

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

June 13th 2007

**OUTURN EXPENDITURE OF CLG (Formerly ODPM) HOMELESSNESS
GRANT FUNDING FOR 2006/07 AND PROPOSEDED EXPENDITURE FOR
2007/08.**

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

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members will recall that the Council currently receives an annual grant from the CLG with which to co-ordinate homelessness support services and schemes that focus upon the prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness in the District.
- 1.2 This report provides members with information relating to:
- The progress of schemes currently funded using CLG homelessness grant 2006/07 which provide support to the homeless or help to prevent homelessness.
 - The level of CLG homelessness grant funding allocated for 2007/08
 - Details of the schemes recommended by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group to receive grant funding for 2007/08.
- 1.3 This source of ring fenced homelessness funding has been received for the past 4 years and has been approved by members for allocation to schemes in accordance with the recommendations made by the multi agency Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the update on the progress of the homelessness preventative and support schemes funded through CLG homelessness grant be noted.

- 2.2 That the level of CLG homelessness grant funding for 2007/08 be noted.
- 2.3 That the submissions for the funding of schemes recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group from the 2007/08 homelessness grant be approved.
- 2.4 That the Head of Planning & Environment Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing be granted delegated authority to re-allocate any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2007/08 in support of existing or new schemes.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 For 2006 / 07, the Council received initial CLG homelessness grant funding of £42,000.

In response to the Strategic Housing Team's close working with the Homelessness Inspectorate at CLG a further additional instalment of £15k was allocated to enable a home visiting service to be formulated in partnership with BDHT.

For 2007/08 the Council has been awarded £60k Homelessness Grant by CLG (£15k of which is to support the home visiting service) with discretion to decide how the grant is spent.

- 3.2 The outcomes to be delivered by the grant are:

- Reduce or sustain the reduction in the level of rough sleeping by at least two thirds below the level in 1998.
- Avoid the long-term use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families with households with children or a pregnant woman.
- End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for young people between 16 and 17 years of age.
- Reduce the use of temporary accommodation for homeless families with children by 50% by 2010.

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

Using capital funding, the Council has made more accommodation available to homeless families through purchase and repair (Buy Back) schemes thus improving the standard of temporary accommodation offered. However, in terms of the final outcome, this does not actually reduce the use of temporary accommodation.

Sound preventative services are key to:

- The Council's strategic aim of reducing the overall use of temporary accommodation, and
- The Council's strategy to phase out the use of hostel type temporary accommodation.

Reducing homelessness through Homelessness Prevention and Support Services provided through the CLG Homelessness Grant are fundamental to the ability of the Council to make progress on these two strategic aims.

4.0 AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEMES SUPPORTED DURING 2006/7

4.1 Members will 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 developed a strategy and action plan to address the support and needs of the homeless and developed schemes aimed at the prevention of homelessness. This action plan is imbedded in the Council's own Housing Strategy (2006 – 2011) which gained 'Fit For Purpose' accreditation by the Government Office of the West Midlands last year.

4.2 This time last year, the Executive Cabinet gave approval to the grant funding for 2006/07 being used in accordance with the recommendations made by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group with delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder to re-allocate any under spend. The grant funding has been allocated and utilised as follows:

Allocation of CLG Homeless Grant 2006/07		
	Planned	Actual
	£	£
Amount Carried Forward from 05/06	334	
Baseline Drop In Centre	12,000	12,000
CAB Debt Advice	12,000	12,000
Baseline Rent Deposit Scheme	5,834	5,834
Centrepont	1,500	1,500
Sanctuary Scheme for Domestic Violence	1,000	1,000
Floating Homelessness Prevention Officers	6,000	6,000
Home Visiting Role (New scheme through extra £15k)	15,000	0
Rent Deposit/ Spent to Save	4,000	0

Total	57,334	38,334
Total Spent		38,334
Total Grant Available		57,334
Under spend		19,000

The additional £15,000 grant was allocated during the year and the end of year under spend was anticipated as the new Home visiting service had to be set up. The Rent Deposit scheme piloted from January 07 – March 07 was successful in offering 2 households access to the private sector. As the deposit or rent in advance is set up as a sundry debt, the homelessness grant allocated for the scheme will only be utilised should the monies become unrecoverable, therefore the grant was not utilised and has been carried forward to be called against at a future date if necessary.

