

**RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION**

Ref. (for Democratic Services only)	Date	Decision Maker	Decision	Reason for Decision	Alternative Options Considered	Conflicts of Interest Declared (and Dispensations granted by Standards Committee)	Consultation with Ward Member(s)	Subject to Call-in? Yes/No
	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2017	Cllr Paul Honeywood	That the Portfolio Holder agrees to fund Derek Crossfield House, using a proportion of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, for an initial period of 12 months and if value for money considerations are satisfied to approve future funding whilst such value for money considerations are met and a budget is available.	The scheme provides a supported housing resource that helps to meet housing needs in the area and prevent and reduce homelessness. Without the scheme the Council would incur additional costs in supporting residents who might otherwise be homeless.	A) to not fund the scheme – 8 tenants would be made homeless and the scheme would not be available for future referrals all of which would be at a financial cost the Council.	None	No	Yes
<b>URGENT DECISIONS ONLY (if non-urgent go to "Agreement to Decision" below):-</b>								
	<b>GENERAL EXCEPTION APPLIES?</b> (Rule 15 Access to Information Procedure Rules)		NO	if yes, has at least 5 clear days notice been given to the Chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee?		YES/NO		
	<b>SPECIAL URGENCY APPLIES?</b> (Rule 16 Access to Information Procedure Rules)		NO	if yes, has the Chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee's consent been obtained?		YES/NO		
	<b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL-IN APPLIES?</b> (Rule 16i Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules)		NO	if yes, has the Chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee's consent been obtained?		YES/NO		
	<b>URGENT &amp; OUTSIDE BUDGET OR POLICY FRAMEWORK?</b> (Rule 6 Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules)		NO	if yes, why is it not practical to convene a quorate meeting of full Council				
				if yes, has the Chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee			YES/NO	

**AGREEMENT TO DECISION:-**

Signed:-



Cllr Paul Honeywood – Portfolio Holder for Housing

Date:-

12/5/17

Delegated Power Reference (in Part 3 of the Constitution) - Part 3.39.

Original signed copy to be retained by Service.

Electronic copy to be sent to Janey Nice, Democratic Services Officer, for inclusion of relevant details into decisions list.

<b>Key Decision Required:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>In the Forward Plan:</b>	<b>No</b>
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## PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING

9<sup>th</sup> May 2017

### A.1 FUTURE FUNDING OF DEREK CROSSFIELD HOUSE, ST PAULS ROAD, CLACTON

(Report prepared by Tim Clarke)

#### PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

##### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To recommend that the portfolio holder agrees to provide funding for the Derek Crossfield House supported housing scheme for an initial period of 12 months and for this to be reviewed in the context of VFM savings achieved.

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Derek Crossfield House is a supported housing scheme dedicated to pregnant and new mothers aged 16 – 25.
- The scheme is operated by Family Mosaic but is due to close following reductions in Housing Related Support Funding by Essex County Council
- The Council has been asked by Family Mosaic if it would be in a position to provide funding to keep the scheme open.
- Given the type of service offered and the level of demand the view of officers is that the scheme be funded initially for one year using a proportion of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant as it is probable that the Council would have a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for the current and future users of the facility.
- As the cost of providing alternative temporary or longer term accommodation is likely to significantly exceed the costs of supporting this facility it is intended to review future funding arrangements on a VFM basis.

##### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That the Portfolio Holder agrees to fund the scheme for an initial period of 12 months and if VFM considerations are satisfied to approve future funding whilst such VFM considerations are met and a budget is available.**

#### PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

##### **DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

The decision will contribute to the Council's community leadership role, will sustain two jobs and keep eight bed spaces available for vulnerable residents of the district.

##### **FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK**

###### **Finance and other resources**

The support elements of the scheme have previously been funded via Essex County Council using Housing Related Support money as part of a wider contract for supported housing services for young persons. The contract has been re-tendered at a reduced scale meaning that this scheme will no longer be supported.

Family Mosaic has indicated that funding of £53,000 is required to continue the level of support that is provided at the scheme. This covers 58 staffing hours per week at £17.52 per hour delivered via a part-time manager and a part-time support worker. Maintenance and service costs are met through the tenant's rent payments which are mostly covered through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

The Government recently announced a new funding stream for local housing authorities - the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG). When announcing the grant in March this year DCLG indicated that it will provide £402 million over the next 2 years; £186 million for 2017/18 and £191 million 2018/19, with a further £25 million set aside for London boroughs to work together to provide accommodation for homeless families in the capital. The emphasis of the new grant will be to provide flexibility to authorities in providing intervention services, moving away from exclusive funding for procurement and funding of temporary accommodation.

The Council has been allocated £273,272 for 2017/18 and £309,438 for 2018/19. Allocations beyond 2018/19 have not yet been announced.

The grant replaces the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee (TAMF) which has been paid to Councils through Housing Benefit subsidy claims to cover the additional costs of providing and managing temporary accommodation. The rate paid was £60 per week per property. In Tendring 28 units of accommodation, managed through a private sector leasing scheme by Colne Housing, attracted this funding equating to £95,000 per year. It has been agreed that the FHSG allocation will be netted down by £95,000 to cover the shortfall in subsidy leaving the remainder to be spent on homelessness prevention. It is proposed that part of this funding is used to provide the £53,000 needed to keep the scheme in operation. Funding the scheme using this grant means that no additional cost pressures are created within the general fund.

