

EXECUTIVE

16th January 2018

Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Mark Shurmer
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis – Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report seeks Members approval to award Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding to specific schemes recommended by the Strategic Housing Manager and delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder and Head of Community Services to allocate any underspend of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding during 2018/19 towards dealing with and preventing homelessness.
- 1.2 The report further seeks approval to approve a Homelessness Grant scheme and associated Policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Executive note the 2018/19 grant funding implications to be included as part of the medium term financial plan report to Council in February 2018 and, subject to Council approval of the budget;**

The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-

- 2.2 **The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is made available in line with the table initiatives in 3.9, and that the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding be allocated as set out in section 3.13.**
- 2.3 **Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community 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 2018/19 in support of existing or new schemes.**

The Executive Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that:-

- 2.4 The Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention Grant Policy as set out in Appendix 1 be approved with delegated authority granted to the Strategic Housing Manager following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to award the grants.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Council has received ring fenced Flexible Homelessness Support Grant for 2017/18 and 2018/19 as per the table in 3.3. The Temporary Accommodation Management Fee previously received has been amalgamated into this new grant. It is proposed that the 2017/18 allocation is carried forward into 2019/20 and that the funding will cover a two year period.

- 3.2 The Council has also been awarded Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding for a 3 year period including a one off payment for a new IT solution as per the table in 3.3.

3.3

Grant	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	£151,487	£166,048	Not Known
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding	£23,289 Plus £9,000 for IT	£21,333	£30,350

Legal Implications

- 3.4 The utilisation of grant for homelessness support and prevention initiatives will assist the Council in meeting its statutory duties under the Homeless provisions of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. In addition the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will place additional burdens on the Council and this funding is expected to be utilised to strengthen homelessness prevention in the Borough.

- 3.5 The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant has been ring fenced to homelessness prevention by the Department of Communities & Local Government.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.6 The main provisions of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will come into effect on Tuesday 3rd April 2018 and will extend the period during which the Council has to treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days. This will apply to all eligible households who approach the Council for homeless prevention assistance regardless of any local connection criteria.
- 3.7 There will also be a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants for up to 56 days and it is anticipated that there will be an increase in households accessing housing options. The Council's resources will need to have a greater focus on preventing homelessness wherever possible, in addition to managing temporary accommodation for households that the Council has a duty to provide accommodation to.
- 3.8 A new duty on Public Services to notify the Council if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days will come into effect 1 October 2018.
- 3.9 Proposed Allocation of Grant

Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	£
Homelessness Reduction Act Prevention – funding for posts	60,000
Contingency Fund	20,000
Dispersed Temporary Accommodation	46,000
Grants to Partners	40,000
Total	166,000

- 3.10 The Council's housing options service will require additional resources to meet the requirements of the new legislation and therefore £60,000 of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is proposed to be earmarked for additional officers. These two posts will be career graded Housing Officer Posts and will not lead to any future increase in staffing costs in the housing options service, as the two post holders will ultimately go on to fill existing posts currently held by temporary staff. It is worth noting that all local authorities across England have benefitted from additional resources via the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and as a result most are taking steps to increase capacity in their housing options teams.

- 3.11 The Housing Options service also relies on a range of partners offering support and accommodation options for those threatened with or experiencing homelessness. It is therefore proposed that £40,000 of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant will be made available for partners of the Redditch Homelessness Strategy Steering Group to submit applications for funding schemes and initiatives that prevent, tackle or support homelessness in line with the draft Homelessness Grant Policy in Appendix 1. The Policy recommends that delegated authority be granted to the Housing Strategy Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing.
- 3.12 There is an expectation that the funding requirement for Dispersed Units of Temporary Accommodation will remain at an estimated annual cost of £46,000 to cover the no longer received Temporary Accommodation Management Fee.
- 3.13 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens grant has been allocated on the basis that the Government expects increased workloads for Housing Options Teams on the back of the implementation of the new legislation and a new Government reporting requirement. It is proposed that this funding be utilised to procure a new homelessness management and monitoring system and fund resources and training to meet this change in working.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens Funding	£23,289 Plus £9,000 for IT	£21,333	£30,350

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.14 The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding 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.
- 3.15 These schemes and functions play a role in meeting the Council's Strategic Purposes:
- Help me live my life independently (including health and activity)
 - Help me find somewhere to live in my locality
 - Help me to be financially independent (including education and skills)

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3.16 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 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
- Increased rough sleeping in the Borough
- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness

In addition the Council will be unable to provide the extensive data required by DCLG in respect of monitoring homelessness.

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

5. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Redditch Council Policy - Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention Grants

6. KEY

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