

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Executive</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>22.3.2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Support Grant Delivery and Commissioning Plans 2021/22</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	<b>Cllr Alun Mummery</b>
<b>Head of Service / Director:</b>	<b>Ned Michael</b>
<b>Report Author:</b> Tel: E-mail:	<b>R.Arwel Jones</b> <b>(01248) 752064</b> <b>RArwel.Jones@ynysmon.gov.uk</b>
<b>Local Members:</b>	

<b>A –Recommendation/s and reason/s</b>
<p>1. To approve the recommendations of the IoACC’S Housing Support Grant Delivery and Commissioning Plans for 2021-22, and in so doing ensuring compliance with the Grant’s Terms and Conditions; and,</p> <p>2. To endorse the funding allocation for every Service area, as outlined on the Supporting People Commissioning Plan, and previously approved by the multi-agency Housing Support Planning Group.</p> <p><b>1.0 Reasons</b></p> <p>1.1 The Housing Support Grant is a policy framework and funding initiative by the Welsh Government, which is an amalgamation of three previously separate grants; Supporting People Programme, Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement.</p> <p>1.2 It came into being in April 2019 following the Welsh Government funding flexibilities pathfinder project. A Ministerial decision was made in October 2018 to form two grants from the Early Intervention, Prevention and Support grant (EIPS) work, separating the housing-related grants from non-housing elements for all local authorities. Consequently, from April 2019, the Welsh Government established a Children and Communities Grant (CCG) (encompassing Flying Start, Families First, the Legacy Fund, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, St David’s</p>

Day Fund, Communities for Work Plus and Childcare and Play), and a single Housing Support Grant (HSG) (encompassing Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement).

- 1.3 The HSG is an early intervention grant programme to support activity, which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation. The HSG does not fund the statutory duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, instead HSG funded services augment, complement and support the statutory service to ensure that the overall offer authorities provide helps people into the right homes with the right support to succeed. It supports vulnerable people to address the, sometimes multiple, problems they face, such as debt, employment, tenancy management, substance misuse, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and mental health issues. Support is person centred, aimed at supporting people to secure and maintain sustainable housing by addressing the mental health and substance misuse or other problems they face, helping to improve their health and well-being and/or helping them progress into, or nearer to, a job or training opportunity based on their specific circumstances.
- 1.4 The grant programme makes a significant contribution to the implementation of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which is focused on homelessness prevention. It also reduces or prevents the need for, often more costly interventions, by other public services including the NHS and/or social care for individuals and families and, in some cases, people who fall into the criminal justice system.
- 1.5 In a letter received from the Welsh Government in December 2021, it was stated that Anglesey's Indicative Allocation for 2021/ 2022 is to be increased from April 2021 by the sum of £ 856,722.50. This is the first increase in the grant for 5 years, with the new indicative award set at £3,571,720.50. In previous years the allocation has been set at £2,714,998, of which £2,643,866 was allocated to the Supporting People element, £64,923 for Homeless Prevention (non-statutory) and £6,209 for the purposes of the enforcement of Rent Smart Wales.

## **2.0 Background**

### **2.1 What does Housing Support Provision Include?**

### **2.2 Common types of Housing-related Support provisions include:**

- Assisting someone who is homeless or is at risk of homelessness to find somewhere to live, within 56 days of them presenting in such a situation.
- Providing a support package to enable the vulnerable person to maintain a

tenancy and mitigate the risk that the tenancy will break down and / or that the person will be evicted from the house.

- Providing support with rent arrears, debt management and budgeting skills
- Supporting the service user to claim welfare benefits and help and enable the individual to continue to receive the benefits that he or she is eligible to receive and deal with the relevant agencies.
- Supporting service users to keep their accommodation safe, e.g. explain how to lock their property and manage appropriate access.
- Encourage the service user to keep any appointments that are relevant to improving their ability to manage their own accommodation.
- Encourage and stimulating the service user to develop social skills and gain the necessary confidence to feel part of the community and to participate in activities of interest.
- Promoting, encouraging and stimulating service users to develop the necessary life skills such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes.
- Providing the necessary support to enable service users to access appropriate education, training and / or employment opportunities.
- Providing advice regarding move-on opportunities or opportunities for permanent housing.
- Engaging with landlords to find suitable and affordable accommodation, and also where disputes may occur, provide appropriate mediation and incentives to prevent unnecessary homelessness.

2.3 Amongst the Housing Support Grant requirements is the need to prepare both Delivery and Commissioning Plans to inform the Welsh Government and all partners and stakeholders of our commissioning intentions and priorities.

