

19 May 2022

## Housing Advisers Programme

### Purpose of report

For information

### Summary

This report provides an update on the Housing Advisers Programme (HAP) to date, including the whole programme evaluation survey conducted in November 2021 and plans for the 2022/23 programme, which will be cohort 6.

Is this report confidential? Yes  No

### Recommendations

Comments on the programme so far and suggestions for the programme going forward are welcomed. These will be taken into consideration by officers in developing the 2022/23 Housing Advisers Programme offer.

### Action/s

Officers to progress work on the 2022/23 HAP taking into account comments from the Board.

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## Housing Advisers Programme

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing Advisers Programme (HAP) aims to fund local authorities in England, alone, or in partnership, to access specialist advice to address their local housing needs. This often involves an obstacle to tackling the housing crisis in their local area that they lack the skills, data or capacity to resolve. HAP has been running since 2017 and has supported 5 cohorts of participants to deliver more than 150 projects so far.
- 1.2 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has confirmed funding for the 2022/23 HAP, which will be cohort 6. A project inception meeting has been scheduled with the relevant DLUHC officers on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- 1.3 Between November and December 2021, we conducted an online survey of HAP participants from the financial year 2017/18 onwards (cohorts 1-3). The purpose of this survey was to evaluate the impact of this programme on its participants and their authorities since its inception in 2017. A total of 31 participants responded.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on the outcomes of the evaluation report, and a brief outline of the options for cohort 6 (HAP 2022/23).

### 2. HAP evaluation survey

- 2.1 [Responses to the HAP evaluation survey](#) indicated that HAP has historically exceeded the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) agreed with DLUHC for the 2021/22 cohort. Key findings included:
  - The vast majority of respondents (97 per cent) said that the programme had or likely will have a lasting impact on their council's ability to deliver housing and homelessness services, rough sleeping provision, and place making
  - One hundred per cent of respondents said that the programme has had a positive impact overall.
  - The vast majority of respondents (97 per cent) said that they would definitely or probably recommend the programme if asked about it.
  - The key goal which respondents' councils most often wanted to achieve through the Housing Advisers Programme was increased general housing supply, identified by 42 per cent of respondents, although a wide range of other goals were also identified. These included: reducing homelessness; improved planning services; improving housing quality and carbon reduction in homes.
  - The vast majority (ranging from 83 to 100 per cent) of respondents who selected each goal reported that the programme had helped their council to make some progress towards that goal. Increased specialist housing supply was the goal which respondents said the programme had helped them make the most progress towards.
- 2.2 The survey is supported by case studies which explore the impact of HAP in more depth and also form part of the KPI agreement with DLUHC

### **3. HAP cohorts 5 and 6 (2021/22 and 2022/23)**

- 3.1. The HAP 2021-22 budget (cohort 5) was originally £190,000 with an additional £60,000 for homelessness projects directed through HAP. In discussion with DLUHC, it was agreed that HAP cohort 5 should have an increased focus on strategic housing projects that support councils in the direct delivery of new housing, which was reflected in the 2021-22 prospectus. In Quarter 4 we received an additional £500,000 funding for the 2021-22 programme.
- 3.2. This additional funding enabled us to support additional projects which had been unsuccessful in the first round, along with targeted projects, which were identified by the regional improvement teams.
- 3.3. DLUHC colleagues have confirmed that they are still keen for the HAP to have an increased focus on the direct delivery of new council housing for 2022/23.

We will need to balance this carefully with HAPs historic local focus, which supports councils to identify specific challenges in their local area which could benefit from external advice.

- 3.4. In the light of the survey results, DLUHC's requirements and the small number of targeted projects funded in 2021/22, we will therefore be considering different options for HAP 2022/23, including whether to increase the amount of targeted support.
- 3.5. We would therefore welcome the board's views and suggestion on the future shape of HAP in advance of the project inception meeting with DLUHC colleagues.

### **4. Financial implications**

- 4.1. HAP is fully funded via the grant determination from DLUHC

### **5. Implications for Wales**

- 5.1. HAP funding is only available to English Councils.

### **6. Equalities Implications**

- 6.1. As HAP is an arms-length programme, where funding and/or support is given to councils it does not have any direct impact on groups with protected characteristics.
- 6.2. Nonetheless, the LGA is committed to ensuring the application process for HAP is fully accessible to all eligible councils

19 May 2022

- 6.3. Considering both targeted support as well as inviting bids may address any indirect disadvantage occasioned by the bid-process being less accessible to councils in areas of higher socio-economic disadvantage.

## **7. Next Steps**

- 7.1. Following the project initiation meeting on 20th May 2022, officers will draft a more detailed project proposal for HAP 2022/23. This will be agreed with DLUHC colleagues and the EEHT board, and the HAP 2022/23 offer will be launched later in 2022.