

Appendix 6 – Housing Related Floating Support – Summary of all written references to Districts, Boroughs, a potential new unitary authority and wider system organisational partners.

This document provides a digest of all written references to Districts and boroughs and a potential unitary authority; and wider system partners and other agencies in following sources:

1. Housing Related Floating Support Original Consultation Proposal (October 2024)
2. Housing Related Floating Support Cabinet Report 25th February 2025
 3. Appendix 1
 4. Appendix 2
 5. Appendix 3
 6. Appendix 4
 7. Appendix 5
 8. Appendix 6
3. Cabinet February 25th 2025, Item 5 - Appendix 3 - People Scrutiny - summary of comments for Cabinet Agenda Supplement

Source document	Section	Paragraph reference	Text
Consultation proposal published on-line. Opened 3 rd October 2024	Why we are proposing this saving	2	We have continued to fund floating support services over the last decade, despite the budget reductions we have experienced. This is because we recognise the value they provide to our residents and because they help prevent the need for other services from us and other organisations like District and Borough Councils.
Consultation proposal published on-line. Opened 3 rd October 2024	Why we are proposing this saving	3	The legal responsibility for providing advice, help and housing to those who are homeless, or at risk of becoming so, lies with District and Borough Councils. We are therefore not required by the law to provide these information and advice services for housing. Given the financial pressures we face, we are therefore proposing a significant reduction in the funding we provide for housing support.
Consultation proposal published on-line. Opened 3 rd October 2024	How people and organisations would be affected	2	A reduction in the service offer for the Floating Support Service is likely to mean more work for our care management teams in adults and children's social care, which are already under pressure. This is because they are the main referrers into the service and do not have the housing expertise needed to support clients directly. It is also likely to affect District and Borough Councils, the NHS and voluntary and community sector organisations that provide housing advice.

Consultation proposal published on-line. Opened 3 rd October 2024	Why we are proposing this saving	4	There is likely to be an increased risk of people becoming homeless and asking for support from the District and Borough Councils, which have responsibility for housing. District and Borough Authorities face similar financial pressures and may struggle to cope with the additional burdens this proposal would create.
Consultation proposal published on-line. Opened 3 rd October 2024	How organisations can take part	1	Official responses from organisations should be submitted by email or post (see contact details for how to get in touch). Individual staff wanting to take part should fill in the survey.
Document name	Section	Paragraph reference	Text
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	2 Background	2.3 Bullet point 6	Signpost individuals and/or family members as appropriate to health and social care services, education, training, employment and support, voluntary, community and social enterprise sector services that will assist with accessing and maintaining their housing and ability to live independently for longer;
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	2 Background	2.3 Final bullet point	Ensure people are appropriately signposted or referred to mental health, social care, health services and substance misuse services as needed and any other appropriate services according to need.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	2 Background	2.5	Table - Organisations making referrals 2023/24: Adult Social Care 41% Districts & Boroughs 22% Children's Services 10% Other (inc. Health, VSCE and other statutory organisations) 21% Self-referral (60+) 7%
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	4 Insight	4.6	The key messages included the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals from other organisations rely on referring people to the service and value how knowledgeable and skilled the staff are; • The size of the cut is too great and it would have far reaching impacts for the housing system; • It would cause greater demand for other services including within the Council and the NHS, local housing authorities and charities;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff from other organisations say they would not be able to fill the gap, meaning that people's needs would go unmet; The services people would end up getting support from instead would be more expensive than maintaining the budget for this preventative service; • People and organisations said the budget shouldn't be cut for this service, with some saying it should get more money not less;
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	5 Alternatives considered	5.2	These priority areas are the community care budget, carers support services, funding for the voluntary and community enterprise sector (VCSE), and funding for staffing frontline and care market roles.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	5 Alternatives considered	5.3	While we recognise the importance of these services, the budget pressures we face mean that we have to make difficult decisions about how we spend our money. We have continued to fund housing support services over the last decade, despite the budget reductions we have experienced. This is because we recognise the value they provide to our residents and because they help prevent the need for other services from the Council and other organisations including the District and Borough Councils in East Sussex. The legal responsibility for providing advice, help and housing to those who are homeless, or at risk of becoming so, lies with the District and Borough Councils. We are therefore not required by law to provide these information and advice services for housing.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	5 Alternatives considered	5.6	The five local housing authorities have stated that they would welcome an opportunity to work with partners to scope a cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention. This would include providers and partners from across health, care and criminal justice and would build on the good practice already underway in existing services. The local housing authorities have therefore recommended that the Council considers extending the transition period for the Floating Support contract, i.e. delaying the implementation of the reduction in funding, to enable systems partners to develop a cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention services.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-	6 Impact and Risks	6.5	<p>The wider system financial implications identified through the consultation are set out in detail in Appendix 2. In summary, it is estimated that with a significantly reduced Floating Support service, this would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate an additional cost to the housing authorities in the region of £9,900,000 per annum;

Related Floating Support Service			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk the loss of Benefits income of approximately £900,000 per annum; • increase the cost to Children's Services of supporting families found intentionally homeless; • increase time required by ASC staff to work with people as they will not be able to refer as many people on for alternative support with housing and/or benefits issues.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	6 Impact and Risks	6.7	<p>The potential impacts the proposal would have on the health and care system, housing system, other organisations, services and residents are set out in Appendix 3. In summary, there would be a significant risk to the system and people using a wide range of services with an increase in homelessness and increased pressure on already challenged services. The floating support service is a critical component to the countywide approach to homelessness prevention. Reducing these services will result in increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services, and a further rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move on accommodation. The proposed reduction to this service will fundamentally challenge the gains made in reducing homelessness and placements into emergency accommodation. This, in turn, would place further pressures on Districts and Boroughs in terms of unaffordable and unavoidable costs. As set out below, we will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the remaining limited financial envelope, and it may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken. However, there are no comparable services or significant mitigations to the potential impact of the proposal.</p>
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	6 Impact and Risks	6.8	Table – see below

