

CABINET

13th January 2020

Homelessness Prevention Grant Allocation for 2021/22

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Shirley Webb
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 This report seeks Members approval to award the new Homelessness Prevention Grant which uplifts and combines Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Grant and the usual Homelessness Grant to specific schemes recommended by the Strategic Housing Manager. Additionally, it seeks to delegate authority to the Head of Community and Housing Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to allocate any underspend of grant during 2020/21 on schemes to prevent homelessness and assist those who actually become homeless.
- 1.2 The purpose of the new ringfenced Homelessness Prevention Grant fund is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness. The Government expects local authorities to use it to deliver the following priorities:
- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness
 - Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention
 - Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six week limit.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet RESOLVE as follows:-

- 2.1 That the initiatives in 3.7 be approved to receive allocation of funding 2021/22.

- 2.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2021/22 in support of existing or new schemes.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 In addition to the annual MHCLG Homelessness Grant, the Council has been awarded new Homelessness Prevention Grant that combines and uplifts Flexible Homelessness Grant and Homelessness Reduction Grant. This report sets out how the Council intends to utilise this funding to create a package of support and services to prevent homelessness and support those who become homeless.
- 3.2 The annual homelessness grant to BDC, allocated through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) 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 Vision:
- 'To enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of high quality services, ensuring that all in need receive the appropriate help and support'.
- 3.3 The new Homelessness Prevention Grant has been ring fenced by the MHCLG for activities that prevent and deal with homelessness.
- 3.4 The Council has agreed a budget of £112,000 for the 2021/22 Homelessness Grant allocation. In addition, Worcestershire County Council ordinarily allocates £11,200 to the Council to part fund the Young Persons Pathway Worker post. The new Homelessness Prevention Grant award is £158,594.
- 3.5 The Council therefore has the following for Homelessness Prevention Services and Housing Options in 2020/21 (including grant from Worcestershire County Council), as follows:

Grant	2020/21
Homelessness Grant Including YPPW	£127,200

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Homelessness Prevention Grant	£158,594
Total Grant Available	£285,794

Legal Implications

- 3.6 Homelessness support and prevention initiatives and schemes developed and funded through MHCLG Grant assist the Council in meeting its statutory duties to those threatened with homelessness and those who are actually experiencing homelessness, including those placed in Temporary Accommodation under the Homeless provisions of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.7 It is recommended that the Grant monies are allocated as follows:

Grant Allocation	2020/21 £ (up to)
Young Persons Pathway Worker – support to prevent homelessness for under 25's	24,700
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	6,300
Single Person and Childless Couples Homelessness Prevention Service top up	1,924
CCP - Rapid Response Winter Weather Workers to respond to notifications of rough sleeping during the coldest months	3,500
No Second Night Out Rough Sleeping Accom	1,000
St Basils Crash Pad – provide a unit of emergency accommodation to young homeless people	10,164
NewStarts - Provide Furniture and Volunteering Opportunities for Ex-Offenders – supports tenancy sustainment and provides future employment opportunities/reduces risk of reoffending	15,000
Fry/Accord Housing Related Support – helping ex-offenders remain housed/seek employment	22,539

St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	30,000
Managing Temporary Accommodation Costs for BDHT	15,500
CCP- outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.	25,269
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of homelessness	35,000
bdht – Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens	36,975
Step Up – Private Tenancy Scheme	18,200
bdht - HomeStart Packs	1,100
Total committed expenditure	247,171

- 3.8 An element of the BDHT three year contract includes the management of Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households. The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government has been allocated for the purpose of managing temporary accommodation and supporting those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Council therefore proposes to allocate £15,500 from this grant to fund this element of the service, as listed below
- 3.9 The notification of the uplift in grant was received on the 21st December 2020 and officers will need to undertake a review of the provision of services for the prevention of homelessness to make best use of this additional funding.
- 3.10 Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments to current initiatives as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grant for 2021/22.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 The Homelessness Grant and Homelessness Prevention Grant will benefit customers by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness, support them to remain in their own homes or help the

Council to manage and support households in Temporary Accommodation.

- 3.12 These schemes and functions play a role in meeting the Council's Strategic Vision:
'To enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of high quality services, ensuring that all in need receive the appropriate help and support'.
- 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 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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