

EXECUTIVE

26th November 2024

Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation for 2025/26

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community 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 4.4 be approved to receive allocation of funding 2025/26.**
- 1.2 **That delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing 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 2025/26 in support of existing or new schemes.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report seeks Members' approval to award the MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant to specific schemes that meet the MHCLG grant requirements and as recommended by the Housing, Tenancy and Advisory Manager in consultation with the Housing Solutions Manager, the Voids and Allocations and Lettings Manager and the Housing Development and

Enabling Manager. Additionally, it seeks to delegate authority to the Assistant Director Community and Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services to allocate any underspend of grant during 2025/26 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 the above 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.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 The management and administration of grant forms a significant part of the Strategic Housing Team's day to day operations. The allocation of the funding is approved by Council annually, a copy of the grants awarded in 2024/25 is attached as Appendix 2.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council has been awarded £425,057 Homelessness Prevention Grant 2025/26 which is ring fenced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the prevention of homelessness. The Temporary Accommodation Management Fund

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(TAMF) previously received through the DWP has been amalgamated into this grant.

- 4.2 The amount the Council would have ordinarily expected from the former Temporary Accommodation Management Fund is £66,380.
- 4.3 The Council expects the funding for Homelessness Prevention in 2025/26, as follows:

Homelessness Prevention Grant	2025/26
Homelessness Prevention Grant	£425,057
Underspend (2024/25 Crash Pad and Cornerstone income)	£17,338
Total Grant Available	£442,395

Domestic Abuse Grant	2025/26
Domestic Abuse Grant	£35,222
Underspend from previous years	£2,300
Total Grant Available	£37,522

- 4.4 Proposed Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant.

Initiatives	£ (up to £442,395)
Redditch Nightstop – Accommodation and Support	34,005
Redditch Nightstop Core Funding	13,000
Maggs Rough Sleeper Outreach Service £102,906.60 (of which £44,225 funded from RSI)	58,682
GreenSquare Accord – 18 units of supported accommodation for Ex Offenders or those likely to offend	17,456
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

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Temporary Accommodation Management	66,380
St Basils Young Persons Supported Housing	63,647
St Basils Young Persons Pathway Worker	30,316
St Basils Crash Pad emergency accommodation	39,132
Onside Advocacy Mental Health Support Worker	36,757
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	7,500
CCP Single and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Service	33,460
Batchley Support Group	15,000
Total	£442,395
Underspend	£0

Proposed allocation of Domestic Abuse Grant

Initiatives	£ (up to £37,522)
Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator	4,813
Domestic Abuse Research and Intelligence Officer	4,426
Domestic Abuse Housing Solutions Officer Top Up	6,000
New Starts	5,000
Batchley Support Group	5,000
St Basils Young Persons Pathway Worker (YPPW)	10,000
Redditch Nightstop	2,283
Total	£37,522
Underspend	£0

- 4.5 These are voluntary organisations and without this funding it is unlikely this support would be offered or available which in turn would lead to an increase in 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 all sectors. In addition, there has been less churn in social housing, so fewer properties are becoming available and social housing options are very limited. All grants are delivering services for Redditch.

- 4.6 The Council has received two applications to provide a rough sleeper outreach and support service. The Caring for Communities and People (CCP) has been funded across Bromsgrove and Redditch since 2017/18 and has in the past provided a good service and supported many individuals to end their rough sleeper lifestyle. However, this service is no longer providing value for money. This is in some part due to recruitment issues where they have been unable to recruit a project manager. The two outreach officers are being managed remotely by two existing CCP managers and this has resulted in a reduction in the number of individuals receiving support and little opportunity to develop the service to meet current needs. The application from Maggs offers a good quality service and value for money with a proposal to support a larger cohort than the current CCP service. The Maggs service will provide two officers and one manager who will deliver the service including carrying out twice weekly assertive outreach. They have already established a HARM reduction drop in at the Baptist Church on Easemore Road, Redditch and support those with substance misuse issues, many of whom are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, so they are already linked in with many of our service users. They also have strong links with accommodation providers and take a staged approach to their support flexing it to meet needs. They expect officers to hold a caseload of 20 clients each and have an ethos based upon never giving up on the person, even if they have 'failed the system' often. The Maggs Service is cost effective and will be based in Redditch. It is therefore recommended that the application from Maggs is approved. The application from CCP is not being put forward for approval. We will be working with both providers over the coming months to ensure a smooth transition from one service to another with service users continuing to receive the support they need. We would like to thank CCP officers for their hard work over the years in providing this service.
- 4.7 The Council is having to prioritise grant award to those that provide accommodation and support people into accommodation or to sustain accommodation. Worcestershire Childrens Services have reduced the independent living support grant for St Basils and they have asked the Council to make up the shortfall of £38,337. Redditch Council does want the young person accommodation to continue as it's loss would have a significant impact on the Council's ability to meet its' statutory homeless duty and find suitable accommodation for young homeless

people and care leavers. This has meant that difficult decisions regarding the funding of other services need to be made.

- 4.8 As a consequence the Citizens Advice bid for £53,331 for Targeted Debt Intervention is not being put forward for approval via the Homelessness Grant. Having reviewed this service, and having increased the in house debt advice provision, there is now a duplication in services. The Council is looking at other ways of funding and working with the Citizens Advice to provide the support our own in house service is unable to provide in respect of the regulated element relating to Debt Relief Orders. It is anticipated that this will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account.
- 4.9 The funding for Nightstop has been reduced from £65,539 to £49,288 due to insufficient grant availability and we will be working closely with them to remodel the service to focus on accommodation options and mediation services to complement our own homelessness prevention and relief role. Redditch Borough Council does now provide its own in house support service that can be utilised to meet the needs of young people that this service will no longer have capacity for and will provide for a continuation in support for those that need it.
- 4.10 This report asks for delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services 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 2025/26. The funding reduction for Nightstop and the ending of the CAB Homelessness Prevention Grant funding will be reviewed should we receive confirmation of additional Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2025/26. The Council expects to be notified of the grant award towards the end of December. Any additional grant award can be utilised under delegated authority of the Assistant Director, Communities and Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 The Homelessness Prevention Grant has been ring fenced to homelessness prevention and tackling homelessness by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

- 5.3 The Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant has been provided to ensure that councils comply with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

6. OTHER- IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.1 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 Borough. 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

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

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.
- 6.5 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.

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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

7.2 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

Appendix 1 – Grant Outcomes Monitoring Table

Appendix 2 – Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse

Grant spend for 24/25

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett	31/10/2024
Assistant Director	Judith Willis Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services	4/11/2024
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter, Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer	05/11/2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	06/11/2024
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles, Climate Change Manager	05/11/2024