

Subject:	Support for people accommodated at Kendal Court Newhaven		
Date of Meeting:	16th January 2019		
Report of:	Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Jerry Aldous	Tel: 01273 296949
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Ward(s) affected:	(All Wards);		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 Following a Notice of Motion, an interim report on the support needs of people residing in Kendal Court came to Housing and New Homes Committee in September 2018. The independent organisation undertaking the survey of needs has now been able to complete this work. The summary results from the combined survey are set out in Appendix 1 with the full survey report in Appendix 2. In addition there were other questions that members raised and are addressed in 3.3

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing & New Homes Committee note the contents of the report.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In July, a cross party Notice of Motion was submitted calling for an independent review of the support needs of people residing in emergency accommodation at Kendal Court. Due to the short timescales, an interim report was presented to Housing and New Homes (H&NH) committee in September with the completed survey report to be presented in January.
- 3.2 In addition further information was requested by committee which is collated as follows:
- The ages of the people who died and how long they had lived at Kendal Court.
 - When was the previously commissioned support service cut.
 - For those people who had been banned from accommodation in the city, what was being done where the council had a duty of care
 - When was Healthwatch commissioned to undertake the survey

- Financial implications – the Government had announced £2m would be provided to the council. Could some of this be used to put in places where there were vulnerable people.
- Exploration of Laundry facilities
- Exploration of providing bus passes to people.

3.3 Each point is addressed in turn below:

3.3.1 The ages of the people who died and how long they had lived at Kendal Court. Seven people have died whilst being resident at Kendal Court. Two of these died over a year ago and it is now difficult to extract those details, as they were not recorded for homeless statistic purposes. Since then we have recorded our own local records, which are as follows:

Age	Length of residence
34	1 year
70	2 years 2 months
37	1 month
36	1 month
53	2 weeks

3.3.2 When was the previously commissioned support service cut?

The Housing support service ended in December 2015. We retained two posts based in the credit control team to focus on assisting people to obtain benefits to pay their rent and retain their accommodation.

3.3.3 For those people who had been banned from accommodation in the city, what was being done where the council had a duty of care.

In these circumstances, we will place people into accommodation outside the city. This would be either in accommodation we have contracted such as Kendal Court, or spot purchase accommodation. We refer to Southdown who provide some support for people placed out of the area in Newhaven or Eastbourne. If people need to attend support or health services in Brighton, a travel warrant or bus pass is issued to enable them to attend their appointments if necessary. Where they meet the requirements to be priority A, under the Temporary Accommodation Allocation policy we will prioritise them for accommodation in the city as soon as we have availability that they are not banned from.

3.3.4 When was Healthwatch commissioned to undertake the survey?

We felt it was important that this piece of work be undertaken by an independent organisation and so we commissioned Healthwatch to undertake an independent survey on 18 September 2018 following H&NH Committee.

3.3.5 The Government had announced £2.0m would be provided to the council for social services. H&NH Committee asked whether some of this be used to support vulnerable people in emergency temporary accommodation?.

The £2.0m provided to Health & Adult Social Care from central government for vulnerable people is to ensure adult social care pressures do not create

additional demand on the NHS and to improve our social care offer for older people, people with disabilities and children. This will include mental health services but not exclusively. It cannot be used for other purposes.

3.3.6 Exploration of Laundry facilities

We have explored how laundry facilities can be provided and have identified the following options:

- The owner builds an extension to house separate laundry facilities – this is not practical in the short term, as it will require planning permission and construction works initially, and then a plan to manage the facility. This is outside the scope of the specification for the accommodation and so would require additional financing. The contract is due to expire in March 2019 although we have enacted our extension for a further 6 months whilst we consider future procurement options.
- Individual requests for plumbing in a washing machine. Due to the layout of the facilities in the accommodation, space for a washing machine is restricted. However, this can be considered on a case by case basis.
- A local charity in Newhaven is looking to provide laundry facilities for rough sleepers. We understand this is a new initiative and there is very limited capacity but we will continue discussions to explore whether this service could be extended to residents in Kendal Court and whether this would require additional funding.
- Bus pass to enable travel to the nearest laundrettes at Seaford and Peacehaven. This would cost £4.72 return per person. If we provided all 50 residents with one pass per week this would cost £236 pw or £12,272 pa. There is currently no budget for this. In addition, there are concerns about the administration to enable this to happen set out in 3.3.8.

3.3.7 Exploration of providing bus passes to people

We have investigated the cost of providing travel warrants or bus passes to enable people placed outside of the city to more easily connect with services, friends and family. There are currently 125 households accommodated outside of the city as follows:

Kendal Court, Newhaven	50
Other accommodation in Newhaven	6
Peacehaven	20
Seaford	3
Eastbourne	46

Bus passes bought in bulk each cost as follows:

- Daily: £4.72
- Weekly: £25
- Monthly: £79

If a person has to make roughly three trips a week this would cost ($£4.72 \times 3 = £14.16$ pw $\times 125$ people $\times 52$ weeks) = **£92,000 pa.**

If people had to travel once a week this would be ($£4.72 \times 125 \times 52$) = **£30,700 pa.**

These figures will increase if there is more than one person in the household. However, not all people placed out of area require travel costs back into the city on a regular basis and so the estimated cost may be between these two

amounts. There is no funding for this currently. If the administration want to prioritise this spend,, new funding would have to be identified which would need approval from PR&G.

