

HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING APPROVAL FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND TO SUPPORT HOMELESS FAMILIES FOR 2017/18

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis – Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Since the Homelessness Act 2002, the Government has allocated homelessness grant funding to local authorities to prevent and tackle homelessness.
- 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. These schemes play a key role in meeting the Council's Strategic Purposes:
- Help me live my life independently
 - Help me find somewhere to live in my locality
 - Help me to be financially independent
- 1.3 BDC has made £111k homelessness grant available for the 2017/18 financial year. It has been agreed by Cabinet that £15k underspend originally earmarked for ELF be used for Homelessness Grant for 17/18. The total funding with carry forward is £142k.
- 1.4 This report seeks Members approval to award Homelessness Grant to specific schemes recommended by the Strategic Housing Manager and delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder and Head of Community Services to allocate any underspend of Homelessness Grant during 2017/18 towards dealing with and preventing homelessness.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet RESOLVE as follows:-

- 2.1 That the initiatives in 3.7 recommended by the Strategic Housing Manager be approved to receive funding from the Homelessness Grant for 2017/18.

- 2.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to use any unallocated Homelessness Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the homelessness Grant for 2017/18 in support of existing or new schemes.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Council has agreed a budget of £111k for the 2017/18 Homelessness Grant allocation.
- 3.2 Worcestershire County Council has confirmed an allocation of £11k to the Council to part fund the Young Persons Pathway Worker post.
- 3.3 Income from the St Basils Crash Pad will contribute to the carry forward from 2016/17 making a total of £19k and the Council has anticipated an income of £1k for 2018/19.
- 3.4 The Council therefore has a total £142k for Homelessness Prevention Services in 2017/18.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 Prevention of homelessness through the initiatives and schemes developed and funded through DCLG Grant assists the Council in meeting its statutory duties to those threatened with homelessness and homeless applicants under the Homeless provisions of the Housing Act 1996, and the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002.

Service / Operational Implications

3.7

Homelessness Grant	2017/18 £
BDHT Housing Options Service – home visits	12,000
Worcs Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator (Previously Homelessness Co-ordinator)	6,300
Step Up Private Sector Placement Scheme	16,000
Young Persons Pathway Worker	17,200

St Basils Crash Pad	7,800
Basement Drop In service	20,000
Fry Housing Related Support	23,800
NewStarts Furniture Project	8,000
St Basils Foyer	31,000
Total committed expenditure	142,100

3.8 Recently announced cuts by Worcestershire County Council to Housing Related Support have meant that this year the focus is on retaining the existing supported housing scheme with St Basils that is under threat. The scheme provides specialist accommodation for young people including a crash pad for 16/17 year olds, which supports the Council to meet its statutory duty towards homeless households. Overall homelessness in Bromsgrove has remained stable but this could easily change with the loss of this specialist accommodation.

3.9 The below table shows homelessness performance figures:

Bromsgrove Homelessness Performance Table

	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Presentations	115	127	138	122	120	123	Q1 22 Q2 22
Acceptances	66	66	78	68	68	70	Q1 16 Q2 12
Preventions	198	204	192	225	263	240	Q1 76 Q2 51
Housing Options Interviews	756	787	802	793	714	654	Q1 219 Q2 168
Rough Sleepers Snapshot Estimate	7	3	3	1	3	4	2

3.10 There are still concerns that welfare reforms, combined with the reduction in housing-related support available to tenants across all tenure types could mean that the number of customers requiring help to sustain their accommodation and avoid becoming homeless may increase over time.

3.11 The Homeless Reduction Bill, which has received Government backing and cross party support is likely to be enacted October 2017, will place a duty on Local Authorities to prevent homelessness for all applicants. Additional funding has been earmarked by the Government in order to support this statutory requirement.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.12 The Homelessness grant will benefit customers by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness and where possible to support them to remain in their own homes. These schemes play a role in meeting the Council's Strategic Purposes:

- Help me live my life independently
- Help me find somewhere to live in my locality
- Help me to be financially independent

3.13 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 If the recommended schemes are not approved there is a risk that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited alternative options. There is also therefore the risk that they may have to make a homeless approach and this could consequently lead to the following negative outcomes:

- Increased B&B costs
- Increased rough sleeping in the District
- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness

4.2 All recipients of Homelessness Grant will enter into a grant agreement and have regular monitoring with officers on the delivery of the service

5. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

6. KEY

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