

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**10<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

**Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation for 2025/26**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services
Report Author	Job Title: Amanda Delahunty Contact email: <a href="mailto:a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a> Contact Tel: 01527 881269
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Not Applicable
Relevant Strategic Priorities(s)	Housing
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 an allocation of funding 2025/26.
- 1.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director 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 2025/26 in support of existing or new schemes.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This report seeks Members approval to award the MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant and the Council's own Homelessness Grant to specific schemes recommended by the Development and Enabling Manager. Additionally, it seeks to delegate authority to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, to allocate any underspend of grant

during 2025/26 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 is expecting to be awarded by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG), Homelessness Prevention Grant £260,432 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 MHCLG for activities that prevent and deal with homelessness.

3.3 The Council has agreed a budget of £112,000 for the 2025/26 Homelessness Grant allocation in addition to the MHCLG grant award.

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- 3.4 The Council therefore has the following for Homelessness Prevention and Domestic Abuse Services and Housing Options in 2025/26 as follows:

<b>Grant</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
Homelessness Grant	£112,000
Homelessness Prevention Grant	£260,342
Carry Forward	£23,986
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£396,328</b>
Domestic Abuse Grant	£35,298
<b>Grant Total Grant Available</b>	<b>£431,626</b>

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

<b>Homelessness Grant Allocation</b>	<b>2025/26 £ (up to £396,328)</b>
BDHT Housing Agency Agreement Top Up	52,475
St Basils 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.	40,316
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	7,500
CCP 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	26,227
St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	48,616
St Basils Crash pad – provides emergency temporary accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds	16,596

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Maggs Rough Sleeper outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.	34,302
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of homelessness	24,541
Step Up – Private Tenancy Scheme	23,000
BDHT - Sunrise Project intensive support	45,300
Revenue Funding for an Additional 4 Static Temporary Accommodation units	30,688
Mental Health Link Worker (part funded)	6,800
CAB – Affordability Assessments	5,490
Spend to Save Top Up	6,130
<b>Total committed expenditure</b>	<b>£396.328</b>
<b>Underspend</b>	<b>£0</b>

<b>Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation</b>	<b>2025/26 Up to £35,298</b>
County Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator	4,813
County Domestic Abuse Research and Intelligence Officer	4,426
Top up to DA Housing Options Officer	5,600
NewStarts Furniture Project	5,000
Basement Project	15,459
<b>Total committed expenditure</b>	<b>£35,298</b>
<b>Underspend</b>	<b>£ 0</b>

- 3.6 With the exception of BDHT, these are voluntary organisations and without this funding it is unlikely this support would be offered or available which in turn would lead to an increase in direct revenue costs for the council. Their prevention role is crucial in helping people remain in their existing accommodation wherever possible. This is even more relevant due to affordability issues in all sectors. In addition, there has been less churn in social housing, so fewer properties are becoming available and social housing options are very limited.

- 3.7 An element of the grant supplements the cost of the Housing Agency Agreement 5 year contract with BDHT.
- 3.8 The Council has received two applications to provide a rough sleeper outreach and support service. The CCP service which has been funded across Bromsgrove and Redditch since 2017/18 and has in the past provided a good service and supported many individuals to end their rough sleeper lifestyle. However, this service is no longer providing value for money. This is in some part due to recruitment issues where CCP have been unable to recruit a project manager. The two outreach officers are being managed remotely by two existing CCP managers and this has resulted in a reduction in the number of individuals receiving support and little opportunity to develop the service to meet current needs. The application from Maggs offers a good quality service and value for money with a proposal to support a larger cohort than the current CCP service. The Maggs service will provide two officers and one manager who will deliver the service including carrying out twice weekly assertive outreach. They have strong links with accommodation providers and take a staged approach to their support flexing it to meet needs. They expect officers to hold a caseload of 20 clients each and have an ethos based upon never giving up on the person, even if they have 'failed the system' often. The Maggs Service is more cost effective. It is therefore recommended that the application from Maggs is approved. The application from CCP is not being put forward for approval. We will be working with both providers over the coming months to ensure a smooth transition from one service to another, with service users continuing to receive support where required. We would like to thank CCP officers for their hard work in providing this service.
- 3.9 Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director 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 2025/26.

**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 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 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 Priorities**

- 5.1 Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant supports the Council's priority of Housing. It allows the Council to support a range of holistic services to help prevent or tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the District.
- 5.2 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.

**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

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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
- 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**

Appendix 1 Outcomes Monitoring Table

## **9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb Portfolio Holder Strategic Housing	30/10/24
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	30/10/24
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter, Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer	30/10/24
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Assistant	06/11/24

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	Director of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Not applicable	N/A
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles, Climate Change Manager	30/10/24