No other resources are required other than the staffing resource needed to draw up a grant agreement and to monitor the performance of the scheme throughout the year.

The scheme is unique in the type of service that it provides to young mothers who might otherwise be unable to sustain a tenancy putting them at risk of homelessness which then places a pressure on the Housing Options service and other public sector services.

In the last year there has been a 60% increase in homelessness cases in the district and the loss of eight bed spaces would be significant in contributing to a further rise.

There are currently eight households in the scheme and if they became homeless and we had to provide each with accommodation, this would be for a minimum of six weeks so a potential cost of £16,800.

More importantly, having a scheme such as this assists us in preventing homelessness. In 2016-17 we were approached by 52 households threatened with homelessness as a consequence of parents asking them to leave where the applicant was under the age of 25 with one child or pregnancy. The scheme is intended for this client group and although not all were moved into the scheme, the cost of providing each household with emergency

accommodation up to six weeks could have been £109,200. Supporting the scheme is therefore a cost effective way of reducing temporary accommodation costs.

### **Risk**

Officers have not identified any significant risk associated with the proposals and providing the scheme continues to operate in the manner it has done up to now it will continue to be a valuable housing resource for a vulnerable group.

Committing to funding the scheme for a year initially does not commit the Council financially beyond 2017/18 and leaves options open for future years. This will be considered as part of a VFM review of the arrangement.

### **LEGAL**

A grant agreement will be put in place between the Council as funder and Family Mosaic as recipient.

There are no other legal considerations and the FHSG will be being used in accordance with the grant determination.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.

No significant issues have been identified.

## **PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

Derek Crossfield House is owned and managed by Family Mosaic, a Colchester based Housing Association.

The information below, provided by Family Mosaic, explains how and who the scheme operates for:

Derek Crossfield House is a supported housing scheme for young people aged 16-25 (single people and couples) who either have care of a baby or are expecting a child. There are 8 self-contained flats plus communal facilities on site including a garden, playroom, kitchen and laundry. All the flats are supplied with a cooker, fridge freezer and carpets.

Applicants are referred by a variety of agencies and are assessed by Tendring District Council as being homeless and both needing and wanting the kind of support that we can offer. We liaise with the Council and other agencies including Social Care and Health in an Allocations Panel to prioritise applications and normally have a short waiting list.

We aim to offer temporary housing and support to young people whilst they gain confidence as parents and learn the skills to live independently and manage a permanent

tenancy. To achieve this, from the time that they arrive with us we begin helping them to plan for the day when they finally move on.

Their length of stay depends upon individual needs. All the properties are let on Assured Shorthold Tenancies which means that young people have an initial tenancy for six months which can be extended up to two years if required. Once we are all agreed that they are ready to move on, they can be considered for suitable properties by Tendring District Council.

The support which we offer depends upon individual needs and is reviewed regularly to make sure that it reflects progress towards moving on to more independent living. We encourage tenants to get involved in a wide range of activities that develop their confidence and help them gain the skills needed for the future as well as building on the skills that they already have.

We help with all the aspects of living in an independent home, including day-to-day living skills. We also support tenants in their role as a parent.

Before tenants move in, they will have been assessed to make sure that we can offer them the support they need and that they meet the criteria mentioned earlier. This means that we will already have agreed with them some of the support needs which they might have.

When they take up their tenancy we allocate a member of staff who will be their Key Worker. This Key Worker will work with them to create a Support Plan detailing what support needs they have and how we can help them while they are living in the scheme. When their Key Worker is not around, other staff are available to offer them the support that they need.

We review support plans on a three monthly basis to make sure that they are working and to pick up on other things with which young people might need assistance. They can ask for us to review their support plan at any time if they feel that their needs have changed or that the plan is not working.

The support they receive from us is a condition of the tenancy agreement and they must be willing to work with us to ensure that the support is delivered. If they do not do this then their tenancy may be terminated and their place offered to someone who wants and will benefit from the type of support which we are able to provide.

Support staff liaise with a variety of statutory and voluntary agencies, including Children's Centres, Colleges, Training Providers, Health Visitors, Social Care etc. to ensure that a full range of support is available to tenants both inside and outside the service.

**The following are brief notes regarding those tenants who have moved on in the past couple of years:-**

**S L 22/9/14 – 30/10/16**

Original needs regarding debt and poor extended family relationships. After the birth of her baby, further concerns about neglect led to her baby becoming subject to a Child in Need (CIN) plan. Also, there were concerns about serious domestic abuse between her and her partner.

Staff supported them to live more safely as a couple and promoted improved attachment with the baby. They were also supported to manage their finances and to address her partner's gambling problems. Also supported to maintain standards of hygiene in their flat and general housekeeping.

They were able to move on in a planned way via TDC into social housing.