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
The proposed significant reduction in funding will have a negative impact on older people, pregnant women, households with children, people with disabilities, those from ethnic minority communities and those who have experienced multiple disadvantages.	This is likely to have a knock-on effect to many areas ranging from Adult Social Care, Children's Services, District and Borough Housing teams, local VCSE services, health and criminal justice services.	We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.
Significant reduction in Housing Related Floating Support service delivery.	Increased risk of homelessness.	
	Potential increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services.	
	A further rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move on accommodation.	
	Loss of support to access private rented sector.	
	Potential impact on health and wellbeing as a result of living in unsuitable accommodation.	
	Added pressure on other VCSE agencies such as Citizens Advice and Money Advice/Welfare Benefits services.	
	Increase in fuel poverty and subsequent impact on individuals' health and greater risk of death.	
	Reduces opportunity to carry out preventative work with families who are facing eviction and housing issues including rent arrears and housing related debt and could lead to more families and children facing homelessness and the negative outcomes that come with this for both parents and children.	
	Potential increase in delayed discharges and A&E attendances.	
	Adversely impact population health and healthcare outcomes and increase health inequalities.	
Lack of resettlement support.	Individuals more likely to be unable to sustain new accommodation.	

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Making financial reductions in one part of local government can adversely impact, other parts of the sector.	The interrelated issues between social care and housing services, and potential gaps in provision at county council level may result in Districts and Boroughs needing to fill these to ensure the needs of customers continue to be met; however, budgets for this are already challenged.	
Increased use of temporary accommodation.	Significant cost to Districts and Boroughs. Potential increase in child protection and safeguarding issues, reduced access to health and education and a direct impact on the health of children living in poor standard housing.	
Potentially ceasing the on-site support provided at five Supported Accommodation services for adults with mental health needs, and adults with additional support needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	If these proposals go ahead this will further exacerbate the impact on East Sussex residents as a result of the significant reduction in funding for housing-related floating support services.	

Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	7 Outline Implementation Plan	7.1	If this Proposal is agreed, the provider will be given six months' notice of the decision to reduce the annual funding. The intended notice period is 1 April to 30 September 2025. During the six month notice period, we will work with our Strategic Partner and District and Borough Authorities to redesign and co-produce a targeted service around homelessness prevention. Work is ongoing to explore funding options for a reduced, but targeted homelessness prevention service, which may include contributions from the Council, District and Borough Councils or other financial arrangements
Document name	Section	Paragraph reference	Text
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service	N/A	Paras 1 & 2	The five local housing authorities have stated that: "BHT Sussex are active within the local housing partnership and have supported service development within the sector, including new homelessness hubs. The local authorities have also been investing in additional homelessness prevention activity, including wellbeing and employability support and are keen to expand this further through grant funding opportunities. The local authorities would welcome an opportunity

Appendix 1 - Alternatives considered			to work with partners to scope a cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention including providers and partners from across health, care and criminal justice, building on the good practice already underway with existing services.” The local housing authorities have therefore recommended an extension to the transition period, i.e. delaying the implementation of the savings proposal, for the floating support contract to enable systems partners to develop a cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention services. Rother DC have commented that the proposed timetable for the budget reductions is too short for the system to respond effectively to the impact. In the time available it will be challenging for the system to come together to try and support with additional funding or make improvements to the system, to compensate for the loss of funding. We are actively engaged with ESCC and BHT Sussex via the East Sussex Housing Partnership. We feel confident that a great deal can be done to support the service with additional funds from elsewhere across the wider health, social care, housing and criminal justice systems. The service offers excellent value for money in terms of the costs that can be avoided in expensive temporary accommodation costs. We encourage ESCC to consider extending the transition period by an additional 6-12 months to enable the partnership to collaborate to minimise the impact on vulnerable people
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 1 - Alternatives considered	N/A	Para 3	Other organisations have also requested the opportunity to work in partnership to consider changes to the service model and collaboration with other providers: “A new model should be sought prior to looking at potential cuts, so the funding fits the model identified not finding a service to fit the funding available. Changes to the existing service and an alternative model should be considered and costing provided” (Wealden CAB).
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 1 - Alternatives considered	N/A	Para 4	BHT Sussex who currently provide the service have suggested a reduction of £2 million (46% reduction) would enable 3,500 people to be supported based on the current commissioned service model. Further remodelling of the service could further increase the number of people supported and safeguard service quality and successful outcomes.

Document name	Section	Paragraph reference	Text
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 2 - Wider system financial implications	District and Borough Housing Teams	Para 1	17% of adults referred by District and Borough Housing Teams were supported by the Floating Support Service to secure new accommodation in 2023/24. If this support had not been available and the households had gone on to be placed in temporary accommodation, this would generate an additional cost to the housing authorities in the region of £9,900,000 per annum.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 2 - Wider system financial implications	Hastings Borough Council	Para 2	Hastings BC made 276 referrals into the service in 2023/24. It costs Hastings BC an average of £15,800 pa to accommodate a household in privately procured temporary accommodation (TA), so, considering the very high success rate of the BHT service (87% successful outcomes), if those 240 households (87% of 276) didn't have their homelessness prevented it would cost Hastings Borough Council over £3.7m a year to provide them with temporary accommodation. This would be a 50% increase in Hastings Borough Council's current, already unsustainable and unavoidable, spend on TA. Plus, that is only for one year, it is realistic to say that with the increased demand we would double current times for households spent in TA before a permanent home is available. So, a four year stay in TA for those 240 households is an extra cost of just over £15m to Hastings Borough Council.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 2 - Wider system financial implications	Children's Services	Para 5	Savings made by reducing the funding for this service would lead to potentially higher costs for Children's Services, especially in relation to families who have been found intentionally homeless and had their housing duty discharged by the Borough and District Housing Authorities. The number of families being found to be intentionally homeless has risen over the last two years at an increasing cost to Children's Services in cases where accommodation must be funded for families with no other housing options under S.17 of the Children's Act 1989. Referrals to the East Sussex Floating Support Service are regularly made to assist in the prevention of families becoming intentionally homeless in the first place and to support those that have had their housing duties discharged to move on from high cost temporary accommodation funded by Children's Services to their own privately rented accommodation. Spend on providing accommodation for these families has more than doubled in the past two years and will continue to increase. There is a risk that more families will end up

