

**CABINET****10 April 2013****Minute Extract****685. GOLD STANDARD FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

(Report CAB2478 refers)

Cabinet congratulated the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) and his team for their work with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on tackling homelessness.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Pines and Learney addressed Cabinet and their comments are summarised below.

Councillor Pines (Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee) supported the Report's proposals. However, he made a number of queries regarding how the DCLG work would impact on the Council's existing homelessness service and its approach to working with the private rented sector in the District. In addition, he expressed some concern that sometimes the different services dealing with the homeless (apart from the Council), did not fully integrate their work.

In response, the Assistant Director advised that the national initiative and the work of the Practitioner Support team funded by the DCLG grant should not interfere with the Council's own homelessness team. It was a completely separate team with no responsibilities for addressing and preventing homelessness in the District or with working with the private rented sector locally. It would be wholly focussed on administering the new national programme. However, there were benefits to the Council of specialist knowledge and advice being readily available. The Assistant Director confirmed that Council Officers worked closely with other agencies to help support homeless individuals and he believed that liaison between other external bodies was also improving.

Councillor Learney also supported the Report's recommendations. She queried why the Report had not been referred to at the Cabinet (Housing) Committee on 27 March 2013? She also asked for further details about the make-up of the Gold Standard Board and the likely timeframe before the Council was awarded the Gold Standard. Finally, she questioned whether there was any financial risk to the Council of being the host authority?

In response, the Assistant Director advised that the new national programme was included in the reports to Cabinet (Housing) Committee on 27 March 2013, although only in general terms. This was because at that time, the official launch and any reference to the term "Gold Standard was embargoed and the Government had not made the details public. He would advise outside of the meeting on the exact make-up of the Board, although it would

include the Council and Shelter. Winchester City Council would be one of the first authorities to take part in the peer review process and, if successful, it was anticipated it should achieve Gold Standard by the end of 2013. The Government was funding the initiative in full and the Council had been assured there would be no additional costs to be met.

In response to further questions, the Assistant Director confirmed that the Health and Wellbeing Board would be notified of the initiative. The Chief Operating Officer advised that the control and any scrutiny of the Board would primarily be a matter for the DCLG. The Council would need to ensure that it met its obligations to the DCLG as accountable body for managing the finances of the project.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**THAT THE WHOLE OF THE £1,030,000 GRANT RECEIVED AS PART OF THE "GOLD STANDARD CHALLENGE" REVENUE GRANT DETERMINATION BE USED TO FUND THE DELIVERY OF THE GOLD STANDARD PROGRAMME.**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the City Council's role in facilitating the national Gold Standard for Homelessness Prevention as outlined in this report be endorsed.
2. That the request for Winchester City Council to fulfil the function of 'accountable body' in relation to key elements of the programme be approved.
3. That an initial set up/support budget for the programme of £80,000 be approved, as detailed in Paragraph 5 of the Report.
4. That the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, and the Chief Finance Officer and Head of Legal Services, be authorised to enter into an agreement with Shelter and other partners in the Gold Standard programme and to approve the constitution of the Advisory Committee/Board through which the delivery of the programme will be governed.