

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD MARCH 2010

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

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor P. Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Planning and Environment
Key Decision	No

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 2009/10 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.

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

- 1.4 In addition to Homelessness Grant mentioned above and in response to the Economic downturn, the Council has received a Non Tenure

Specific 'Economic Recovery Fund' of £28,500 to assist people who have suffered an income shock due to redundancy or short time working, whether they are home owners or tenants. The fund which is being held separately from Homelessness Grant has so far prevented one family from becoming homeless whereby £4,000 was used to clear a second charge to prevent their house from being repossessed therefore leaving remaining funds to assist further cases in avoiding repossession.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the update on the homelessness prevention and support schemes funded through CLG Homelessness Grant during 2009/10 be noted.
- 2.2 That the Council's continuing performance in more than 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 2010/11.
- 2.4 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 2010/11 in support of existing or new schemes and approve expenditure of the Non Tenure Specific Economic Recovery Fund.

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, has very low usage of B&B (using hostel and self contained dispersed units to house homeless families) and has sound homelessness preventative services, all of the above requirements are currently being met.

4. SCHEMES FUNDED BY CLG GRANT DURING 2009/10 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. Through this group which includes partners from a range of organisations, the Homelessness Section of the Council's Housing Strategy and Action Plan has been developed to address the support needs of the homeless and provide schemes that are aimed at the prevention of homelessness. The successful outcomes were recognised by the Council (in partnership with Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum and BDHT) being awarded Regional Centre of Excellence for Youth Homelessness for 2008/2009.
- 4.2 In 2008, for the first time, the Council was awarded Homelessness Grant totalling £80,000 pa for a three year period from 08/09 – 10/11. On the 1st April 2009 the Executive Cabinet gave approval to the grant funding for 2009/10 and 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 or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2009/10 in support of existing or new schemes.

The table below sets out how the grant funding for 2009/10 has therefore been allocated and utilised:

Allocation of CLG Homeless Grant 2009/10			
	Budget	Bids Approved	Projected Actual Spend
	£	£	£
Amount Carried Forward from 08/09	46,609		
Homelessness Grant for 09/10	81,050		
Additional BYHF Grant for PTS	10,000		
Economic Downturn Grant	10,000		
Total	147,659		
CAB Mortgage Rescue allocated 08/08		12,000	12,000

Newstart Furniture Project		5,000	5,000
Baseline Rent Deposit Scheme		18,000	18,000
Floating Homelessness Prevention Officers		24,000	24,000
Housing Options Service		15,000	15,000
Consultation		500	100
Training flat		2,728	0
New Start Van Driver		5,000	5,000
Basement Team Leader/ Peer Mentoring		2,000	2,000
Basement Management		5,200	5,200
Underoccupation		21,000	14000
Education Initiative		2,000	0
County Homelessness Strategy coordination (previously allocated to Centerpoint		3,000	625
Regional Centre of Excellence		3,424	3,424
BYHF PTS from CLG		10,000	10,000
Prevention Training		250	250
Economic Downturn Grant		10,000	9,545
Total	147,659	139,102	124,144
Underspend (budget less actual spend)			23,515

4.3 The new initiatives funded during **2009/10** are progressing as follows:

Under occupation

There is evidence that there are significant numbers of people under occupying their homes and the Council has commissioned 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 and thus free up accommodation to meet the needs of homeless people and to provide an incentive fund for encouraging people to downsize. Any under spend in the grant allocated will need to be carried forward to 2010/11.

Owner Occupier Money Adviser

The Owner Occupier Specialist Adviser based at the CAB spent an average of 10 hours with 73 clients (up to the end of Dec 2009) who were experiencing difficulties meeting their mortgage repayments. Of these, two cases were referred to full mortgage rescue. The remainder have been resolved by accessing additional benefits such as support for mortgage interest, debt prioritisation and negotiation with mortgage lenders.

Economic Downturn Fund

An additional £10k was awarded to Bromsgrove DC to assist in providing a response to the economic downturn. This was utilised to provide the Mortgage Wise advice packs, promote CAB services and extend the hours of the Owner Occupier Specialist Advisor post at CAB.

BYHF Private Tenancy Scheme

Following the successful Regional Centre of Excellence Youth Homelessness Event held at Avoncroft Museum in May, CLG awarded an additional £10k to BYHF to promote the private tenancy scheme for under 25 year olds.

5.0 THE IMPACT THAT PREVENTATIVE SERVICES HAVE HAD ON REDUCING HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS AND ACCEPTANCES AND BDC's 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 BDC 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.

Performance info 2009/10	Total 2006-7	Total 2007/8	Total 2008/9	2009/10 1 st Qtr	2009/10 2 nd Qtr
Presentations	249	147	119	20	32
Acceptances	123	91	69	11	12
No of people in temp accommodation	63	16	13	15	13
Preventions	76	157	172	41	47
New homes	72	46	145	22	24
Voids	291	314	343	91	89
Housing advice (BDHT)		646	695	160	233

- 5.2 Back 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 the number of households in temporary accommodation from 68 to 34.
- 5.3 By the 31st December 2007, we had achieved the target figure of 34 when we recorded only 33 clients occupying temporary accommodation. Since that milestone, the trend for reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation has continued with 13 occupying temporary accommodation at the end of December 2009. This impressive performance has been recognised at a National Level with BDHT and BDC being invited to a Homelessness Conference in London to talk about how the target was achieved two years early. It is also important to recognise that it has only been through strong partnership working, and the funding of additional

prevention activities that has enabled the Council to achieve this. Investment in prevention activities will need to continue to be a priority in this challenging economic climate.