			homeless and potentially intentionally homeless if they are not able to access specialist housing advice and support. The cost to ESCC in 2023/24 of supporting families found intentionally homeless was £639,000 and the forecasted cost for 2024/25 is £575,000
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 2 - Wider system financial implications	Rother DC	Para 6,7	“The Floating Support Service is an effective homelessness prevention tool and demonstrates better value for money than investments made after a household becomes homeless. The housing and homelessness system is in crisis. We have reviewed the performance of the ESFSS within Rother in 2022/23 and estimate the degree of reduction proposed could mean we experience an additional 200 temporary accommodation placements. It could increase our net temporary accommodation costs by up to £1.4m, which is almost 10% of our total net revenue budget.” “RDC is concerned that the degree of the budget reductions to this specific service is heavily weighted on homelessness prevention and risks tipping some District and Borough Councils into a position where they cannot deliver a balanced budget.”

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Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service

Appendix 3 - Impact of savings proposals on the wider system

Health and care system	<p>The service has co-located staff working in statutory services’ teams (5 Districts and Boroughs and Children’s Services) which enables frontline workers to undertake close joint working with people and share resources and knowledge to deliver better outcomes.</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>2,230 people were referred to the service by Adult Social Care in the 12 months Oct 23 – Sept 24, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 490 people referred due to Mental Health problems (anxiety, depression, bi-polar disorder, schizoaffective disorders, personality disorders); • 336 people referred directly from the Dementia Support Team (over 60’s); • 132 people referred due to high levels of vulnerability due to frailty (over 60’s) – (frailty relates to the adult’s mental and physical resilience, or their ability to bounce back and recover from events like illness and injury). <p>Of these, 51% were aged under 60 and 49% aged 60+.</p>
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55% of those referred were supported to remain in their existing accommodation whilst the remainder were supported to identify and/or move into new accommodation. They were also supported with their finances, access to health services and with their wellbeing and staying safe.

Statutory Children's Services

603 people were referred to the service by Statutory Children's Services (referrals from Children's Services are when the risk to children in the household is high), including:

- 80 families at direct risk of homelessness;
- 120 families already experiencing homelessness (families living in temporary accommodation, living in unsecure accommodation);
- 101 people at risk of domestic violence.

"At a time when the need to prevent homelessness and ensure children, young people and families have access to stable housing has never been higher, a reduction in the capacity of this service to support individuals and families with housing related support would have a worrying and far-reaching impact across children's services and the outcomes for the families and individuals we work with. It would most certainly have an impact on the opportunity to carry out preventative work with families who are facing eviction and housing issues including rent arrears and housing related debt and would lead to more families and children facing homelessness and the negative outcomes that come with this for both parents and children." (Children's Services Managers)

Health

"Health and mental health services: acute services are reporting delays with discharges relating to housing needs. Housing colleagues have been supporting the development of Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams, it had been envisaged that links to the housing-related floating support service would form a key opportunity to ensure housing is part of the core offer in each area." (Heads of Housing)

"There is potential for this to have an impact on A&E services, which are already under pressure and at capacity, in the absence of the current support offer."

Key considerations in regard to the support offer from this service include;

- *Access to safe and secure housing is a key determinant of health.*
- *Across the county there are increasing numbers of people who do not have access to housing or whose housing is temporary.*
- *Housing prices are 11x the average salary in East Sussex (ONS Housing Affordability, 2023 data).*
- *5% of East Sussex residents are either fairly or very dissatisfied with the quality of their housing, particularly renters, 18-34s and single parents.*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.7% of households had fewer rooms than needed for the occupants, classified as overcrowded. Census, 2021. <p>Noting the above, this proposal has the potential to materially impact the health and safety of a number of future service users across East Sussex and present a greater risk to many becoming homeless. There is also a strong risk that cutting funding will destabilise the system which is not set up nor has the expertise to cope with the influx of people in need of support.</p> <p>There could be a high risk that the proposals will adversely impact population health and healthcare outcomes and increase health inequalities.” (NHS Sussex)</p> <p>“The proposal to reduce funding for the Floating Support Service from over £4.3 million to £500,000 a year (88.5%) will have a significant impact on people who are at risk of homelessness. Many of those who use this service have been referred by housing colleagues in Borough and District Councils and may struggle to maintain their tenancies without this support, which may return pressures to Adult Social Care services.” (Healthwatch)</p> <p>“This is a person-centred service for vulnerable people who are not able to access other similar services. This service is skilled in engaging individuals whose conditions and circumstances make it difficult for them to engage with other services. The older people served by this support tend to have complex and enduring mental health problems, cognitive difficulties, co-morbid health issues and are socially isolated. They often experience problems with debt and are struggling to navigate other systems of support for housing and benefits. Unmanaged debt is known to be a risk factor for suicide. Clinicians believe that the people who tend to use this service would struggle to access alternatives.” (SPFT)</p>
Housing system	<p>“The Housing-related Floating Support Service is an integral part of local provision and meeting statutory duties in relation to homelessness prevention. Due to the high demand for homelessness services, there will not be capacity for local housing authorities to continue these interventions. Reducing these services will result in increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services, and a further rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move on accommodation. 17% of clients referred by District and Borough Housing Teams were supported by the Floating Support Service to secure new accommodation in 2023/24. If this support had not been available and the households had gone on to be placed in temporary accommodation, this would generate an additional cost to the housing authorities in the region of £9,900,000.</p> <p>There are currently 1,232 households placed in temporary accommodation across East Sussex and approximately 1,400 children currently living in temporary accommodation. This trend has a significant impact on individuals and families, impacting access to education, employment and engagement with health and wellbeing. The cost of providing temporary accommodation is creating an unsustainable financial pressure on the local housing authorities, diverting resources away from other key services and threatening the overall viability of some</p>