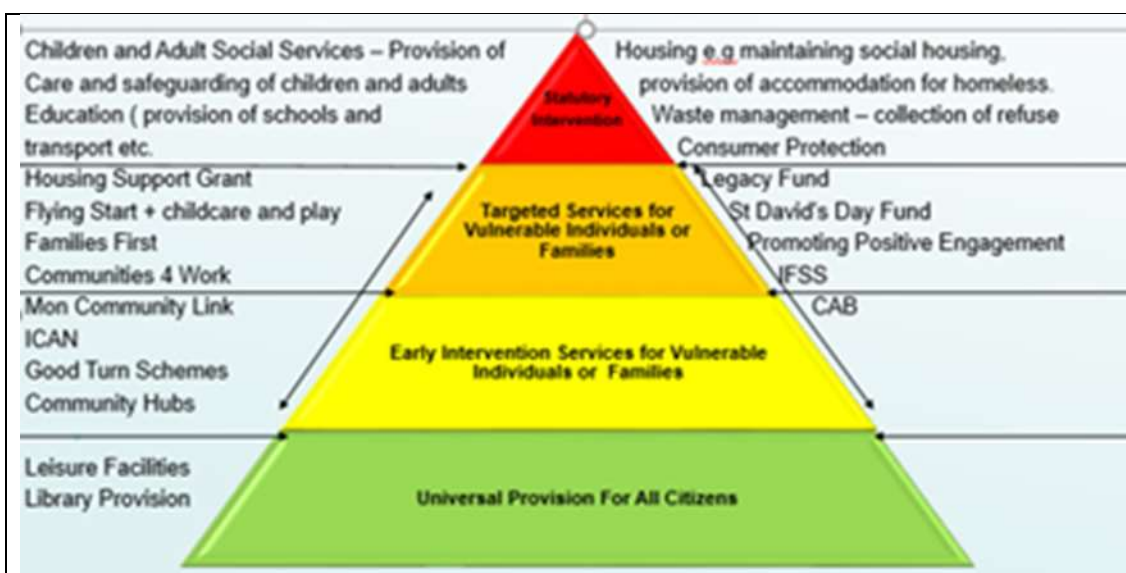
2.4 Both the Delivery and Commissioning Plans attached, outline our intentions, as to how we propose to utilise the Housing Support Funding, from April 2021. In accordance with the aims and objectives of the programme, we will work with key partners and stakeholders across sectors to prevent homelessness wherever possible and empower vulnerable individuals and families to acquire or regain the necessary daily living skills in order for them to manage their accommodation across all tenures. In doing so we will make a significant contribution to 2 of the 3 Core aims of the council, these being;

- creating the conditions for everyone to achieve their long-term potential
- support vulnerable adults and families and keep them safe, healthy and independent as possible

2.5 The successful delivery of the Housing Support Grant and its alignment with its sister

programme the Children and Communities Grant are also an integral part of the Council's Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy.

- 2.6 During the past 18 months to two years we have seen from analyzing data and discussing with providers and other stakeholders that there has been a shift in both the volume of referrals and probably more so, the number of complex cases which require support and targeted interventions.
- 2.7 We have during this period witnessed a swing across all age groups, (from 16+ to 55+), where the majority of cases were previously low to medium, needs to ones where needs are now medium to high, with many presenting or re-presenting with two or more challenging needs, such as mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse. The covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation, with many households experiencing loss of income, isolation, mental health, hidden domestic abuse, increased substance misuse and other factors which impact on both physical and mental wellbeing. Unfortunately all of the above have a strong correlation with the risk of increasing poverty, debt, health needs, antisocial behaviour engaging in criminal activity, leading to possible eviction.
- 2.8 As part of our Corporate Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy, we have adopted Maslow's Hierarchy of Need model to distinguish between the various levels of interventions and needs. The universal level of need at the base of the triangle is where the volume of service provision is at its highest, followed by prevention and early intervention, before reaching the apex, where interventions tend to be statutory based, with numbers receiving services, lower than the other tiers but with costs higher. Given the shift detailed above in the specialist needs and complex and often chaotic lifestyles of those requiring housing support interventions, the majority of services delivered via this programme are now seen as targeted and sit just below the statutory level of intervention.
- 2.9 Cases identified with lower needs such as those requiring support to access community activities or engaging in social prescribing matters will now be referred to our partners at Mõn Community Link, ranked in the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest tier of needs. The following diagram illustrates how we propose to identify, the various levels and types of information which are available.