6.0 THE CLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING THAT HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FOR 2010/11.

- 6.1 In 2008 CLG allocated Homelessness Grant of £80,000pa for three financial years, 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11. This has enabled more security and forward planning of services. The following are the schemes were approved last year for the period up to Mar 2011 and schemes where 09/10 funding needs to be carried forward to complete the work during 2010 / 11.

Name of Project	Grant Approved £	Outcomes Other Considerations
BYHF – Private Tenancy Scheme for under 25's	£18,000pa	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	£24,000pa	Continuation of the floating support service for homeless or potentially homeless. This scheme is jointly funded by Supporting People and BDHT.
Owner Occupier Money Adviser with CAB	£12,000pa	To provide specialist advice regarding mortgage repayment issues including debt prioritisation, benefit advice and negotiation with lenders in order to prevent repossession.
County Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator	£4,375	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 carried forward from 09/10	To support the 'Is Homelessness Hitting Home' and Stamp education initiatives which are delivered in schools for young people to be made awareness of the importance of a home, what it might be like to become homeless and the reasons for this.
Training Flat	£5,456 for two years	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
Underoccupation	£7,000 carried forward from 09/10	To carry out research into underoccupation and provide incentives to encourage people to downsize
Home Visiting Service BDHT	£15,000	For BDHT to continue to provide Home Visiting and prevention activities as per the recommendations of the CLG Homelessness Adviser in 2006
Consultation	£400 carried forward from 09/10	To carry out consultation of housing options and homelessness services.
New Start Re-use and Resettlement Project	£5,000pa	To provide furniture and support to homeless people.
	£93,231	

7.0 DETAILS OF THE NEW SCHEMES RECOMMENDED BY THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY STEERING GROUP TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDING FOR 2010/11.

7.1 At the last meeting of the Homelessness Steering Group on 17th November 2009, bids for funding of new preventative schemes during 2010/11 were considered.

The Steering Group considered bids against the available amount of £8,627 (which is made up of Homelessness Grant for the year, plus under spend for last year less the amount for schemes previously approved up to 2011), 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
Move on Essential	3,000	1,400	1 year	To provide essential items that cannot be

Items Pack – Fry Housing				provided by the New Start Furniture Project to enable move on into independent living. To be recovered from the Community Care Grant so that the fund is replenished.
New Start – Part time van driver	£5,000	£3,500	1yr	To meet the growing expectations and demand for doorstep furniture collections and deliveries.
The Basement Private Tenancy Scheme	£5,000	£3,500	1yr	To cover a shortfall in the funding already approved to pay for a full time post to deliver the private tenancy scheme for under 25's.
		8,400		

7.2 The recommendations from the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group to support additional new schemes during 2009/10 total £8,400.

8.0 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

8.1 Members are therefore asked to approve from the remaining 2010/11 CLG Homelessness Grant, the funding of schemes recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group amounting to £8,400 as set out at 7.1 of this report.

8.2 Finally, as in previous years, Members are asked to grant the Head of Planning & Environment Services (or after 1.4.10, the Head of Community 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 2010/11 in support of existing or new schemes and approve expenditure of the Non Tenure Specific Economic Recovery Fund.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 In summary the financial implications are as follows:

Carry forward from 09/10	£23,515
Grant 10/11	£80,000
	£103,515
Approved or carried forward from 09/10 (per 6.1)	-£93,231

Recommended projects (per 7.1)	-8,400
Balance remaining	£1,884

- 9.2 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.

10.0 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.

11.0 COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 11.1 **Objective 1 – Regeneration (Town Centre and Housing)**
Improved standard of support and preventative service for homeless people.
- 11.2 **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.
- 11.3 **Objective 3 – Sense of Community and Wellbeing**
Homelessness prevention, reduction and support influences health and wellbeing.
- 11.4 **Priority 4 – Environment**
Reduction of homelessness helps a more planned allocation of housing thus supporting better neighbourhood integration and therefore reduces any negative impact upon the environment.

12.0 RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 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 reduction in the use of temporary accommodation to no more than 34 units.

13. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

13.1 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.

14. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Grant funded initiatives are utilised to help vulnerable groups to access housing. For example, young people, ex-offenders, care leavers etc. It is anticipated that the underoccupation research will encourage older residents to move to more manageable sized properties that will be easier to maintain, more affordable to keep warm and be more easily adapted to meet any needs they may have should they become frail or disabled due to the ageing process.

15 VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Homelessness Grant is provided by CLG to facilitate the development of homelessness prevention activities. By working with partners we are able to deliver a wide range of services and initiatives cost effectively.

16. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON IMPLICATIONS

16.1 None

17. 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
Biodiversity None

18. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Joint Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (Services)	No
Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	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

19. WARDS AFFECTED

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

20.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

20.1 None

CONTACT OFFICER

Name	A.M. Coel
E Mail	a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel	01527 881270