	<p><i>councils. So far, this financial year (2024/25) the 5 local housing authorities have spent £6,358,800 on temporary accommodation. In In 2023/24, the cost of temporary accommodation in East Sussex was £14,194,421. The long waiting times for social housing mean the intensive support provided by the floating support service is key to ensuring people can access accommodation in other sectors, particularly the private rented sector.” (Heads of Housing)</i></p> <p><i>“Eastbourne BC’s homeless hub (which is seen locally and nationally as a model of good practice) is hugely dependant on partnership working. The proposed significant reduction in funding to the floating support service threatens to compromise what has been a hard won, sector-leading piece of prevention work. The work of BHT Sussex in delivering floating support is a critical component to the countywide approach to homelessness prevention. We note that an 88% reduction to this service is proposed, which would fundamentally challenge the gains we have made in reducing homelessness and placements into emergency accommodation. This, in turn, would place further pressures on Districts and boroughs in terms of unaffordable and unavoidable costs.” (Eastbourne BC)</i></p>
Residents	<p><i>“Homeless children are more likely to be at risk, face upheaval that adversely impacts their education, fail to thrive because temporary accommodation doesn't meet their needs, and because homelessness often leads to relationship breakdown for their parents.</i></p> <p><i>Adults who end up sleeping rough or sofa surfing are more likely to develop mental and/or physical health problems, addictions, loss of employment, relationship breakdown and to engage in anti-social or criminal behaviours.</i></p> <p><i>The county is an area of high housing costs and shortage of affordable accommodation, so the impacts of increased spending on addressing the issues outlined above are likely to be significant.” (Resident)</i></p> <p><u>Feedback from residents</u></p> <p><i>“I find this proposal to cut funding morally reprehensible. When there’s a tough decision to be made it’s always the vulnerable and the poor who get hit the hardest. Often dealing with council paperwork is bewildering and having help in getting what one is entitled to is invaluable.”</i></p> <p><i>“In my experience this wonderful service is Vital. They literally saved my life. I think one shouldn't underestimate the importance of their work for people in crisis, like I was. I could not have managed to survive without their expert help and patient advice and support.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Floating Support Service has been a lifeline for us during extremely challenging times. They provided essential support and guidance when we needed it most, helping us navigate difficult situations and access resources that improved our quality of life.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is no other service where a client would be contacted within 24 hours of starting the service and had a support session either over the telephone or face to face within a week of that contact.”</i></p>

"This service is pivotal to East Sussex as it provides a home visiting service to vulnerable clients in order to prevent homelessness. Many clients do not have access to the internet, especially the elderly, and being able to visit them at home to support them with important paperwork and access the benefits system ensures inclusion, income maximisation and tenancy sustainment."

"We would never have managed the housing forms without the support of the support worker."

"They also helped us to fill in very difficult forms to claim what otherwise we may not be able to do by ourselves."

"ASC require the support of the specialist teams such as the East Sussex Floating Support Service to be able to offer a comprehensive and knowledgeable service to our clients. ASC CANNOT take on this role as well, we are over run and running on empty as it is."

"Everyone I knew who worked for the service was kind, caring, knowledgeable and just wanted to help people."

"Many clients will no longer have bespoke, knowledgeable support with their housing and/or financial needs which in turn is likely to increase the disadvantages they are already facing."

"88.5% might as well be 100%, it won't be indistinguishable. And if anyone thinks that these are 'savings', just wait and see what time bombs you've just set off."

"If it 88% cut you may as well say it is a closed service as the wait list will be enormous."

"The proposed cut in funding is far too large! It seems to us that if this goes ahead you may as well do away with this service."

"I couldn't of coped if I did not have the support of BHT."

"Without this service I do not know what we would have done!"

"The Floating Support Service brings badly needed professional help that just isn't available elsewhere."

"BHT are essential to keeping the homeless alive and feeling supported. I cannot express adequately how much BHT have helped me and continue to do so. I would probably be dead to be totally honest without the support and guidance from BHT and them fighting and working for my safety."

"Service works with children as well as parents. Feedback from 10 year old (via staff member as she is at school) was sofa surfing then in temporary accommodation with her mum. Now they have their own accommodation and she has her own bedroom. Mum has been supported into work and is much happier. This has all made her life much better."

