

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

November 18, 2020

Council secures further funding to realise long-term homes ambition for rough sleepers

Fenland District Council's ongoing mission to end homelessness in the district has taken a significant step forward after successfully securing funding totalling more than £1.4million.

The Council has secured funds from the Government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), and match funding from Clarion Housing Group, the UK's largest provider of affordable housing which owns and manages more than 4,000 homes across the district, to help Fenland's rough sleepers off the streets for good.

In September, the authority won £198,000 from NSAP to support its ongoing work to help rough sleepers into safe, short-term accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now the Council has secured a second bid for an additional £567,650 from the programme to help realise a much longer-term solution.

The latest funding – together with £579,880 received by Clarion Housing Group as a result of the same bid, in addition to an upfront investment of £150,000 – means ten, one-bed properties can now be purchased to provide settled, long-term homes for the homeless.

The sum includes £123,530 to fund specialist support to those living in the homes over the next three years, until March 2024. Local homelessness charity, the Ferry Project, will provide the support, which will be offered in the homes to help people maintain their tenancy and remain living independently.

It is hoped the ten properties, which will be long-term "national assets" for a minimum of 30 years, will be ready by March 2021.

The Council also successfully secured a third grant from the NSAP to support five new supported accommodation properties, with 30 beds, operated by homelessness charity Amicus Trust. The £55,000 granted will fund the set-up costs for each property, including white goods, CCTV, furniture and fittings.

Cllr Samantha Hoy, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing, said: "In Fenland we are passionate about our homelessness prevention work and proud of the effective action that has been taken to protect rough sleepers from the pandemic.

"The next step in our mission is to ensure they have a more settled home, and this funding will help us and our partners to achieve that. It will help to deliver those crucial homes and provide more opportunities for people to turn their lives around."

Keith Smith, Founder and Director of the Ferry Project, said: "I'm delighted that the Government has granted additional funding to support a more sustainable solution to homelessness in Fenland.

“It will provide secure, long-term accommodation from which the root causes for rough sleeping can be addressed – giving our most vulnerable residents the stability and security they need to start rebuilding their lives.”

Michelle Reynolds, Chief Operating Officer of Clarion Housing Group, said: “Clarion’s history goes back more than 100 years and core to our mission is providing homes to those who are in greatest need and would otherwise be at risk of homelessness.

“As winter approaches and we find ourselves in the midst of a second national lockdown, moving people off the streets and into secure homes has never been more important. We’re proud to be working with Fenland District Council to provide homes for former rough sleepers, as well as the support they need to find their feet and thrive.”

- If you’re at risk of homelessness or know someone who is, contact Fenland District Council on 01354 654321 or email housingadvice@fenland.gov.uk. For more information, visit: www.fenland.gov.uk/homelessness

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For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226