

EXECUTIVE

5th December 2023

Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation for 2024/25

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Craig Warhurst
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Head of Communities and Housing Services
Report Author	Job Title: Amanda Delahunty Contact email:a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881269
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Not Applicable
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finding somewhere to live• Aspiration, work and financial independence• Living independent, active and healthy lives• Communities which are safe, well maintained and green.
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive RESOLVE as follows:-

- 1.1 That the initiatives in 3.4 be approved to receive allocation of funding 2024/25.
- 1.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement and the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2024/25 in support of existing or new schemes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report seeks Members' approval to award the DLUHC Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant to specific

schemes that meet the DLUHC grant requirements and as recommended by the Strategic Housing Manager in consultation with the Housing Solutions Manager and the Voids and Allocations and Lettings Manager. Additionally, it seeks to delegate authority to the Head of Community and Housing Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement and the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services to allocate any underspend of grant during 2024/25 on schemes to prevent homelessness and assist those who actually become homeless and for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness due to being victims of domestic abuse.

- 2.2 The purpose of the ringfenced Homelessness Prevention Grant fund is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness. The Government expects local authorities to use it to deliver the following priorities:
- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness
 - Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention
 - Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six week limit.
- 2.3 The council received a number of applications for this funding and this criteria was used to support the award of this grant.
- 2.4 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant funding has been allocated to ensure that councils can comply with the requirements to provide safe and supported accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse. The grant will contribute to a specialist County co-ordinator post and a specialist County Research and Intelligence Officer post and will also be used to support existing services that meet the needs of this cohort.

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Council has been awarded £330,067 Homelessness Prevention Grant 2024/25 which is ring fenced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for the prevention of homelessness. The Temporary Accommodation Management Fund (TAMF) previously received through the DWP has been amalgamated into this grant.

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- 3.2 The amount the Council would have ordinarily expected from the former Temporary Accommodation Management Fund is £66,380.
- 3.3 The Council expects the funding for Homelessness Prevention in 2024/25, as follows:

Homelessness Prevention Grant	2024/25
Homelessness Prevention Grant	£330,067
Underspend from 2023/24	87,000
Total Grant Available	417,067

Domestic Abuse Grant	2024/25
Domestic Abuse Grant	£35,222
Underspend from 2023/24	£16,839
Total Grant Available	£52,061

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 Proposed Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant.

Initiatives	£ (up to £417,067)
Redditch Nightstop - Outreach Worker to support 21 to 35 year olds and prevent homelessness or work towards planned moves into suitable and sustainable accommodation.	26,566
Redditch Nightstop Core Funding	13,000
Redditch Nightstop Safe Accommodation and Support	15,000
Rough Sleeper Outreach Service	45,599
GreenSquare Accord – 18 units of supported accommodation for Ex Offenders or those likely to offend	16,852

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Newstarts - Furniture Project to provide furniture for homeless households.	10,000
Homelessness Prevention - Spend to Save budget for use by Housing Options Officers	17,060
Temporary Accommodation Management – as 3.1 above	66,380
St Basils Smallwood Almshouses - Progression Coach to offer additional support that can operate outside of normal office hours to fit around a young persons education, training and employment.	24,476
St Basils Young Persons Pathway Worker	24,572
St Basils Crash Pad emergency accommodation	43,472
Citizens Advice Debt Advice and Affordability Assessments	51,119
County Partnership Manager	9,500
Single and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Service	33,460
Batchley Support Group	20,000
Total	£417,056
Underspend	£ 11

Proposed allocation of Domestic Abuse Grant

Initiatives	£ (up to £52,061)
Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator	4,400
Domestic Abuse Research and Intelligence Officer	4,700
Redditch Nightstop – Safe accommodation & Outreach Worker to support 21 to 35 year olds and prevent homelessness or work towards planned moves into suitable and sustainable accommodation.	13,282.00
St Basils Progression Worker	12,238.00

New Starts	5,000
St Basils YPPW	12,286
Total	£51,906
Underspend	£ 155

- 3.5 These are voluntary organisations and without this funding it is unlikely this support would be offered or available which in turn would lead to increase direct revenue costs for the council. Their prevention role is crucial in helping people remain in their existing accommodation wherever possible. This is even more relevant due to affordability issues in the private rented sector and mortgages for first time buyers being more difficult to access due to the increase in interest rates, in addition there has been less churn in social housing, so few properties are becoming available and social housing options are very limited.
- 3.6 One bid was not supported from BEAM for a Private Sector access and crowd funding scheme. The funding for 2023-24 has not led to the securing of any private rented properties largely due to the market being difficult to access for anyone on low incomes, with LHA rates having been frozen since 2020 and landlords increasing rents significantly when re-letting due to the cost of living crisis and having to meet increased mortgage repayments. Other landlords are seeing an opportunity to set higher rents simply due to the lack of supply accommodation in the District and the increased demand often with 15-20 households attending block viewings where they can cherry pick their tenants.
- 3.7 The bid from CCP for a Rough Sleeper Outreach Service is still under consideration and whilst the funding has been earmarked for this service and discussions are continuing with CCP, it may be that a different way of delivering the service will be explored, for example, the development of an in house Rough Sleeper Outreach team.
- 3.8 The Citizens Advice bid for a Debt Adviser and the provision of affordability assessment for the Housing Solutions Team has been increased to a full time post due to the demand for this service.
- 3.9 Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community and Housing 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 Grant for 2024/25.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has statutory duty under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to assist those who are threatened with homelessness or experiencing actual homelessness and has placed additional duties on the Council regarding preventing and relieving homelessness
- 4.2 The Homelessness Prevention Grant has been ring fenced to homelessness prevention and tackling homelessness by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 4.3 The Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant has been provided to ensure that councils comply with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant allows the Council to support a range of holistic services to help prevent or tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the District. The combination of practical support such as furniture compliment those services that provide outreach support to help clients access accommodation, sustain tenancies, manage budgets, engage in positive activities and access employment. The breadth of services available support all of the strategic purposes provide opportunities for:
- Finding somewhere to live
 - Aspiration, work and financial independence
 - Living independent, active and healthy lives
 - Communities with are safe, well maintained and green

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 The recycling of furniture supports the Council's green thread as it minimises waste and provides reuse and recycling of household items wherever possible.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The Homelessness Grant and Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant 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.
- 6.2 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.
- 6.3 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant will ensure that there are resources to support the provision of a range of services available to meet the needs of those victims/survivors of domestic abuse who become homeless and need support to set up a new home and recover from their experience. The majority of those experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic abuse are women.

Operational Implications

- 6.4 The management and administration of grant forms a significant part of the Strategic Housing Team's day to day operations.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 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 with 80% having to be picked up by the local authority.
 - Increased rough sleeping in the Borough
 - Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness
- 7.3 All recipients of Grant will enter into a grant agreement and have regular monitoring with officers on the delivery of the service.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Craig Warhurst	20 th November 2023
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis Head of Communities and Housing Service	20 th November 2023
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter, Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer	20 th November 2023
Legal Services	Claire Felton Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	20 th November 2023
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Not applicable	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles, Climate Change Manager	20 th November 2023