Document name	Section	Paragraph reference	Text
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 4: Consultation results report East Sussex Floating Support Service	Taking part in the consultation	Paragraph 2	All of the consultations were promoted in our newsletters for residents, providers and staff. We also shared news stories with partners in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sectors, to include in their newsletters for residents, organisations and staff.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 4: Consultation results report East Sussex Floating Support Service	Key messages	Table, page 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals in other organisations expressed how knowledgeable and skilled the staff are and said that they heavily rely on referring people to them for support. • Without the service, frontline staff in other organisations say they would not be able to fill the gap in support, or have the skills and knowledge to replicate it, meaning people's needs would go unmet. • Both people who use the service and staff in other organisations said they would not be able to cope without the important role the service plays in the housing system. People said the size of the cut would be too great and cause greater demand on services from the NHS, charities, housing organisations, social care and local councils. Moreover, this increase in demand would be more expensive than the cost of maintaining the current budget for the service.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 4: Consultation results report East Sussex	Organisation comments	Page 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wealden Citizens Advice: "Floating Support Services remain an important part of the support that we can offer to our clients. The fact that they can support clients with home visits and build that relationship is very important as many of the clients we support have long-term illness, suffer with mental health and/or disability. If we are unable to refer to them there would be a huge gap." • Hastings Borough Council: "We made over 200 referrals in the last 12 months, so it is a service we make considerable use of to prevent homelessness. As a very rough measure it costs us an average of £15,800 per annum to accommodate a household in private TA [temporary accommodation] – so if

<p>Floating Support Service</p>			<p>those 200 households didn't have their homelessness prevented it would cost us over £3m a year in TA costs."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHT Sussex (provider): "Our response concerns the scale and resulting impact of this cut, reducing the contract by £4million, constituting a service reduction of 88.5%. A cut of less severity would retain a service that could perform its key role as an integral part of provision across East Sussex". • Care for Carers: "These services are vital for carers at risk of homelessness and are a key support for us in enabling some of the carers with the most complex caring roles to continue caring." • East Sussex Children's Services: "We know that housing instability can negatively impact a child's health, development and school performance and often compounds trauma that they are going through or have experienced. East Sussex Floating Support Service provides a valuable service which complements and strengthens the statutory work of our case management teams in supporting children and families to remain in, manage or access safe and suitable housing." • Eastbourne Borough Council: "The work of BHT in delivering floating support is a critical component to the countywide approach to homelessness prevention. We note that an 88% reduction to this service is proposed, which would fundamentally challenge the gains we have made in reducing homelessness and placements into emergency accommodation. This, in turn, would place further pressures on Districts and boroughs in terms of unaffordable and unavoidable costs." • Heads of Housing in East Sussex Authorities: "The Housing-related Floating Support Service is an integral part of local provision and meeting statutory duties in relation to homelessness prevention. Due to the high demand for homelessness services, there will not be capacity for local housing authorities to continue these interventions. Reducing these services will result in increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services, and a further rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move-on accommodation." • Rother District Council: "The impact of these proposals is on some of our most vulnerable residents and on the financial position of Rother District Council. The concerns relate both to the degree of budget reduction to the ESFSS and Pathways scheme [separate service] as well as the timeframe in which it is proposed that these budget reductions are made."
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Rother District Council submitted a combined response to the ASCH Savings Proposals (this was available in the Members room) which included the following text relevant to Housing Related Floating Support:

Introduction

RDC is keen to work collaboratively to maintain our shared focus on reducing inequalities, protecting vulnerable people and preventing individuals and families falling into crisis.

East Sussex Floating Support Service

The Council has a number of concerns about the proposals to reduce the East Sussex Floating Support Service (ESFSS) and our supported accommodation provider Pathways in Bexhill, providing 12-units of supported accommodation for those homeless households with mental health challenges. The impact of these is on some of our most vulnerable residents and on the financial position of Rother District Council. The concerns relate both to the degree of budget reduction to the ESFSS and Pathways scheme as well as the timeframe in which it is proposed that these budget reductions are made. It does seem regrettable to RDC that the vulnerability of the ESFSS and Pathways to this degree of reduction was not communicated to system partners sooner, so that the strong partnerships within East Sussex could respond as effectively as possible.

The following key concerns and impacts have been identified by RDC:

Temporary accommodation costs: The Floating Support Service is an effective homelessness prevention tool and demonstrates better value for money than investments made after a household becomes homeless. The housing and homelessness system is in crisis. We have reviewed the performance of the ESFSS within Rother in 2022/23. We estimate the degree of reduction proposed could mean we experience an additional 200 temporary accommodation placements. It could increase our net temporary accommodation costs by up to £1.4m, which is almost 10% of our total net revenue budget. We are also aware, via our membership of the East Sussex Housing Partnership, costs of temporary accommodation continue to rise for our ESCC social care colleagues as well as in the criminal justice sector.

			<p>Impact on vulnerable children and adults: the ESFSS supports some of the most vulnerable residents in Rother and we agree with your own assessment of the impact of these proposals on the most vulnerable. The impact of homelessness and temporary accommodation on child development is also well understood and the impact of the ESFSS in minimising this impact should not be underestimated. We acknowledge from your consultation narrative that these impacts are well understood by you too and we will not repeat these here.</p> <p>Homelessness Prevention is a statutory duty: The housing and homelessness system is in crisis. We agree that local authorities need to prioritise those services that meet statutory duties. While it is true to say that homelessness prevention is not a statutory duty under the Care Act, it is a statutory duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act. RDC is concerned that the degree of the budget reductions to this specific service is heavily weighted on homelessness prevention and risks tipping some District and boroughs into a position where they cannot deliver a balanced budget.</p> <p>Timetable for the proposals: the proposed timetable for the budget reductions is too short for the system to respond effectively to the impact. In the time available it will be challenging for the system to come together to try and support with additional funding or make improvements to the system, to compensate for the loss of funding. We are actively engaged with ESCC and BHT Sussex via the East Sussex Housing Partnership. We feel confident that a great deal can be done to support the service with additional funds from elsewhere across the wider health, social care, housing and criminal justice systems. The service offers excellent value for money in terms of the costs that can be avoided in expensive temporary accommodation costs. We encourage ESCC to consider extending the transition period by an additional 6-12 months to enable the partnership to collaborate to minimise the impact on vulnerable people.</p> <p>Infrastructure support to sustain the resilience of our VCSE sector Rother District Council notes the retendering of VCSE infrastructure support across East Sussex and welcomes the more equitable allocation of funding to each District for General Infrastructure. We are keen to record how much we value having a locally based partner such as Rother Voluntary Action. There are substantial and well evidenced benefits of this local partnership, for our</p>
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			effectiveness as a Council in strategy development and implementation. It is also beneficial in terms of RVA's reach into some of the most isolated and deprived rural areas of Rother, which an organisation that was not locally based would struggle to achieve. This is all at a time when the resilience of our VCSE sector has never been more important for all of us, in supporting and sustaining our communities and the most disadvantaged individuals within them.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 4: Consultation results report East Sussex Floating Support Service	Service specific questions	Page 10	Where people would have gone for support if the service hadn't been available? The majority said they wouldn't have known where else to go (436 comments). The other top themes were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views: Equivalent services not available (140 comments) • Citizens Advice Bureau (96) • Local council (71) • Comment about personal circumstances (66) • Council unhelpful (50) • People supported by service struggle to access/engage with other services (45) • Would have been homeless (41)