2.10 It is hoped that by identifying needs, providing the correct and timely information, advice and assistance will reduce the need for most costly statutory intervention and reduce dependency levels.

### 3.0 Current provision

3.1 At present the Housing Support Grant is used to commission a raft of designated specialist providers within specific areas to deliver a range of interventions. Weekly monitoring of referrals since April 2020, has shown that there have been between 690 at its lowest and 730 cases per week, at its highest open to providers. In addition, there have been occasions where contact has been difficult to establish with chaotic individuals, or refusal to accept support, despite the referral having been submitted on their behalf, more often than not by professional / statutory agencies. At present, our commissioned units per week fall below demand for support. Weekly analysis shows that the numbers awaiting contact or placed on waiting lists varies between 45 and 90 units, and it is anticipated that the number requiring support and those at risk of eviction from rented properties or as unable to meet mortgage payments is likely to increase further. It is also expected that an increase in domestic abuse, mental health and youth homelessness will occur, once lockdown restrictions are lifted, and the wider socio-economic impact of the pandemic becomes more visible.

### 4.0 Use of Additional Money.

4.1 The substantial increase in funding of £856,722.50 which equates to 31.6% has been welcomed across the sector. However, it does present its own challenges to ensure that maximum benefit, is realised quickly, particularly as staff will need to be recruited whilst demand remains at an unprecedented high.

#### 4.2 In utilising the additional funding from April 2021/22 we propose to:

- Continue to commission the current delivery, monitoring and reviewing of all contracted housing support provision as noted in our 2021/22, Commissioning Plan attached as well as
- Significantly bolster the HSG workforce with additional support workers across our supply of providers where we will mainstream the 5 housing support workers and the Private Landlord Liaison Support Officer, who were initially appointed following receipt of Welsh Government's Phase 2 Programme in 2020, to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. Furthermore, we have identified the need for a further 8 additional support workers to be appointed by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. As a result we hope to have 13 extra support workers appointed, compared to the Pre Covid-19 pandemic, with each on average with a caseload of 15 in the following areas.
  - Generic Internal x 3
  - Housing First (25 - 54 years) x 2
  - Domestic Abuse x 2
  - Vulnerable Families x 2
  - Substance Misuse x1
  - Older People x 1 (emphasis on mental health)
  - Adult Mental Health x 1
  - Vulnerable Young People x1
- Provide an inflationary increase of 3% to all support providers from April 2021. It should be noted that, unless the service has been retendered, that no provider has received an increase during the last five years. As a result of the stagnant annual allocation, it is not unreasonable to assume that some services are indeed running at a loss towards the end of their contractual agreements. All of our contractual agreements tend to be for 3 years with an option to extend for further 3 years on a year on year basis. It is hoped that our providers will utilize this additional funding to increase salaries of support workers as part of a drive to invest in the workforce to improve staff retention levels and act as an incentive for easier recruitment.
- Consolidate our Single Point of Access Gateway project with additional support for the current co-ordinator, to ensure referrals are signposted timeously and informed data and intelligence on need and demand levels are analyzed and reported at regular intervals to inform the commissioning processes.
- Contribute to the provision of collaborative outreach in partnership with the Area

Planning Board to support complex and challenging cases, in areas generally associated with substance misuse, and prison leavers, with the emphasis on harm reduction.

- Develop a Rapid ReHousing Hub
- Invest in a training programme and therapeutic support of staff and managers, funded by the HSG, to enable them to effectively deliver their roles. This will include Psychologically Informed Approaches.
- Provide discretionary Payments and incentives to facilitate the purpose of the grant i.e. a one off non reoccurring expense designed to make it easier for an individual to live in their own home and prevent the need for statutory homeless intervention
- Strengthen Project Management and/or Strategic Planning Resources within the Local Authority, during 2021/22 to ensure we maximize effective use of the additional housing support funding during the transition period.
- Continue to fund the post of the Private Sector Rent Liaison Officer work to engage with both landlords and tenants, and in so doing promote the ethos of rapid rehousing, and facilitate, suitable, affordable and settled accommodation for those who present as homeless.
- Contribution to regional projects identified and agreed by the North Wales Regional Housing Support Collaborative Grant. The identified projects currently are:
  - Supported or dispersed accommodation and support for members of the LGBTQ Community
  - Refuge or dispersed accommodation for male victims of domestic abuse
  - Research into the effectiveness and benefits of the Psychologically Informed Environment approach
  - Hoarding Support Service
  - Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDVA)

All North Wales Local Authorities have a standing financial commitment in place, where a contribution of 0.5% of the HSG Annual award is transferred into a regional fund, to consider the need for services as noted above. In accordance with this agreement, Anglesey will be required to contribute £17,858. In comparison all other North Wales LA's will be contributing at least double this sum, with the highest contribution being £43,225.47.

