

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

APRIL 1ST 2009

OUTURN EXPENDITURE OF CLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING FOR 2008/09, UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AND PROPOSED USE OF GRANT FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTATIVE SCHEMES FOR 2009/10 – 2010/11.

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor P. Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Planning and Environment
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Since the Homelessness Act 2002, the Government has allocated grant funding to local authorities to prevent and tackle homelessness and to help achieve the Government target set for each LA of halving the number of homeless people living in temporary accommodation by 2010.
- 1.2 The annual grant to BDC, allocated through Communities and Local Government (CLG) has been used to fund a range of homelessness support services and schemes that focus upon the prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness in the District and has assisted the Council in meeting the Government's target of halving the use of temporary accommodation ahead of schedule.
- 1.3 This report provides members with information relating to:
- The schemes in place in this District funded by CLG Grant during 2008/09 which provide support to the homeless or help to prevent homelessness.
 - The impact the preventative services have had on reducing homeless presentations and acceptances and the authorities performance against the Government target of reducing the use of temporary accommodation by 2010.
 - The award of additional CLG homelessness grant in recognition of the Council becoming a Regional Centre of Excellence for Youth Homelessness.

and seeks Members approval of the recommendations for the award of grant to specific schemes in 2009/10 and 2010/11 that have been made by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the update on the homelessness preventative and support schemes funded through CLG Homelessness Grant during 2008/09 be noted.
- 2.2 That the Council's continued performance in halving the use of temporary accommodation in advance of the Government's 2010 target date be noted.
- 2.3 That the submissions for the funding of schemes recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group as set out at Sect 7 of the report be approved to receive funding from the Council's CLG Homelessness Grant for 2009/10.
- 2.4 That funding of £12,000 be forward allocated from the Council's CLG Homelessness Grant for 2010/11 to support the second year of the new CAB Mortgage Rescue Money Advisor service a detailed at 8.1 of the report.
- 2.5 That the Head of Planning & Environment Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing be granted delegated authority to allocate any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2009/10 in support of existing or new schemes.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since the Homelessness Act 2002, the Government has allocated grant funding to local authorities to prevent and tackle homelessness and repeat homelessness and to help achieve the Government target set for all local housing authorities to halve the number of homeless people living in temporary accommodation by 2010. Since its inception, the annual grant to BDC, allocated through Communities and Local Government (CLG) has been used to fund a range of homelessness support services provided in the District by a range of partner organisations.
- 3.2 The Government requires the following outcomes to be delivered by the grant:
 - Reduced and sustained reduction in the level of rough sleeping by at least two thirds below the level in 1998.

- Avoidance of long-term use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families with households with children or a pregnant woman.
- By 2010 end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for young people between 16 and 17 years of age.
- Reduction in the use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010.

3.3 As the Council experiences minimal or no rough sleeping and has very low usage of B&B (using hostel and self contained dispersed units to house homeless families), the first three requirements (above) are currently being controlled.

In terms of the final outcome, sound preventative services have helped us to achieve, and continue to achieve, the reduction in the use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 and will continue to support the Council's aim to phase out the use of hostel accommodation.

4. SCHEMES FUNDED BY CLG GRANT DURING 2008/09 WHICH PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE HOMELESS AND/OR HELP TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS.

4.1 Members may recall that as the Strategic Housing Authority, BDC coordinates and leads the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group which in partnership with a range of organisations has helped us to develop the Homelessness section of the Housing Strategy and action plan to address the support needs of the homeless and have developed schemes aimed at the prevention of homelessness.

4.2 Last year, for the first time, the Council was awarded Homelessness Grant totalling £80,000 for a three year period from 08/09 – 10/11. On the 6th February 2008 the Executive Cabinet gave approval to the grant funding for 2008/09 – 2010/11 being used in accordance with the recommendations made by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group. The Executive Cabinet also gave delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder to re-allocate any under spend.