3.3.8 Risks of operating a bus pass scheme.

We currently operate a bus pass scheme to enable people placed out of the area to reach their accommodation when they have no finances. We therefore have processes in place to administer a basic scheme. However, there are difficulties in administering a more expansive scheme. There are risks around ensuring passes are appropriately distributed and not misused i.e. we would need to consider how passes were distributed to people away from the office or whether we issued several in advance in which case consideration would be needed as to how we monitored the use of the passes and that they weren't lost or sold.

3.4 The full independent report is contained in Appendix 2.

Highlights of the key findings are as follows:

- A total of 29 people responded to at least some of the questions
- 17 people state that they used some form of health, care or housing support in the past 6 months, 8 of whom state that they are unable to continue to do due to be being placed at Kendal Ct. See Q1and Q6.
- 13 people state that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their main support service and 4 people state they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, See Q7.
- 4 people obtain their main support service from Newhaven and 15 people obtain this elsewhere. See Q8.
- When asked a series of questions about their experience of living at Kendal Ct out of the average of about 18 people who responded to at least one of the questions there was a total of 55 largely positive responses and 51 largely negative. See Q12.
- 11 of the 24 respondents said they did feel safe at Kendal Court while 13 said they felt unsafe. See Q12.
- 7 people stated that they have not experienced any barriers to receiving services while 9 stated that they had.

4. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

In compiling the independent survey, Healthwatch engaged with the residents and management at Kendal Court.

5. **CONCLUSION**

The report is for noting following the notice of motion that called for further information relating to support needs of people placed in Kendal Court following a spate of deaths.

The survey report shows a wide range of responses, some of which are positive but also highlights that a significant number need some additional support. The

previous report at Committee today deals with the proposal to develop a support service for people in temporary accommodation and this will go some way to addressing some gaps identified by the survey. Where additional funding is required, this would need consideration by PR &G.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 6.1 The costs of providing bus passes to residents placed outside of the city in temporary accommodation, as outlined in this report, range from £10,400 per annum to give residents of Kendal Court once a week access to a laundry in Newhaven, to £92,000 per annum if all current residents placed outside the city are each given three daily passes per week. The report suggests that not all residents would require travel to the city
- 6.2 The report discusses the risks and controls required to operate such a bus pass system. Current cost estimates assume that managing this process would be met from within current resources.
- 6.3 Temporary accommodation is a housing general fund function. The current budget for temporary accommodation is forecast to overspend by £0.750m in 2018/19 (month 8 forecast) although this can be mitigated in the short term by use of one-off grant funding. There is currently a small budget allocated for bus passes which is fully committed and so there are no funds available for expanding this system and it is unlikely that this can be managed within current resources (by using underspends) as this budget is already under pressure. In order to fund this, new general fund resources approved by PR&G for 2019/20 would be required.
- 6.4 The Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Strategy 2019/20 report to PR&G on 6th December identified a budget gap of £2.15m. A request for funding required for bus passes as outlined in this report would add to the budget gap which must be closed in order to present a balanced budget to Budget Council on 28th February 2019

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 19/12/18

Legal Implications:

- 6.5 Under the Housing legislation, the key question is whether any offer of temporary accommodation is suitable. This is assessed on an individual basis.
- 6.6 There is to our knowledge no cases that have gone before the Court where laundry facilities are a feature. We do note that if for instance an individual was incontinent then the availability of laundry facilities might be a factor of suitability.
- 6.7 In certain cases (the main case being around a family with particular focus on children) travel distance was a feature. This involved accessing school and familial support networks. Again, the availability of support networks may be a factor to take into account on a case by case basis. Also of relevance would be alternate provisions in the area in which a person would be placed.

- 6.8 There should be an evidence-based approach to identifying factors around suitability.
- 6.9 The senior Courts continue to recognise the burden placed on local authorities in trying to identify local accommodation in cases of homelessness and in December confirmed that they will only reluctantly intervene with placements outside of the 'borough'. This is providing that there is in place a lawful local policy which explains why certain people are placed out of area and identifying the process to define who can and cannot be placed out of area. The Council has a policy, which has been approved by committee.
- 6.10 There is a process for anyone placed out of area to ask for a review of suitability.
- 6.11 The Care Act also makes provision for support for those with need.

Lawyer Consulted: Simon Court

Date: 12/12/18

Equalities Implications:

- 6.12 None

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.13 None

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 6.14 None