



Author/Lead Officer of Report: Zoe Young
Housing Options and Advice Team Manager

Tel: 0114 2053118

Report of: *Executive Director Place*

Report to: Individual Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety; Councillor Jim Steinke

Date of Decision: *13 August 2018*

Subject: **Flexible Homelessness Support Grant**

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? Neighbourhoods and Community Safety Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Safer Stronger communities		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 185		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		

Purpose of Report:

The Council has received a new Government Flexible Homelessness Support Grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The grant is required to be ring fenced to be used on homeless services in the sum of £403,595 in 2017/18, £442,613 in 2018/19 and £491,515 in 19/20. The funding replaces the former accommodation management fee funding in order to facilitate local authorities with a greater flexibility in homelessness prevention.

This report explains the purpose of the grant and sets out a proposal to use the funding. The entire grant will be used internally and will need to be carried forward to 2019/2020.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the DCLG grant offer of £403,595 (2017/18) and £442,613(2018/19) and £491,515 is accepted.

Background Papers:

n/a

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>M Wassell</i>
	Legal: <i>Deepak Parmar / Janusz Siodmiak</i>
	Equalities: <i>Louise Nunn</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission: <i>Laraine Manley</i>
3	Cabinet Member consulted: <i>Jim Steinke</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Zoe Young</i>
	Job Title: <i>Housing Options and Advice Team Manager</i>
Date: <i>2/8/18</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The flexible homeless support grant is being made available to councils to enable them to have greater flexibility in promoting homeless prevention. The grant is required to be ring fenced to be used on homeless services over the next two years. There will be an ongoing review of the implementation of the grant by DCLG, including how it is working and how it will be resourced in subsequent years.
- 1.2 The grant replaces the former Department of Work and Pensions temporary accommodation management fee funding. The government wants to 'encourage local authorities to spend money on stopping homelessness instead of on costly temporary accommodation'. It has therefore abolished paying management fees and provided instead a 'lump sum' in order for Local Authorities to tackle homelessness in more flexible and creative ways.
- 1.3 In addition the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 due to be implemented April 2018 will place additional duties upon authorities nationally to prevent and reduce homelessness. The Act will place an emphasis on services preventing homelessness from occurring by strengthening the duties of local Authorities to provide advice, practical solutions and to secure alternative accommodation for the people of Sheffield.
- 1.4 There has been nearly a 60% reduction in homelessness acceptances in Sheffield since 2010 but in the last year acceptances have increased by 4%. 48% of acceptances were from single people or couples compared to the national figure of 29%. The top three reasons for homelessness in Sheffield are being asked to leave by friends and family/parental eviction (32%), ending of a private sector tenancy (16%) and domestic abuse (11%). The incidences of rough sleeping remains low in Sheffield at 15 people but this is a 36% increase from the previous year.
- 1.5 Although in Sheffield we do relatively well on preventions achieved through sanctuary schemes, arranging hostel placements and making offers on social housing we do less well on other prevention activities such as using the homeless prevention fund, resolving benefit problems, debt advice, legal advocacy and negotiation to retain a private tenancy or arranging private tenancies and conciliation via home visits. We also have a number of people who get stuck in expensive temporary accommodation (TA) because they have complex needs and need more intensive help to move on.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

The proposal supports the vision set out in the Council's Housing

Strategy 2013 - 2023 to help vulnerable people to live independently. It supports the corporate plan 2015 -18 priorities of better health and wellbeing, tackling inequalities and having thriving neighbourhoods and communities. Poor health can be both a consequence and cause of homelessness. Being homeless can make it more difficult to access health services and live a healthy life. The proposal sets out how we will tackle this to ensure those at risk of homelessness or who are homeless have access to appropriate services and work closely with health partners to identify health interventions that will be of most use. The flexible homeless grant supports early prevention to help people keep their home or move in a planned way. This involves looking at locality working to support people to stay in their community with support and affordable housing so people sustain tenancies in areas they want to live in. The proposal also supports the tackling inequality ambition. Some groups are at a greater risk of homelessness and the proposal supports improving our partnership work and targeted interventions to meet needs.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 There hasn't been any consultation about this grant directly but we have recently consulted on a new homeless prevention strategy agreed by cabinet in December 2017. Customers told us they would like to get help earlier with their problems in order to prevent homelessness. They wanted better housing choices and felt hostels were not always an appropriate solution for everyone.
- 3.2 Our partners told us they were committed to working together to prevent homelessness. The feedback they gave was that different approaches were needed to work with different groups of people and they felt that mental health was an issue that all services needed to work collaboratively on.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 Reducing the level of homelessness in the City will have a positive impact on all residents. It will contribute to prevention of homelessness within the city which will put those people vulnerable to homelessness in a better position.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The DCLG's grant allocation is as follows: £403,595 in 2017/18 and £442,613 in 2018/19 and £491,515 in 2019/20. The grant is ring-fenced for activities to prevent and deal with homelessness.
- 4.2.2 It should be noted that SCC anticipates that the 2017/18 grant allocation will not be fully spent and any underspend will be carried

forward into 2018/19.

- 4.2.3 As the funding only last for three years the Project Manager will need to ensure that an exit strategy is developed as there is no alternative funding identified should there be any ongoing costs.

Procurement

- 4.2.4 All public sector procurement is governed by both European Legislation and UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in Sheffield City Council must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as 'Contracts Standing Orders' (CSOs).
- 4.2.5 Contracts Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase/acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.

4.3 **Legal Implications**

- 4.3.1 Homelessness is defined in legislation under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. It refers to people who have no accommodation, who have accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to live there, and who are threatened with losing their home within 28 days. Sheffield City Council have a number of duties to both prevent homelessness occurring and provide advice and assistance to people who are homeless. A minority of people are owed temporary and permanent rehousing duties.
- 4.3.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act received Royal Assent in March 2017 and will make substantial amendments to the existing legislation. The Act requires local authorities to intervene at an earlier stage (extending "threatened with homelessness" from 28 to 56 days) to try and prevent homelessness (extending to all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need) and to take reasonable steps to help those who are, or who become homeless to secure accommodation.

4.4 **Other Implications**

- 4.4.1 An Achieving Change will be tabled to take into consideration increase in staffing

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 No other options were considered as the grant is ring fenced to be used for homeless prevention activities.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The flexible homeless support grant is a ring fenced grant made available to councils to use on prevention activities and stop people having to stay in temporary accommodation for long periods of time if at all. Evidence has shown that we need to focus on early prevention work to shift the focus on prevention work at an earlier stage that are proactive before a crisis occurs. To stop the use of temporary accommodation we will need to offer help earlier and offer tailored advice for people who are at risk of homelessness. Evidence shows that a disproportionately high number of single people with physical and mental health concerns are accepted as homeless and we need to target this group for prevention work. Offering more tailored advice and early intervention will stop people being placed in temporary accommodation which is unsuitable for people and is associated with high costs.