The grant funding for 2008/09 has therefore been allocated and utilised as follows:

Allocation of CLG Homeless Grant 2008/09		
	Bids	Actual
	£	£
Amount C/f from 07/08	27,122	
Homelessness Grant	80,000	
Total available	107,122	
Homeless focus group	500	500
Newstart	5,000	5,000
Baseline Rent Deposit Scheme	18,000	18,000
Centrepont	3,500	0

Nightstop	8,000	0
Floating Homelessness Prevention Officers	24,000	24,000
Home Visiting Role	15,000	15,000
Consultation	1,000	200
Spend to save	3,000	3,000
Under occupation	24,000	0
Temporary Accommodation Reduction	939	939
Sanctuary	1,308	0
Homelessness Module	875	875
Total	105,122	67,514
CAB Mortgage Rescue Money Adviser (approved under spend to cover year 1 in 2009/10)		12,000
Total		79,514

An additional award of £10,000 homelessness grant (see table below) was made in July 2008 when the Council in partnership with Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum and Bromsgrove District Housing Trust was recognised as a Regional Centre of Excellence for Youth Homelessness. This funding is primarily to enable BDC and BYHF to host and assist other authorities in sharing our good practice.

Additional £10,000 Homelessness Grant Award for 2008/09	Awarded for specific scheme	Spend up to March 09
Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum	5,000	5,000
RCE Event 7 th May 2009	4000	4000
Education Initiative	1,000	1,000
	10,000	10,000

4.3 The new initiatives funded during **2008/09** are progressing as follows:

Baseline Rent Deposit Scheme (Private Tenancy Scheme) for under 25's

Through the provision of additional funding for a full time officer to deliver the Private Tenancy Scheme 22 young people and 6 children were successfully prevented from becoming homeless through 10 private tenancies between April and December 2008. During 2008 funding was secured from Supporting People to provide a floating support officer for those placed in private rented accommodation through the scheme.

NewStart Re-Use and Resettlement Project

Funding for the development of the New Start's furniture and resettlement project by New Song Church resulted in 78 deliveries within the District, including a total of 383 items of

furniture between April and December 2008. 64% of deliveries were to high priority homeless households.

Under occupation

There is evidence that there are significant numbers of people under occupying their homes and the Council had identified funding for a research project to understand the full scale of under occupation and what opportunities might exist or be put in place to encourage people to downsize. This piece of research was put on hold awaiting the implementation of Home Choice Plus Choice Based Lettings. However, the Council has supported a bid from Rooftop Housing for Supporting People to fund two Countywide officers to support those that have indicated a willingness to downsize. The Council has committed £10,000 of the £24,000 above towards the provision of incentives for the scheme; this could include help with removals or provision of carpets etc.

Mortgage Rescue Money Adviser

Following the launch of Central Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme the Head of Planning and Environment and the Portfolio Holder, who have delegated authority for the re-allocation of under spend, approved £12k homelessness grant for the provision of a Mortgage Rescue Money Adviser with CAB. The officer will provide a rapid response to enquiries from anxious home owners who are struggling to pay their mortgage. Recruitment is now underway and an officer is expected to be in post by the 6th April 2009. Whilst approval has been given for the first year's funding the CAB would like to be able to offer the position for a 2 year period to compliment the national Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

5.0 THE IMPACT THAT PREVENTATIVE SERVICES HAVE HAD ON REDUCING HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS AND ACCEPTANCES AND THE AUTHORITIES PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT TARGET OF REDUCING THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION BY 2010.

- 5.1 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 indicates a trend of reducing homeless presentations and acceptances and a growing number of cases that are being prevented from becoming homeless.
- 5.2 In 2004, the Government set all housing authorities a target of reducing the number of homeless clients living in temporary accommodation by

2010. For Bromsgrove, this meant reducing our numbers from 68 to 34, which whilst aiming to phase out the use of hostels and retain minimal use of B&B would be a difficult task to achieve without sound preventative services.

- 5.3 At the 31st December 2007, we achieved the target figure of 34 when we recorded only 33 clients occupying temporary accommodation. This means that the Council, with the support of BDHT, CAB, Baseline and partner support services achieved the government's target two years ahead of the deadline. Over the last year the numbers in temporary accommodation have continued to reduce to 10 households at the end of Dec 2008. It must be recognised that changing circumstances such as any increase in mortgage repossessions under the current economic climate may significantly alter our performance in the future.

