



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 29 January 2019	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title: **County Council Proposals to Discontinue Support Services**

Report Author(s): **Steve Nash (Housing Services Manager)**

Purpose of Report:	To inform Members of the County Council's intention to reshape and reduce support service provision.
Report Summary:	The Director of Public Health at Leicestershire County Council (LCC) has produced a draft model for homelessness and housing support which LCC's Cabinet agreed on 23 November 2018 should be moved to consultation. The draft model envisages the cessation of the Floating Support Scheme.
Recommendation(s):	<p>A. That Leicestershire County Council's draft model and the window for consultation be noted;</p> <p>B. That a formal consultation response to be submitted by the Director of Finance & Transformation following consultation with the Chair of this Committee be consented to; and</p> <p>C. That the Chair of this Committee writes to Leicestershire County Council asking them to publish the rationale behind their decision to maintain the Falcon Centre Hostel in preference to maintaining the Housing Matters Floating Support contract.</p>
Responsible Strategic Director, Head of Service and Officer Contact(s):	<p>Stephen Hinds (Director of Finance & Transformation) (0116) 257 2681 stephen.hinds@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Adrian Thorpe (Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration) (0116) 257 2645 adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Steve Nash (Housing Services Manager) (0116) 257 2662 steve.nash@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p>
Corporate Priorities:	Effective Service Provision (CP2) Wellbeing for All (CP5)
Vision and Values:	"A Strong Borough Together" (Vision) Customer Focus (V5)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources (CR1)

	Reputation Damage (CR4)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising directly from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising directly from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	Report entitled 'Development of a New Model for Homelessness and Housing Support' to Leicestershire County Council Cabinet meeting held on Friday, 23 November 2018.
Appendices:	None.

1. Housing Matters Floating Housing Support Service

1.1 'Housing Matters' provide intensive, one-to-one support through home visits, phone contact, drop-ins and/or group work. Support is focussed on helping people to achieve security and independence in their home and typically lasts for up to 9-months.

1.2 The scope of assistance includes:

- A person or household who may need help to move into and set up their new home;
- A person or household who is currently in temporary accommodation waiting for permanent housing; and/or
- A person or household who already have their own home but experience difficulties with:
 - Difficulties with budgeting;
 - Risk of becoming homeless;
 - Lack of essential furniture or household items;
 - Little or no income;
 - Looking for alternative housing;
 - Problems with managing household bills;
 - Rent arrears; and
 - Socially isolation.

1.3 Referrals are multi-channel, including from this Council's Housing Officers and Housing Options Officers.

1.4 The Table below shows the numbers of referrals received by the Housing Matters service for single people:

Locality	2017/18	Q1 & Q2 2018/19
Oadby & Wigston	12	5

Rest of Leicestershire	228	109
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- 1.5 The service is funded by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) and is delivered by Nottingham Community Housing Association and The Bridge (East Midlands).

2. Leicestershire County Council Draft Model

- 2.1 At its Cabinet meeting on 23 November 2018, LCC decided to move to consultation on a new draft model for homelessness and housing support. Consultation is likely to take place between January – April 2019.
- 2.2 LCC have included expenditure on homelessness support in their Early Help and Prevention Review (EHAP) which is tasked with saving £3.1million.
- 2.3 The draft model is estimated to achieve savings of £200,000.00 from an overall budget of £500,000.00
- 2.4 The draft model involves cessation of the existing Housing Matters service and the retention of the Falcon Centre Hostel which is located in Loughborough. Members will note that the Falcon Centre became the replacement for the South Wigston-located Kennedy House Hostel under a previous cost reduction exercise.
- 2.5 The draft model will see a redesigned community outreach model in line with LCC's Local Area Co-ordination (LAC) service.
- 2.6 The remit of the LAC Service would expand to include responsibilities around prevention of homelessness. A number of additional LAC's would be recruited (estimated at three).

3. Likely Impact for Borough Residents

- 3.1 The draft model expects that LAC's will onward refer Borough residents to other supporting services including District and Borough Council prevention services and substance misuse and mental health services.
- 3.2 Officers have raised concerns as to whether a referral to Housing Options could hope to replace the existing service.
- 3.3 The Council's Housing Options Team have seen a 215% increase in cases in Q1-Q3 of 2018/19 over the same period of 2017/18. In part, this is due to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 coming into force in April 2018.
- 3.4 The Housing Options team have neither remit nor capacity to provide any of the functions listed in paragraph 1.2 above, apart from helping those 'at risk of homelessness' and assisting people looking for alternative homes. Assistance is usually limited to advice, sign posting and assessment – it does not provide a practical onsite support worker.
- 3.5 Enquiries have been made with colleagues at other District and Borough Councils regarding their position. Of the three responses received, one is essentially in an identical situation to ourselves with no commissioned outreach services. Of the others, one Council has a Resident Support Team, which appears to replicate elements of the Housing Matters service, and the other had a limited service but targeted at their existing Council tenants.
- 3.6 The new proposed service will include assistance to families as well as single people.
- 3.7 If the draft model is implemented, a small number of Borough residents will cease to have

access to the valued Floating Support Service.

- 3.8 The likely worst case scenario of the service being discontinued will be an increase in failed tenancies across all rented tenures including Council tenancies. There will also likely be an impact on resident's health which will create additional costs to the 'health economy' (i.e. CCGs, Public Health, EMAS, hospitals etc).
- 3.9 LCC's LAC's have not been in contact with the Housing Teams at this Council, although they have contacted Officers in other teams. The Housing Services Manager is awaiting a response to an e-mail sent requesting urgent contact. It is not clear from the Cabinet paper of 23 November last whether LCC thinks that this Council has an existing resource which could provide all or some of the services currently provided by LCC.
- 3.10 If the existing Floating Support Scheme is discontinued, Officers are clear that this Council cannot provide either transitional support nor replicate the existing offering within this Council's current staffing resource.
- 3.11 Members are asked to consent to a formal consultation response being submitted by the Director of Finance & Transformation following consultation with the Chair of this Committee.
- 3.12 Officers recommend the consultation response outlines the parlous position that the suggested model places vulnerable tenants in the Borough in.
- 3.13 Officers also recommend the Chair of this Committee writes to Leicestershire County Council asking them to publish the rationale behind their decision to maintain the Falcon Centre Hostel in preference to maintaining the Housing Matters Floating Support contract.