

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

22nd November 2023

Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation for 2024/25

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis Head of Community and Housing Services
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Not Applicable
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work and financial independence• Living independent, active and healthy lives• Affordable and sustainable homes• Communities which are safe, well maintained and green
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RESOLVE that:-

- 1.1 That the initiatives in 3.5 be approved to receive allocation of funding 2024/25.
- 1.2 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 2024/25 in support of existing or new schemes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report seeks Members approval to award the DLUHC Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant and the Council's own 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

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allocate any underspend of grant during 2024/25 on schemes to prevent homelessness and assist those who become homeless.

2.2 The purpose of the 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.

2.3 The council received a number of applications for this funding and this criteria was used to support the award of this grant.

2.4 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant funding has been allocated to ensure that councils can comply with the requirements to provide safe and supported accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse. The grant will contribute to a specialist County co-ordinator post and a specialist County Research and Intelligence Officer post and will also be used to support existing services that meet the needs of this cohort.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 In addition to the annual Homelessness Grant £112,000, the Council has been awarded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Homelessness Prevention Grant £168,763 and £35,298 Domestic Abuse New Burdens funding. 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 Homelessness Prevention Grant has been ring fenced by DLUHC for activities that prevent and deal with homelessness.

3.3 The Council has agreed a budget of £112,000 for the 2024/25 Homelessness Grant allocation. In addition, the DLUHC Homelessness Prevention Grant award is £168,763.

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3.4 The Council therefore has the following for Homelessness Prevention and Domestic Abuse Services and Housing Options in 2024/25 as follows:

Grant	2024/25
Homelessness Grant	£112,000
Homelessness Prevention Grant	£168,763
Underspend from 23/24	£ 23,200
Domestic Abuse Grant	£ 35,298
Total Grant Available	£339,261

3.5 It is recommended that the Homelessness Grant and Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant monies are allocated as follows:

Homelessness Grant Allocation	2024/25 £ (up to £303,963)
Housing Agency Agreement Top Up	52,475
Young Persons Pathway Worker – support to prevent homelessness for under 25's and Crash Pad to provide a unit of emergency accommodation for young people.	53,512
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	9,500
Single Person and Childless Couples Homelessness Prevention Service	18,347
NewStarts - Provide Furniture and Volunteering Opportunities for Ex-Offenders – supports tenancy sustainment and provides future employment opportunities/reduces risk of reoffending	10,000
GreenSquare Accord Housing Related Support – helping ex-offenders remain housed/seek employment	25,320
St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	10,492
Rough Sleeper outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.	29,941
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of	26,667

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homelessness	
Step Up – Private Tenancy Scheme	23,000
Sunrise Project intensive support	44,667
Total committed expenditure	303,921
Underspend	£ 42

Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation	2024/25 £35,298 (up to)
County Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator	4,400
County Domestic Abuse Research and Intelligence Officer	4,700
NewStarts Furniture Project	5,000
Basement Project	13,333
Bromsgrove Foyer	7,865
Total committed expenditure	£35,298
Underspend	£ 0

- 3.6 These are voluntary organisations and without this funding it is unlikely this support would be offered or available which in turn would lead to increase direct revenue costs for the council.
- 3.7 An element of the grant supplements the cost of the Housing Agency Agreement 5 year contract.
- 3.8 The bid from CCP for a Rough Sleeper Outreach Service is still under consideration and whilst the funding has been earmarked for this service and discussions are continuing with CCP, it may be that a different way of delivering the service will be explored, for example, the spot purchase of existing services for outreach alongside the expansion of other existing support services.
- 3.9 A bid was received by BEAM for £20k to support individuals into the private rented sector. The Council recognises that the Private Rented sector is now out of the range of most households on benefits due to the Local Housing Allowance Rate being frozen at 2020 levels and landlords increasing rents significantly when re-letting due to the cost of living crisis and having to meet increased mortgage repayments. Other landlords are seeing an opportunity to set higher rents simply

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due to the lack of supply accommodation in the District and the increased demand often with 15-20 households attending block viewings where they can cherry pick their tenants. The Council is currently able to help with the cost of accessing any lower rent properties in the private sector through the Step Up scheme and bdht Housing Options Team, which means that a substantial element of the BEAM offer could also be seen as a duplication of service.

- 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 2024/25.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has statutory duty under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to assist those who are threatened with homelessness or experiencing actual homelessness and has placed additional duties on the Council regarding preventing and relieving homelessness.
- 4.2 The Homelessness Prevention Grant has been ring fenced to homelessness prevention and tackling homelessness by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 4.3 The Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant has been provided to ensure that councils comply with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant allows the Council to support a range of holistic services to help prevent or tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the District. The combination of practical support such as furniture compliment those services that provide outreach support to help clients access accommodation, sustain tenancies, manage budgets, engage in positive activities and access employment. The breadth of services available provide opportunities for:
- Work and financial independence through the provision of support services and debt advice
 - Living independent, active and healthy lives through the provision of support to access positive activities including healthy eating and exercise.

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- Affordable and sustainable homes through the provision of supported accommodation.
- Communities which are safe, well maintained and green through the provision of supported accommodation.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.3 The recycling of furniture supports the Council's green thread as it minimises waste and provides reuse and recycling of household items wherever possible.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.
- 6.3 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant will ensure that there are resources to support the provision of a range of services available to meet the needs of those victims/survivors of domestic abuse who become homeless and need support to set up a new home and recover from their experience, many of whom are women.

Operational Implications

- 6.4 The management and administration of grant forms a significant part of the Strategic Housing Team's day to day operations.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 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 with 80% having to be picked up by the local authority.
 - Increased rough sleeping in the District

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- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness.

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

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb	1/11/ 2023
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis Head of Communities and Housing Services	31/10/23
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter, Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer	31/10/23
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	31/10/23
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Not applicable	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles, Climate Change Manager	31/10/23