**S S 6/7/15 – 9/6/16**

Originally some issues with budgeting and housekeeping. She was supported to address these and also to gain a place at college to do Maths and English. She subsequently did a painting and decorating course. Staff supported her to access childcare to allow her to return to education.

She was able to move on in a planned way via TDC.

**Z L 3/6/13 – 15/12/15**

Her baby was originally subject to a CIN plan due to attachment issues. Following support from DCH staff, the CIN was subsequently removed.

She moved on following a dispute with another tenant. Staff supported her to locate private rented accommodation.

Notwithstanding this neighbour dispute, she had been supported to address serious Domestic Abuse issues during her time at DCH and was also paying her bills (both of which were big issues when she first came to the scheme). This enabled her to maintain a private tenancy after she left and she also gained employment.

**K J 20/4/15 – 4/10/15**

Original needs to do with never having managed a tenancy before, bereavement following the death of her mother, attending appointments, claiming benefits and poor confidence and self-esteem.

Staff also identified domestic abuse from her partner.

She was supported to gain some self-confidence and she was able to end the abusive relationship.

She returned to her parental home in a planned move.

**B G 5/5/14 – 5/7/15**

Original needs were to do with never having managed a tenancy before and practical issues such as budgeting, benefits etc. She was also suffering from bereavement following the death of her father.

Staff also supported her to maintain a healthy relationship once her partner joined her in the scheme. In the end she was able to end the relationship.

She moved on in a planned way via TDC.

**J H 9/6/14 – 7/6/15**

Original needs to do with her child's disability. Also, she and her partner had never managed a tenancy before.

There was serious domestic abuse from her partner and staff supported her to gain a non-molestation order. She then found a new partner and there was further domestic abuse.

Staff raised concerns with social care and a Child Protection (CP) plan was put in place. Following injuries to her child and concerns about her ability to stay safe, she moved in a planned way back to her mother.

**S G 18/11/13 – 26/4/15**

Original support needs around maintaining a tenancy, budgeting and parenting.

Staff supported her to access childcare to return to education. Her baby was subject to a CIN plan, but this was removed before she moved on following staff support.

Moved on by TDC in a planned way

**C W 25/6/13 – 4/5/15**

Original needs were to do with maintaining a tenancy and emotional support as a new mum. She worked with support staff to address these issues and improve relationship with her family.

She was supported to move back to her family home in a planned way

**C C 21/7/14 – 5/4/15**

Original needs were to do with parenting and never having held a tenancy before. She moved in with her partner and staff quickly identified domestic abuse issues. She was supported with confidence building and maintaining a healthy relationship.

She was able to end the relationship and remained in the tenancy alone.

She moved on to rent a property off a family friend. Staff supported her in this move, although it was not advised and was ultimately unsuccessful.

**S D 14/4/14 – 5/4/15**

Originally subject to a CIN plan but this was removed following staff support. Most of the

other support offered was around in-work benefits as her partner gained employment while they were with us.

Moved by TDC in a planned way

**E B 15/9/14 - 14/12/14**

Surrendered her tenancy after her child was removed. Only with us 3 months and never engaged with support.

**E S 16/12/13 – 31/8/14**

Original needs were tenancy sustainment, housekeeping and budgeting. She suffered from Asperger's Syndrome which made communication difficult. Her unborn child was subject to CIN, but this moved up to C P after the birth.

She was supported to make contact with Autism Anglia for specialist intervention. She received lots of support around attending appointments, claiming benefits and budgeting money. Also parenting support alongside the CP plan.

She moved in a planned way to private rent in Harwich so as to be closer to her family support network.

**Of these 12 move-ons, 11 were planned and one was unplanned. One planned move-on was not successful.**

The following figures collated by the Council's Housing Options service show the number of housing applicants who had a priority need through pregnancy and are the type of household we would continue to place there:

2014-15 – 80

2015-16 - 61

2016-17 – 39

On the basis of this evidence and the financial evidence above officers believe there is a clear and continuing need for the scheme in helping to discharge our duties as a local housing authority. If the scheme were to close there would be no other supported housing of this type available. Without the support offered by the scheme the tenants might be unable to sustain a tenancy elsewhere which adds pressure to the Housing Options service which may end up helping them several times over in the course of a few years, both financially through rent deposits and with advice. Since 2010, the Council has provided 19 residents at the scheme with accommodation in the affordable rented sector. Of this figure 17 remain in the affordable rented sector which would demonstrate that the residents are given support whilst at the scheme to become "tenancy ready" and be able to sustain a tenancy.

The proposal is to fund the scheme for an initial period of one year allowing time for the impact of ECCs revised supported housing contracts to be assessed. A further report will be presented in December to consider whether any further funding should be offered.

## **CURRENT POSITION**

The Head of Housing and the Housing Needs and Strategic Policy Manager recently visited the scheme and met with staff and residents. This followed on from a meeting with a Director and the Operations Manager from Family Mosaic who run the scheme. The building was found to be in good order and the staff knowledgeable and committed.



The current tenants have been served with a Notice to Quit giving them two months notice of the closure of the scheme. Some tenants have already visited the Housing Options service for advice and have been advised to wait until a decision on future funding has been made by the Council.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION**

None

**APPENDICES**

None

