



ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

**Record of Officer
Executive Decision**

Ref. No: DforC/013/17-18

Date of Decision: 26th February 2018

If you have any questions about this decision, please contact 01903 221006 or email heather.kingston@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Record of Decision: Allocation of Going Local Grants 2017/18
Decision taken by: Mary D'Arcy, Director for Communities
Declaration: I do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest, or conflict of interest.
Delegated authority: The authority is delegated to the Director for Communities, in consultation with the two Executive Members for Health and Wellbeing, to "develop a new strategic grants programme, to be aligned with partners in ways that maximises the partnership whilst meeting the strategic priorities for the Councils." - source .
Decision: To allocate £40,000 of Going Local Grants to fund a new independent, specialist Housing Advice service delivered by a collaboration between Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau (CASSCA) and Worthing Churches Homeless Project (WCHP). This new service will specifically be for referrals from Going Local, the multi-partnership social prescribing service, and from Adur & Worthing Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help team (IPEH). This service will start from April 2018. Context: Going Local is a social prescribing pilot that has been active across six surgeries in Adur and Worthing since November 2016. The pilot enable doctors to refer patients to non-clinical services, typically provided by not-for-profit organisations such as charities, voluntary groups and statutory agencies. It allows patients to access much needed services and support for their wider holistic needs, many of which have an impact on their health and use of health services, but cannot be met through health routes. The aim of the pilot is to reduce demand for health services and improve outcomes for patients. Metaphorically, the service can be described as providing a prescription of a different kind that is in addition to, or instead of, a medicine or treatment.

Going Local is hosted by Adur and Worthing Councils; they employ Community Referrers who take referrals directly from GPs and work closely with individuals - to support and connect them with organisations that may assist and provide ongoing networks to create personal resilience and wellbeing. To date, there has been over 600 referrals and **one third** of these have been housing related. This provides the evidential base for looking at how this need can be addressed and demonstrates the impact that housing related issues and homelessness can have on a person's health and wellbeing. Whilst individuals are seeking support from their GP for clinical issues, a key determinant of their health issues may also be related to their housing and financial situation.

In January 2017, Adur and Worthing Councils' Joint Strategic Committee agreed to change two existing (participatory budgeting) grant streams to better align to the Councils' priorities around Health and Wellbeing - and to support Going Local.

During the first year of the pilot, feedback has been gathered from those being referred, third sector organisations, not for profit groups and statutory agencies. Initially, it was thought that referrals from Going Local may place additional pressure on existing services, however what has emerged is a stronger need to address identified gaps in advice provision. Housing, and related financial advice, is one of the areas where suitable advice services are limited and there is no single service locally that specialises in housing advice across all cohorts.

In January 2018, Adur & Worthing Councils circulated an [Expression of Interest](#) paper inviting organisations to apply for funding to deliver housing advice in Adur and Worthing. One return was received, a collaboration between Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau ([CASSCA](#)) and Worthing Churches Homeless Project ([WCHP](#)).

In February 2017, this partnership was invited to meet with Adur and Worthing Councils' Housing Solutions Manager and the Communities and Third Sector Lead. The strengths of the partnership and their proposal, that were discussed in this meeting, were:

- Together they bring specialist housing advice knowledge to individuals and families.
- CASSCA would provide an experienced paid adviser for 20 hours per week, with a further 10 hours case-work. WCHP will provide additional support to clients referred to the project, through the provision of hostel and supported accommodation and proactive support including substance misuse.
- The advice worker would sit within the Housing Team at Adur and Worthing Councils, would be integrated into this team and work in a person-centred approach focusing on the right outcome for them - not focusing purely on legislation.
- Subject to agreed confidentiality agreements, the project would openly share information and data between the Housing, Going Local and IPEH teams to ensure the best outcome for this individual and their family. There would be strong reporting measures in place and regular reviews of the service.
- CASSCA and WCHP envisage supporting 280 clients per annum and would play an important role in personalised plans for individuals in order to support the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act which comes into force in April 2018.
- Both will work in a holistic manner, and CASSCA will review financial statements and entitlements so as to maximise income for individuals in order to secure and/or maintain their tenancy.

- CASSCA will provide Housing Advice across the board - ranging from Private Rented, RSL and Adur Homes tenancies, to mortgage arrears;
- CASSCA and WCHP have the potential to save taxpayers' money as they avoid homelessness - for example, in Horsham alone last year, 60 people have been prevented from losing their homes. At a cost of roughly £4,000 per eviction, this has saved the local Council £240,000.

A Public Services Contract will be put in place with clear objectives, outcomes and reviews.

Going Local is a pilot with funding to November 2018 and although it is anticipated this will be extended, it is subject to formal agreement between the parties. In order to ensure the widest reach of the service, it is also proposed that this Housing Advice is open to families supported through the WSCC Integrated Prevention and Early Help Team (IPEH). This is a team, which is also hosted at Adur and Worthing Councils via West Sussex County Council, provides interventions and support to families - and a number of the challenges these families face are also housing related.

Key Decision: No, due to the value of the spend.

Reason for the Decision:

CASSCA and WCHP presented a sound proposal and have a strong track record of delivering (albeit separately) similar projects in Crawley and Horsham District Council areas - CASSCA for over seven years.

Both organisations bring additional value that is above and beyond the contract, namely a variety of offers and services within their respective organisations. Both recognise that a joined-up, holistic and person-centred approach is the only way this project can really be successful.

It is assessed, subject to ongoing monitoring, that the service can provide excellent value for money. The total cost of the project is £40,000 and will aid 280 people = £142.86 per person, which compares well to other similar services. Crucially there is an immediate and quantifiable potential saving of £4,000 to the Councils if they avoid eviction or homelessness, and further savings to the Council if emergency or temporary accommodation is avoided.

There is an evidenced need in Adur and Worthing for independent, specialist housing advice and this contract will be used as a platform to try different approaches to reducing homelessness in subsequent years.

Alternative Options Considered:

The initial proposal inviting organisations to apply was sent directly to Shelter, Brighton Housing Trust (BHT), United Response, CASSCA and WCHP. Community Works, the local infrastructure support organisation, also distributed it to their Health and Wellbeing networks.

In some ways it was a surprise that there was only one returned application, but equally it also makes it abundantly clear there is a service-gap and perhaps organisations needed more

support in starting up and delivering this new service in Adur and Worthing. More work will be done in this area by the Communities and Third Sector Lead.

Shelter responded to say although they were interested they no longer had enough local knowledge to deliver this.

Additionally, before reaching the decision to use the money to support housing advice, a consideration was to offer smaller grants to lots of organisations but it was felt that this would dilute the impact as grants of around £5,000 would not go very far within an organisation.

Other Matters Considered:

Legal Advice and Issues	✓	Financial Advice and Issues	✓
Sustainability Issues	✓	Equality Issues	✓
Community Safety Issues	✓	Human Rights Issues	✓
Reputation	✓	Risk Assessment	✓
Health and Safety Issues	✓		

Consultation:

The Councils' Communities and Third Sector Lead worked closely with the Community Referrers from Going Local and consulted with the Executive Members for Health and Wellbeing before commencing approaching housing charities. Community Works were also consulted as well as colleagues across the Communities directorate - mainly in Housing Solutions and this strong relationship will continue to ensure success of the project going forward.

Background Papers:

The Councils' Joint Strategic Committee [report](#) from January 2017.

The Expression of Interest [paper](#), January 2018.

Call-in: The call-in deadline for this decision will be 5:00pm on 5 March 2018



Signed:

Name: Mary D'Arcy

Dated: 26 February 2018

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