4.2 The **2006/07 funded schemes** are progressing as follows:

Baseline Drop In Centre

The Basement Project opened in February 2005. CLG homelessness grant monies helped towards the set up of the scheme and an award of £12,000 CLG Homelessness Grant funding for 06/07 contributed towards the running costs of the Drop In Centre. This scheme provides an Information and Support Day Centre with a focus on preventative work, emotional and practical support for young people and access to information for young people. The Basement Project is equipped with a comfortable reception area, kitchen and shower facility. Computer and internet access is made available to service users.

CAB Specialist Debt Advice Service

This specialist service offers assistance and representation for potentially homeless clients. The work has shown to be highly successful in achieving positive results in the prevention of homelessness. Between April 06 and March 07 this service assisted 88 clients and dealt with 617 issues. The majority of their work has been concentrated on money advice/repossession cases and during the period 25 evictions and possession proceedings were halted.

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

BYHF have developed a 'Private Tenancy Scheme' which can provide three alternative incentives to encourage Private Landlords to let their accommodation to young people. These are Rent Deposits, Rent guarantees and rent in advance. Over

the last year the scheme has worked with 9 landlords and housed 11 young people and currently has a waiting list of potential clients.

Centrepoint Mediation and Preventative Work

This service is supported by all districts in the County through allocation of CLG grant. Centrepoint has been unable to deliver homelessness awareness training to health professionals during 06/07 due to changes in PCT structure; however, plans are in place to deliver training as soon as the PCT's new structure is operational. Training delivered in the South of the County has received a good response from health professionals. Centrepoint has carried out an evaluation of the countywide mediation scheme pilot to capture the impact and provide learning opportunities. Centrepoint have revised the 16/17 year old joint protocol between Housing and Children's Services.

Sanctuary Scheme – Bromsgrove District Council

The Council's Sanctuary Scheme helps to prevent homelessness by enabling victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes. The first scheme carried out assisted one victim of domestic violence and their two children to remain at home. The scheme was celebrated as a success by all agencies involved and applauded by the Police.

Floating Support – Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT)

This scheme provides non tenure specific floating support to customers who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness. The service was set up during January 2007 therefore there is no evidence of outcomes at this early stage. There was a delay in setting up the service which resulted in an under spend of homelessness grant of £4k which was re-allocated to pilot the following two schemes:

1. **Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme (Rent Deposit / Bond) for over 25's – Bromsgrove District Council**
Utilising the under spend of CLG grant the Council was able to pilot the 'Step Up' private tenancy scheme for over 25's. At the end of March the scheme had helped two households access private rented accommodation.

2. **Spend to Save Scheme – Bromsgrove District Council**
Part of the under spend of CLG grant was also earmarked for opportunities to prevent homelessness

through a 'Spend to Save' scheme. Whilst BDHT have been encouraged to consider innovative use of these monies, no applications have been forthcoming at present. It is hoped that now BDHT has agreed to re-structure its service towards more prevention work, that this fund will be better utilised during 2007/08.

Prevention of Homelessness through Home Visits – Bromsgrove District Housing Trust

On the 4th July 2006 the Strategic Housing Team met with Sarah Cumberland, Homelessness Expert from CLG and reviewed the Council's performance in respect of homelessness and the use of Temporary Accommodation. A number of recommendations were identified to deliver improvement in performance and following the meeting a further £15k CLG Homelessness Grant was awarded for the Council to develop a home visiting service through BDHT.

Due to some staffing difficulties at BDHT, commencement of the service was delayed; however we have committed these monies to BDHT for a two year period and accordingly need to carry the £15k forward to be drawn during 2007/08.

5.0 CLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING FOR THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR 2007/8

- 5.1 The CLG have advised us that the level of Grant allocated to the Council has increased to £60k for 2007/08 (including a second allocation of the additional £15k awarded).