Cabinet Report – 25th February 2025

Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service

Appendix 4: Consultation results report East Sussex Floating Support Service

Extract from Appendix 4 (pages 22-26)

4) If the service had not been available when you needed help, where would you have gone instead for support with housing?

There were 890 responses to this part of the question. Responses mentioning organisations are included below.

Comment theme	Total
Citizens Advice Bureau	96
Local council	71
Local authority/adult social care	26
Local charity	13
Age Concern	9

Brighton Housing Trust	6
Shelter	5
Solicitors	5
GP	4
Local MP	4
Food Bank	3
Hastings Advice and Representation Centre	3
Hospital	3
Housing Associations	3
Housing Authority	3
Library	3
Mental health services	3
Other housing services	3
Samaritans	3
Seaview	3
Age UK	2
Emergency shelters	2
I would go to my GP	2
Police	2
Young Men's Christian Association	2
Advocacy service	1
Agency	1
Association of Carers	1
Benefits agency	1
Care for the Carers	1

Charities limited in support they can provide	1
Church	1
Community Outreach Service	1
Counsellor	1
East Sussex Housing	1
Eastbourne homes	1
Emergency services	1
East Sussex Recovery Alliance	1
Government	1
Hastings Advice and Representation Centre	1
Homelink	1
Internet	1
Job Centre	1
Macmillan	1
Nearest housing support service	1
Private agency	1
Psychiatric Unit	1
Rough Sleepers Initiative	1
Armed Forces charity, the Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Families Association	1
Sussex Community Development Association	1
Social Prescriber	1
Southdown Housing	1
Single Point of Advice (SPoA)	1
Stonewall	1
Sussex Homemove	1

Victim Support Service	1
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Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 4: Consultation results report East Sussex Floating Support Service	Other feedback by email etc. The organisations who submitted a response are:	Page 44/45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHT Sussex • Care for the Carers • Children's Services at East Sussex County Council • Eastbourne Borough Council • Hastings Borough Council (2 responses) • Heads of Housing across the District and Borough Authorities • Healthwatch East Sussex • Lewes District Council • Lewes Town Council • NHS Sussex • Rother District Council • Sussex Community Development Association • Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust 45 • Wealden Citizens Advice • Wealden District Council
Document name	Section	Paragraph reference	Text
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	Overview of the Service	Page 2 Paragraph 5	While homelessness prevention in relation to housing provision is not an East Sussex County Council statutory responsibility, improving health and reducing health inequalities are. Many of the cohort of individuals supported by this contract will have the poorest health and wellbeing within the County. The aim of this service underpins the strategic priorities of Adult Social Care and Health, Children's Services, our NHS partners and the District and Borough Housing Authorities and supports vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	Overview of the Service	Page3 Paragraph 12	One of East Sussex County Council's broad objectives is to support the prevention of homelessness by appropriate work with its District/Borough Council partners and this funding was a way of doing that. East Sussex County Council is still committed to that objective but the financial challenges facing the authority leave East Sussex County Council having to make difficult decisions to cease services.

Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	Overview of the Service	Page 3, Table	BHT Sussex: Summary of adults by 4 referrer pathway 2023/24: Adult Social Care and Health 3357 39% Districts & Boroughs 2124 25% Other 1468 17% Children's Services 881 10% Self-referral (60+) 732 9%
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions	Age Page 7	Quote: I also didn't know about the service. I needed to get support and tried to register for housing. I went to Town Hall and went to see CAB but that didn't work as well as I wanted to. Then someone from Heart Response referred me for BHT floating support and they came and helped me."
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions	Age Page 13	Feedback from Wealden Citizens Advice 'Often where there is a housing issue, there is more going on in our clients' lives. Many adults who approach Wealden Citizens Advice, not only have housing issues, but debt and income issues and have complex lives. People have benefited greatly from this service and outcomes to reduce homelessness are evident.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions	Age Page 15	East Sussex Children's Services: All teams across Children's Services including our Single Point of Advice, Multi agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Duty and Assessment, and Locality Family and Youth Support teams regularly refer families or individuals to the service to prevent the risk of them becoming homeless or to support them with housing issues at both a preventative early help and statutory level. The co-location of ESFSS support workers within the MASH teams leads to successful partnership working which is effective and valued by both East Sussex Children's Services staff and ESFSS, and leads to valuable joint working and successful outcomes for families. ESFSS offer a service that all teams are able to refer to easily and with confidence. The number of families being found to be intentionally homeless has risen over the last two years at an increasing cost to Children's Services in cases where accommodation must be funded for families with no other housing options under