4.3 At the time of writing 99.3% has been committed for spending with a balance of £19,775.21, remaining uncommitted and can be used for any of the three elements of the Housing Support Grant listed above. Similarly, any slippage incurred due to issues

with recruitment or any other identified factor can also be used flexibly.

**B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?**

Not applicable – Submission of documents is a condition of receiving the Grant

**C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?**

Terms and conditions of the Grant state that Commissioning and Delivery Plans must be endorsed prior to submission.

**CH – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?**

Yes

**D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?**

No – Housing Support Grant is an additional source of funding to the Council's RSG. Responsibility for budgetary allocation, rests with the Anglesey Housing Support Planning Group, consisting of Senior Managers from The Housing Services, Children and Adult Services, BCUHB and the Wales Probation Service.

**E – Impact on our Future Generations(if relevant)**

1	<b>How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island</b>	The delivery of housing support currently provides various employment opportunities for nearly 200 people. The added investment will strengthen commissioned providers ability to develop, retain and recruit staff for the medium term. The sector provides a range of roles including direct support, provision, administrative and managerial opportunities. Although the HSG does not fund the statutory duty on local authorities to prevent
---	--	---



		homelessness, instead HSG funded services augment, complement and support the statutory service to ensure that the overall offer authorities provide, helps people into the right homes with the right support to succeed. It supports vulnerable people to address the, sometimes multiple, problems they face, such as debt, employment, tenancy management, substance misuse, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and mental health issues. Support is person centered, aimed at supporting people to secure and maintain sustainable housing by addressing the mental health and substance misuse or other problems they face, helping to improve their health and well-being and/or helping them progress into, or nearer to, a job or training opportunity based on their specific circumstances.
2	<b>Is this a decision which it is envisaged will prevent future costs / dependencies on the Authority. If so, how:-</b>	Yes – Housing Support is a preventative / early intervention source of funding which prevents the need for statutory intervention, predominantly within Housing and Adult Social Services.
3	<b>Have we been working collaboratively with other organisations to come to this decision, if so, please advise whom:</b>	Working in collaboration is part and parcel of the HSG framework. As commissioners, we work with all 11 Service Providers on a regular basis in terms monitoring, reviewing and regular engagement. In addition the governance of the programme involves the input of other statutory agencies such as Health partners and Probation in relation to key commissioning decisions
4	<b>Have Anglesey citizens played a part in drafting this way forward? Please explain how:-</b>	Yes – Anglesey citizens, past and present who receive support and other forms of intervention, have a continuous opportunity to feedback their opinions on service delivery, service quality and areas for improvement by accessing the On-line Your Service Your Say questionnaire, which informs the commissioning process. Furthermore, a percentage of service users are consulted as part of the monitoring and reviewing processes, and can also utilise the Corporate Complaints and Compliments process.
5	<b>Outline what impact does this decision have on the Equalities</b>	All citizens who require access to support or homeless prevention services are treated

	<b>agenda and the Welsh language</b>	equally and in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010. All providers are expected to fully comply with The Welsh Language Standards and The Welsh Language Measure 2011, and are monitored for compliance. All commissioned providers are able to deliver support, and intervention through the medium of Welsh. A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken prior to April 2021
--	--------------------------------------	--

<b>DD – Who did you consult?</b>		<b>What did they say?</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT)</b> (mandatory)	Recommendations endorsed
<b>2</b>	<b>Finance / Section 151</b> (mandatory)	Present at SLT and has approved the Spend Plan Template submitted to Welsh Government in Draft Fomat
<b>3</b>	<b>Legal / Monitoring Officer</b> (mandatory)	Present at SLT
<b>4</b>	<b>Human Resources (HR)</b>	No impact on Council budget – cost neutral impact.
<b>5</b>	<b>Property</b>	N/A
<b>6</b>	<b>Information Communication Technology (ICT)</b>	N/A
<b>7</b>	<b>Procurement</b>	N/A
<b>8</b>	<b>Scrutiny</b>	N/A
<b>9</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	N/A

<b>F - Appendices:</b>

<b>FF - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):</b>
<b>Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan 2021/2022</b> <b>Housing Support Grant Commissioning Plan 2021/22</b> <b>Housing Support Grant Spend Plan Template 2021/22</b>

