact Assessment to be completed.</i>				
9.	Proceed to a Full EIA?	Yes		No
				x
Lead Officer Signature: 			Date: 13.05.19	

**On completion submit copies to: Policy Officer (Equalities & Diversity)
Democratic Services for Committee with policy (if relevant)**

General Equality Duties:

- 1 Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 2 Advance the equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. Eg:
 - a. minimising disadvantage,
 - b. taking steps to meet their needs,
 - c. involving them with activities where normally people with that PC participation is low.
- 3 Foster good relations between people that share a relevant protected characteristic and those that do not.