			<p>S.17 of the Children's Act 1989. Referrals to ESFSS are regularly made to assist in the prevention of families becoming intentionally homeless in the first place and to support those that have had their housing duties discharged to move on from high-cost temporary accommodation funded by Children's Services to their own privately rented accommodation. Spend on providing accommodation for these families has more than doubled in the past two years and will continue to increase.</p> <p>Feedback from the Lewes Family Support Team: "We regularly refer to the floating support service and I'm worried about the prospect of losing this support. Particularly I'm worried that not having this will at times prevent us from closing cases. Quite often, we reduce risks and can close, with BHT continuing to support with ongoing housing needs. This would be different if this support is removed."</p>
<p>Cabinet Report – 25th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment</p>	<p>2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions</p>	<p>Age Page 17</p>	<p>The proposal to reduce the service is likely to impact on the ability of Children's Services ability to carry out preventative work with families who are facing eviction and 18 Age 16 -59 housing issues including rent arrears and housing related debt, thereby lead to more families and children at risk of homelessness and the negative outcomes this will have on the physical and mental health and wellbeing for both parents and children</p>
<p>Cabinet Report – 25th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment</p>	<p>2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions</p>	<p>Age Page 18</p>	<p>This proposal is likely to result in a significant increase in costs for Children's Services especially in relation to families who have been found intentionally homeless and had their housing duty discharged by the Borough and District Housing Authorities</p>
<p>Cabinet Report – 25th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-</p>	<p>2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions</p>	<p>Disability Page 22</p>	<p>"I asked the DWP for help with form filling and was told they can't help as they've reached their quota. "This is the same for all these [statutory] services, they don't have time to help people like BHT do".</p>

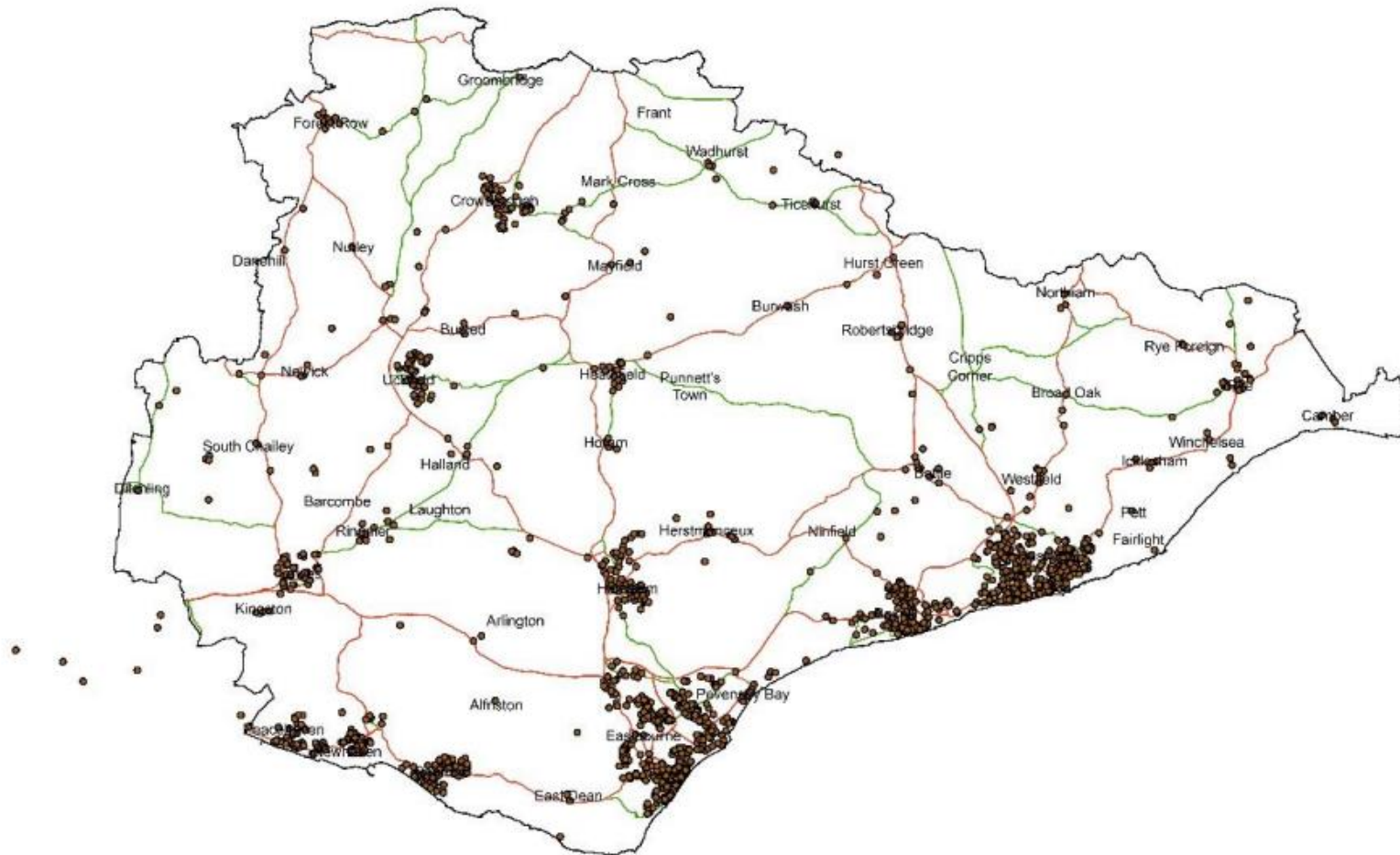
Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment			
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions	Pregnancy and maternity Page 25	This is likely to impact on District & Borough Councils and Children's Services as women who are classed as priority need under The Homelessness (Priority Need to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken. 26 for Accommodation) (England) Order 2022.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions	Race and ethnicity Page 26	Quote: "People are not helping me, I was told to go to CAB, no help there. I needed to move as quickly as possible. I was advised to go to the Police Station, they didn't help. They (BHT) helped me to get this place, but it is temporary for one year".
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions	Rurality Page 36	The map shows that the larger proportion of adults are from coastal urban towns of Hastings and Eastbourne, it also demonstrates the reach of the service into the rural areas of the county and proportionate with data population for East Sussex.
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions	Rough sleepers Page 41	Options for people sleeping rough are limited due to their often complex needs limited appropriate accommodation options. This is further exacerbated by several grant funding streams supporting services people with multiple compound needs, including the East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative and Changing Futures programme, due to end March 2025.