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	Up to Dec 08
Homeless Presentations	320	341	249	141	92
Homeless Acceptances	141	175	122	90	57
Cases prevented from being homeless	Not recorded	52	76	157	118
Numbers in temp accom	75	97	63	16	10

6.0 THE CLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING THAT HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FOR 2009/10.

- 6.1 Last year CLG allocated Homelessness Grant of £80,000pa for three financial years, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11. This has enabled more security and forward planning of services. The following schemes were approved last year for a 3 year period.

Name of Project	Grant Approved £	Period of grant	Outcomes Other Considerations
BYHF – Private Tenancy Scheme for under 25's	18,000	3 years	Continuation of scheme offering rent deposit, rent in advance and support to assist under 25's to access private

			rented accommodation
BDHT – Floating Support Service	24,000	3 years	Continuation of the floating support service for homeless or potentially homeless. This scheme is jointly funded by Supporting People and BDHT.
New Start Re-use and Resettlement Project	5,000	3 years	To provide furniture and support to homeless people.
	47,000	3 years	

7.0 DETAILS OF THE SCHEMES RECOMMENDED BY THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY STEERING GROUP TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDING FOR 2009/10.

- 7.1 At the last meeting of the Homelessness Steering Group on 29th January 2009, bids for funding of preventative schemes during 2009/10 were considered.

The Steering Group considered bids against the available amount of £60,608 (which is made up of £27,608 c/f from 08/09 + £80,000 CLG grant for 09/10 less £47,000 3 year approvals, approved by the Executive Cabinet last year as itemised at in 6.1 above).

The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group recommended the following schemes for approval by the Executive Cabinet.

Name of Project	Initial Bid £	Grant Recommended £	Period of grant	Outcomes Other Considerations
Home Visiting Service – BDHT	15,000	15,000	1 year	Service provided by BDHT in accordance with the recommendations of the CLG Homelessness Advisor following their assessment visit to BDC in 2007.
NewStarts – Part time van driver	£5,000	£5,000	1yr	To meet the growing expectations and demand for doorstep furniture collections

				and deliveries.
The Basement Service Manager	£5,200	£5,200	1yr	To provide more management hours for the running of the Basement 'Drop in' service.
The Basement Service Team Leader	£2,000	£2,000	1yr	To appoint a team leader to develop a peer mentoring project.
Consultation Fund	£500	£500	1yr	To provide financial incentives to encourage the completion of satisfaction surveys and engagement in other consultative work.
Spend to Save	£4,000	£4,000	1yr	Additional funding to resolve homeless and potentially homeless situations and avert use of temporary accommodation.
County Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator	£2,500	£2,500	2yrs	To be responsible for the co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and review of the Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy. (All districts being asked to contribute)
Education Initiative	£2,000	£2,000	1 yr	To work with local schools to disseminate preventative information about Housing and Homelessness.
Training Flat	£2,728	£2,728	2 yrs	To provide young people an opportunity to experience independent living on a trial period of up to 4 weeks following which they return home. The Training Flat is intended to help young people understand their responsibilities and find out whether they are

				ready for independent living thus increasing their chances of future tenancy sustainment.
Under occupation	£18,000	£18,000	1 yr	To commission research into the level of under occupation across social housing in the District and identify support/incentives to encourage downsizing and thus free up accommodation to house the homeless.
		56,928		

7.2 The recommendations from the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group to support additional schemes during 2009/10 therefore total £56,928 leaving a surplus of £3,680 for allocation under delegated authority within the year if required.

8.0 REQUEST FOR FORWARD APPROVAL OF GRANT FOR YEAR 2 OF CAB MORTGAGE RESCUE MONEY ADVISER SERVICE FROM 2010/11 CLG GRANT.

8.1 Funding to support Year 1 of new service at CAB to assist home owners under threat of mortgage repossession has been approved from the 2008/9 CLG Grant under delegated authority. This will support the service from April 2009 – March 2010. To ensure the longer term continuity of this scheme during the current and projected economic downturn, Members are asked to approve in advance, funding for the second year of the service to cover the period April 2010 – March 2011 from the Council's CLG Homelessness Grant for 2010/11.

