

EXECUTIVE

26th March 2019

Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens Funding

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| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Cllr Craig Warhurst |
| 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 New Burdens Funding to specific schemes recommended by the Strategic Housing Manager, Additionally it seeks to delegate authority to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to allocate any underspend of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens Funding during 2019/20 on schemes to prevent homelessness and assist those actually homeless.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-**

The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is allocated to the initiatives in 3.7 and that the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding be allocated as in 3.11.

Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community 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 Grants for 2019/20.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Council has received £193,040 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant for 2019/20 which is ring fenced by the MHCLG for the prevention of homelessness. The Temporary Accommodation Management Fee previously received through the DWP has been amalgamated into this grant.

- 3.2 The Council has also been awarded £30,350 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding awarded to local authorities to assist in meeting the added requirements of the act

Legal Implications

- 3.3 The Council has statutory duty under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to those people that are threatened with homelessness or homeless. In addition the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has placed additional duties on the Council regarding homelessness and the prevention of homelessness
- 3.4 The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant has been ring fenced to homelessness prevention by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 The main provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 have extended the period during which the Council has to treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days. This applies to all eligible households who approach the Council for homeless prevention assistance regardless of any priority need, intentionality or local connection criteria.
- 3.6 There is also a duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants for up to 56 days, however the Council can take into account local connection at this stage. The Council's resources now have a greater focus on preventing homelessness wherever possible.
- 3.7 Proposed Allocation of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant £193,040

| Initiatives | £ |
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| Homelessness Reduction Act Prevention – funding for posts Detail – the latest Act created two new legal duties – to prevent and relieve homelessness. As a result the numbers of households living in temporary accommodation could rise and it also becomes increasingly important to help people remain appropriately housed. The proposed funding will therefore create 2 new posts to support the timely move-on | 60,000 |

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| <p>from temporary accommodation, and tenancy sustainment in the private rented sector in Redditch. (see 3.8) The Executive has already agreed to support these posts as part of the Medium Financial Plan 2019/20-2022/23 when it met in February 2019.</p> | |
| <p>Rent Deposits and Spend to Save</p> <p>Detail – most local authorities operate a fund that helps people access the private rented sector, and which can also be used to intervene to prevent tenants losing their existing home. These interventions are far less than the cost of homelessness itself, so they represent good value for money, in addition to helping reduce homelessness in the borough. In the last two years the Council has provided over 80 rent deposits, so investing extra in this area and making spend to save interventions with local households should reduce homelessness in the borough.</p> | 17,060 |
| <p>Temporary Accommodation Management Fee replacement.</p> <p>The Council is legally obliged to provide temporary accommodation to eligible homeless households. The Temporary Accommodation Management Fee previously associated with this activity has now been rolled up into the new Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.</p> | 66,380 |
| <p>Redditch Nightstop - Outreach Worker up to 35yrs</p> <p>Detail – in August 2018, with financial support from the Council, Nightstop launched a new extended service to provide emergency housing for people aged 21 to 35. This was in response to increasing demand from this client group, who have been subject to some of the</p> | 27,000 |

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| most significant changes inside the welfare benefits system. Since August, Nightstop have assisted 23 single people, often with complex and multiple needs, aged 21 to 35 with emergency housing placements, providing short term practical and emotional support whilst also reducing demand on other services. Nightstop also work closely with the Council on addressing the longer term housing needs of this client group. | |
| CCP Rough Sleeper Outreach Service Detail – in the past year CCP have worked with 40 people, some of whom have been street homeless in Redditch, or have a street presence in the town centre since March 2018. CCP works closely with the Council to secure accommodation for these people, safeguarding their health and wellbeing, reducing costs and demand on other services such as the Police and Health, whilst ensuring the town centre remains an attractive and safe place for local residents and businesses alike. This funding also supports CCP interventions under the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol, which targets street homelessness at times of the year when temperatures are at their lowest. | 34,990 |
| Total | £205,430* |

*£12,390 to be met from earmarked reserves

- 3.8 The Council's Housing Options service requires additional resources to meet the requirements of the new legislation and therefore £60,000 of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant has previously been agreed to recruit a Private Sector Tenancy Sustainment Officer and a Temporary Accommodation Officer both on 2 year fixed term contracts. The Council had originally earmarked this funding from 2018/19 grant and therefore the two year funding is available utilising 2018/19 grant in addition to the 2019/20 grant award.

- 3.9 Funding during 2018/19 was made available for partners to provide support to the Council's homelessness function. The funding provided additional outreach support through Redditch Nightstop for clients up to 35 years of age. In addition funding was awarded to St Basils to increase on-site support in order for them to be able to accept clients with more complex needs. Officers propose to extend the Outreach service provided by Redditch Nightstop for another year. St Basils have advised that they no longer require our grant funding to addition on-site support as they have organised funding through there their rental income. Officers are proposing that the Rough Sleeper Outreach Service provided by CCP is funded to extend this service through to April 2020. The service is currently funded through Rough Sleeper Grant which will end on the 24th July 2019.
- 3.10 An element of the funding replaces Temporary Accommodation Management Fund that previously met the cost of the management of Temporary Accommodation and the amount identified for this from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is £66,380.
- 3.11 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens grant has been awarded for a three year period on the basis that the Government expected increased workloads for Housing Options teams following the implementation of the new legislation. It is proposed that this funding be utilised to fund the required homelessness IT system with Housing Partners at £9,000 p.a., additional staffing resources and any appropriate training requirements.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.12 The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding will benefit customers by offering household's more options to tackle rough sleeping, prevent homelessness, provide support to help tenancy sustainment or help the Council to manage and support households in Temporary Accommodation.
- 3.13 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)
- 3.14 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

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

None

6. KEY

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