<p>Cabinet Report – 25th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations-</p>	<p>Page 43</p>	<p>There are some services in East Sussex that provide housing advice, but we know these are in high demand and don't necessarily offer the same level or type of support e.g. home visits and face-to-face. The service is heavily used by Adult Social Care and Health, the District and Borough Housing Authorities, Children's Services as well as other Statutory and VCSE organisations. This significant service reduction is likely to place an increased burden on these services and could lead to poorer housing outcomes for people. Homelessness and insecure housing are known to have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the individuals affected and consequently can be linked with increased use of healthcare and support services which has a significant impact on other stakeholders.</p> <p>Key Impacts: The Floating Support Service supported almost 5,300 residents during 2023/24 to access appropriate support to address their housing needs tailored to each individual situation with face-to-face support as needed.</p> <p>The proposed significant reduction in funding will have a negative impact on older people, pregnant women, households with children, disabled people, those from ethnic minority communities and those who have experienced multiple disadvantages. This is likely to have a knock-on effect to many areas ranging from Adult Social Care and Health, Children's Services, District and Borough Housing teams, local VCSE services, health and criminal justice services many of which are already facing reduced funding streams alongside an increase in demand.</p> <p>...This is further exacerbated with the proposal to withdraw funding for the support provided within Supported Accommodation and with several grant funding streams supporting services people with multiple compound needs, including the East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative and Changing Futures programme, currently due to end March 2025 leaving uncertainty about the future of these services.</p> <p>The money advice/welfare benefits provision in the county is under huge pressure with increasing demand and the ending of the Additional Measures funding in March 2025.</p>
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Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	3. List detailed data and/or community feedback that informed your EqlA	Page 48	Consultation meetings held with stakeholders: Heads of Service- Operational Management Team Meeting Homelessness Health and Support Group Mental Health and Supported Living Accommodation Board East Sussex Mental Health Oversight Board Mini East Sussex Housing Officers Groups Financial Inclusion Steering Group Changing Futures Citizens' Panel East Sussex Housing Partnership Board Disability Rights Representation Group East Sussex Inclusion Advisory Group Harm to Hope Partnership East Sussex Seniors Association
Cabinet Report – 25 th February 2025 Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment	3. List detailed data and/or community feedback that informed your EqlA	Page 49	Strategic Referral Partners including: Adult Social Care and Health Children's Services District and Borough Housing Authorities NHS services including Primary Care; Acute and Community hospitals; Mental Health; Community teams, Rehabilitation services; Maternity and Health Visiting; Social housing providers Advice Agencies VCSE services including Carers' organisations; Age UK; hospices; Stroke Association; housing and homelessness agencies; drug and alcohol services; MARAC (domestic abuse services) Police Probation Jobcentre Plus Schools Care agencies Private letting agencies Family/friends
Document name	Section	Paragraph reference	Text
Housing-Related Floating Support Service - Appendix 6 - Profile of Service	Local Housing Authorities	Paragraph 7	Local Housing Authorities: 1,416 referrals from the Local Housing Authorities (the 5 District and Boroughs- Hastings, Rother, Wealden, Eastbourne, Lewes):

Housing-Related Floating Support Service - Appendix 6 - Profile of Service

The map below shows the location of adults who used the service in 2023/24.



Document name	Section	Paragraph reference	Text
People Scrutiny Committee Pre-decision Board - 20 February 2025	General comments	1.5	The Board was concerned about the capacity of the independent and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to meet increases in demand as a result of proposals going ahead, and noted the fragility of the care market, particularly since the recent increases to national living wage and employer national insurance contributions. The Board discussed plans for local government reorganisation and commented that some savings proposals would have significant impacts on District and Borough Council services, which would become the responsibility of any new unitary authority.
People Scrutiny Committee Pre-decision Board - 20 February 2025	Housing-Related Floating Support Service	1.19	The Board was deeply concerned about this proposal and its likely impact on vulnerable clients, including increased risk of homelessness, and on strategic partners and the VCSE sector, including BHT Sussex. The Board felt that the proposal would shift additional pressures onto District and Borough Councils which had a statutory responsibility to provide support. The Board also expressed concern that this was a short-term solution and that housing support could be the responsibility of a new unitary authority in 3 years' time. However, the Board recognised that this service was not a statutory responsibility of the County Council and had therefore not been prioritised as an area to protect. In light of this, the Board reluctantly accepted the proposal.
People Scrutiny Committee Pre-decision Board - 20 February 2025	Housing Related Floating Support	1.20	The Board received assurance that, although referrals would be reduced, priority would be given to referrals from Children's Services and individuals most at risk of developing Care Act eligible needs, which included those with care experience.
People Scrutiny Committee Pre-decision Board - 20 February 2025	Supported Accommodation	1.22 1.23	The Board was deeply concerned about this proposal and its likely impact on vulnerable clients, including increased risk of homelessness, and on strategic partners. The Board felt that the proposal would shift additional pressures onto District and Borough Councils which had a statutory responsibility to provide support. The Board also expressed concern that this was a short-term solution and that housing support could be the responsibility of a new unitary authority in 3 years' time. However, the Board recognised that this was not a statutory responsibility of the County Council and had therefore not been prioritised as an area to protect and reluctantly accepted the proposal.

			The Board welcomed that the Department would continue to work with partners, including Districts and boroughs to redesign and co-produce a targeted service around homelessness prevention.
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