Name of Project	Initial Bid £	Grant Recommended £	Period of grant	Outcomes Other Considerations
CAB Mortgage Rescue Money Adviser	12,000	12,000	2 years	This specialist adviser will be able to advise and support owner occupiers experiencing difficulties in meeting their mortgage repayments thereby

				preventing homelessness. Information will be collected to help the Council influence changes to the national Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
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9.0 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- 9.1 Members are therefore asked to approve from 2009/10 CLG Homelessness Grant, the funding of schemes recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group amounting to £56,928 as set out at 7.1 of this report.
- 9.2 In addition, as detailed at 8.1 above, Members are also asked to forward allocate £12,000 from the Council's CLG Homelessness Grant for 2010/11 to support the second year of the new CAB Mortgage Rescue Money Advisor service.
- 9.2 Finally, as in previous years, Members are asked to grant the Head of Planning & Environment Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder For Strategic Housing delegated authority to approve re-allocation of any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2009/10 in support of existing or new schemes.

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 In summary the financial implications are as follows:

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Carry forward from 07/08	£27,608
Grant 09/10	£80,000
	£107,608
Approved 08/09 (per 6.1)	-£47,000
	£60,608
Recommended projects (per 7.1)	-£56,928
Balance remaining	£3,680

- The final recommendation asks members to pre allocate £12,000 of the 2010/11 grant allocation to enable 2 year security to the CAB Mortgage Rescue Money Advisor service.

- 10.2 Grant funding under the Homelessness (In Need of Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 is allocated by the CLG to local authorities in accordance with their expenditure upon schemes up to the allocation limit. Accordingly the expenditure incurred in supporting the schemes does not fall upon this authority.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Prevention of homelessness through the schemes developed and funded through CLG Grant assist the Council in meeting its statutory duties to homeless applicants under the Homeless provisions of the Housing Act 1996 and the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 that prevents local authorities from placing homeless families or expectant mothers in B&B type accommodation.

12.0 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 12.1 **Objective 1 – Regeneration (Town Centre and Housing)**
Improved standard of support and preventative service for homeless people.
- 12.2 **Objective 2 – Improvement**
Improved service to customers by the ability to provide a higher standard of prevention and support service together with more choice in solutions available.
- 12.3 **Objective 3 – Sense of Community and Wellbeing**
Homelessness prevention, reduction and support influences health and wellbeing.
- 12.4 **Priority 4 – Environment – (Clean Streets)**
Reduction of homelessness helps a more planned allocation of housing thus supporting better neighbourhood integration and therefore reduces any negative impact upon the environment.

13.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 13.1 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 the risk that they may have to make a homeless approach and this could consequently lead to the following risks:
- Inability by the Council to meet the statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation in the District thus necessitating placement in B&B accommodation outside of the District.
 - Increased B&B costs.

- Inability to maintain the DCLG target of reducing temporary accommodation by 50% by the year 2010, NPI 156 – Number of households living in temporary accommodation

14. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

14.1 This scheme will benefit the Council's customer, by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness. Where possible to enable them to remain in their own homes, the Council will be encouraging them to be more independent and take responsibility for their housing situation.

The scheme will also benefit the larger community as there will be fewer households making homeless approaches, and in turn less homeless households in the district.

15. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues
None
Personnel Implications
None
Governance/Performance Management
Ability to improve and maintain performance against BVPI's as detailed in the report.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998
None
Policy
None
Environmental
None
Equalities and Diversity
One of the recommended schemes is to provide Focus Group and consultation opportunities. These will assist the Council and BDHT in

identifying E&D issues relevant to homeless and potentially homeless persons and provide an opportunity to review services provided. It is anticipated that the research into underoccupation may also include an analysis of overcrowding which will assist the Council in identifying E&D issues relevant to households in either of these positions.

16. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive Officer	Yes
Executive Director (Services)	Yes
Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

17. WARDS AFFECTED

17.1 The homeless prevention services and issues covered in the report are District wide and are not specific to any particular ward.

18.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 None

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