Submissions for schemes to be funded from the £60k grant were invited and were considered by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group when it met on the 28th March 2007. The details of the submissions and the revised bids are set out in the table below:

Homelessness Grant Applications for 2007/08

Name of Project	Initial Bid	Award Proposed	Outcomes	Other Considerations
BDHT Floating Support and Homelessness	£24,000	£24,000 (committed for a two year	The provision of non tenure specific floating	There was a recognition by partners of the Steering Group,

Prevention Service.		period when the scheme was first commissioned last year)	support to prevent homelessness and repeat homelessness. Mixed funded initiative supported by BDC, BDHT and Supporting People.	when this scheme was first approved last year, that committing funds to this project meant that in future years some schemes previously funded through Homelessness Grant would have to be active in seeking alternative funding.
BDC Strategic Housing Sanctuary Scheme	£1,000	£1,000	Prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness. Better outcomes in respect of social, health and well being and education. Supported by Police and Supporting People.	Will only be appropriate for a small group who can be helped to feel safe enough to stay at home.
Bromsgrove & District CAB Homelessness Debt Advice Service	£12,000	£12,000	Good track record in preventing households from becoming homeless. Value for money through piggy backing on existing housing advice service which uses volunteers.	The Council will be carrying out a review of the SLA's with both CAB and BDHT this financial year. The recommendation from the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group is that funding is awarded for this financial year subject to this review taking place.
Centrepoint	£2,000	£1,000	Increase access to	

<p>Awareness raising with Health Professionals, Countywide Mediation Service, Review of 16/17 year old protocol</p>			<p>health provision for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. To provide a method to detect potential homelessness at an early stage. To prevent cyclical homelessness presentations through appropriate health interventions.</p>	
<p>Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum</p> <p>Private Tenancy Scheme for the under 25's</p>	<p>£9,000</p>	<p>£9,000</p>	<p>Providing young people with access to the private sector. 8 young people housed since April, there are 10 clients on their waiting list and they are working with 9 landlords.</p>	<p>Provides a housing solution for a non priority group, but nevertheless dealing with a group from one of the main causes of homelessness – parental eviction/exclusion.</p>
<p>BDC Strategic Housing</p> <p>'Step Up' Private Tenancy Scheme</p>	<p>£4,000</p>	<p>£2,000 (Essentially carrying forward from 06/07 as a pot of money against which any bad debts from clients failing to repay their rent deposits can be charged.)</p>	<p>Provides both priority and non priority households access to the private sector to enhance the range of housing options available to those in housing need and prevent</p>	<p>This scheme is important as a homeless prevention tool and enables the Homelessness Officers to offer a range of housing options to households presenting as homeless.</p>

			homelessness	
Bromsgrove District Housing Trust	15,000 (Carried forward from 06/07) 15,000 (07/08)	30,000	The Homelessness Expert from CLG recommended this role as being vital for effective homelessness prevention and an opportunity for the Council to benefit from significant reduction in homelessness acceptances	
Total		79,000		
Total Amount Available (inc £19k C/F from 06/07)		79,000		

- 5.4 Members are asked to approve the recommendations put forward by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group for funding, and that subject to spending being in line with the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy, 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 2007/08 in support of existing or new schemes.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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.

7.0 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.

8.0 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

8.1 Objective 1 – Regeneration (Town Centre, Longbridge and Housing)

Improved standard of support and preventative service for homeless people.

8.2 Objective 2 – Improvement (Customer Service, Reputation and Performance)

Improved service to customers by the ability to provide a higher standard of prevention and support service.

8.3 Objective 3 – Sense of Community and Wellbeing (Community Influence and Community Events)

Homelessness prevention, reduction and support influences health and wellbeing.

8.4 Priority 4 – Environment – Clean District and Planning

Reduction of homelessness helps a more planned allocation of housing thus supporting better neighbourhood integration and therefore reduces any negative impact upon the environment.

9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 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.
- Weakened performance against BV 183a (number of families placed in B&B) which is currently zero.
- Inability to reach DCLG target of reducing temporary accommodation by 50% by the year 2010

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 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.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues None
Personnel Implications None
Governance/Performance Management Ability to improve 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 None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Please include the following table and indicate 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate. Delete the words in italics.

Portfolio Holder	YES and he supports the recommendations.
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	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	Yes

13. OTHER SUB HEADINGS

13.1 None

14.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 None

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