

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny 21st January 2013

Update on Schemes and Initiatives Funded through Homelessness Grant for 2012/13.

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Del Booth
Relevant Head of Service	Deputy Chief Executive

1.0 Background Information

- 1.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on the 27th February 2012 the Strategic Housing Team were requested to provide an update on the Homelessness Grant funded initiatives for 2012/13 that were approved by Cabinet on the 1st February 2012.
- 1.2 The annual Homelessness grant to BDC, allocated through Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has been used each year since 2002 to fund a range of homelessness support services and schemes that focus upon the prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness. Austerity measures introduced by the Government have put households under greater financial pressure and are leading to increases in homelessness in the District. To help support local authorities to manage the increase in demand for services DCLG increased the amount of homelessness grant it awards to local authorities. For Bromsgrove, this resulted in the Homelessness Grant allocation increasing by 40% to £113,470 for 2011/12 and 2012/13.

2.0 Allocation of Homelessness Grant

- 2.1 The table below shows the allocation awarded for 2012/13 projects

Allocation of CLG Homeless Grant 2012/13		
Homelessness Grant for 2012/13	Bid allocation	Actual SPEND IN YEAR
Amount Carried Forward from 11/12	18,531	
Homelessness Grant for 12/13	114,000	
Total	132,531	
CAB Mortgage Rescue Adviser allocated 08/08	17,600	17,600
Housing Options Service	15,000	15,000
Floating Homelessness Prevention Officers	24,000	24,000
mYPlace Rent Deposit Scheme for under 25's	21,500	21,500
Newstart Furniture Project	8,500	8,500
Homelessness Coordinator	2,500	4,500
Night Assessment Centre	3,000	5,375
Step Up – salary	21,000	21,000
St Basils – exp approved in 11/12 inc in carry forward	0	15,000
Total	113,100	132,475

2.2 CAB - Owner Occupier Money Adviser

The Owner Occupier specialist adviser at the CAB offers free, impartial advice for owner occupiers to prevent repossession and homelessness, and to assist clients at risk of getting into mortgage arrears. The hours spent working with each client varies from 9 to 24 hours with an average of 10 hours per client. In total 6 cases have been assisted by the mortgage rescue scheme. The remainder have been resolved by accessing additional benefits such as support for mortgage interest, debt prioritisation, negotiation with mortgage lenders or in a minority of cases where mortgage rescue and other options are exhausted, working with households to plan their move on into other tenures. During 2011/12 78 clients were assisted and in the first 6 months of 2012/13 31 clients were assisted.

2.3 Housing Options

In 2007 the Homelessness Service was re-structured to enable a more preventative approach to those who are homeless and those who are threatened with homelessness by creating a Housing Options Service. The funding is used to enable home visits to be undertaken. The service is offered to anyone seeking advice regarding housing and is supported by the Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme, the mYPlace scheme and Home Choice Plus. The number of clients accessing the service has steadily increased from 646 in 2007/08 to 787 2011/12 and an anticipated 832 in 2012/13.

2.4 Homeless Prevention Floating Support Officers

This service is jointly funded with bdht and Supporting People to provide floating non tenure specific support to 18+ year olds who are homeless or potentially homeless. Clients are supported to maintain their accommodation and prevent them from becoming homeless, or to secure accommodation and sustain it thereby avoiding repeat homelessness. The officers work closely with the Housing Options team to ensure a seamless service for clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and prioritise those customers in most need of support. 100% of all clients were successfully supported to live independently in 11/12. The service was awarded an A rating by SP under the QAF in July 2012. 48 households were supported in 2011/12 and 63 supported in the first 6 months of 2012/13.

2.5 St Basils 'mYPlace' Private Tenancy Scheme

mYPlace sources safe, affordable accommodation for young people in the Private Rented Sector, working with local landlords. They support and prepare 18-25 year olds that are homeless or at risk of homelessness to rent privately, creating sustainable tenancies by providing financial support, ensuring affordability, support with independent living skills including setting up utilities, regular tenancy health checks, accessing furniture needed, as well as ongoing support if required. 8 placements have been achieved since April 2012. St Basils have assisted in rehousing a further 13 young people, and

continue to support 7 people on the waiting list and have enabled 3 young people to return to live with their families.

2.6 NewStarts Furniture Project

NewStarts furniture project has grown rapidly into the largest furniture re-use scheme in Worcestershire. It assists those who are homeless and requiring furniture to access settled accommodation earlier and helps those who are on limited incomes to access cheap furniture and avoid getting into debt. The scheme helped 341 households in 2011/12 and 198 in the first six months of 2012/13.

2.7 County Homelessness Co-ordinator

The County Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator post is responsible for the co-ordination, implementation, monitoring, reviewing and updating the Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy and action plan. This is a jointly funded post between the six local authorities in Worcestershire and Supporting People.

2.8 Night Assessment Centre

The Night Assessment Centre creates a place of safety for people who would otherwise have to sleep rough during the coldest months of the year – November to March – to keep warm and have some food. All clients who access the service have their needs and requirements assessed and a support plan is developed. Support is given to secure temporary or permanent accommodation that is appropriate for the individual. Where clients are presenting with other needs eg: mental health, they will be offered an opportunity to be referred to the appropriate service. 9 clients were assisted in 2011/12 with a local connection to Bromsgrove. The contribution for 2011/12 was carried forward as Worcester City Council were late submitting the invoice for the 2011/12 financial year.

2.9 Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme for over 25's

The Step Up private tenancy scheme was established in 2007 and supports homeless households to access private rented accommodation by offering them help with paying for rent in advance and deposit, therefore, preventing their homelessness. The scheme enabled 21 placements into the PRS during 2011/12 and 17 for the first 6 months of 2012/13. In addition, the Step Up scheme has enabled 17 empty homes to be brought back into use in 2011/12 and 4 empty homes to be brought back into use in the first 6 months of 2012/13.

2.10 St Basils – Callowbrook Lane

During the previous financial year £15,000 was identified to support St Basils in the refurbishment and management of Callowbrook Lane which comprises 15 units of self contained accommodation, leased through a Private Sector Leasing Scheme. The funding was carried forward to 2012/13 as the refurbishment wasn't completed until Spring 2012. The accommodation is available to under 25's that are homeless

or potentially homeless and prepared to engage with training and support.

3.0 Homelessness Performance

- 3.1 The number of people presenting as homeless, those accepted and the outcome of homelessness prevention services are monitored by the Strategic Housing Team on a quarterly basis. The table below forecasts an increase across all areas for 2013 and this trend is likely to continue due to a range of Welfare Reforms from April 2013.

Performance info 2009/10	Total 2008/9	Total 2009/10	Total 2010/11	Total 2011/12	Projected 2012/13
Presentations	119	123	115	127	144
Acceptances	69	63	66	67	78
No of people in temp accommodation	13 on 31/3/09	14 on 31/3/10	31 on 31/3/11	26 on 31/3/12	50 estimate for 31/3/13
Preventions	172	155	198	204	220
Housing advice (BDHT)	695	766	756	787	832

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