

Report to Executive Board – 7th February, 2005
 Report to Council – 14th February, 2005

ODPM Homelessness Directorate Revenue Funding

Report of:	<i>Val Johnson Neighbourhood Renewal</i>	Wards Affected
Report Author:	<i>Nerys Parry, Street Homeless Co-ordinator Tel no. 01865 252825 Email: nparry@oxford.gov.uk</i>	
Lead Member Responsible:	<i>Portfolio Holder Housing</i>	
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	<i>Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</i>	
Key Decision:	<i>Yes</i>	
<p>SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>Oxford City Council has been successful in an award of £570,000 Revenue Funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Homelessness Directorate to commission services with the purpose of meeting the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keep levels of rough sleeping as close to zero as possible (at least two-thirds below the level in 1998, or lower) ➤ Ensure B&B hostels are not used to accommodate homeless families with children, except in emergencies and even then for no longer than six weeks; and ➤ Tackle homelessness more effectively through implementation of the homelessness legislation and delivery of the homelessness strategy. <p>This will also help deliver the Council's vision in terms of enhancing community safety; working more closely with partners to develop and deliver shared goals and making Oxford a safer City.</p> <p>There are also strong links to the Crime and Community Safety Strategy, Oxfordshire Supporting People Strategy and the Oxfordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team.</p> <p>The staffing implications are set out in the body of the report.</p> <p>The financial implications are also set out in the body of the report.</p> <p>The Executive Board is asked to recommend to Council to:</p> <p>a) Approve the drawing down of the government allocation</p>		

- b) Waive the Council's Contract Procedure Rules because of the specialist nature of the projects in order to enable the award of the necessary individual grants.
- c) Approve the following financial grants for 2005-2006 to external agencies:
 - i. 2 Resettlement Workers (ECHG) - £56,000
 - ii. 2 specialist, floating support workers (Elmore Team) - £71,199
 - iii. 1 Prevention Worker (The Bridge Oxford) - £29,377
 - iv. 4 posts at the Street Services Team (CRI) - £138,000
 - v. 1 Substance Misuse Worker (Simon House) - £33,000
 - vi. 1 Befriending Scheme Co-ordinator (CRI) - £35,500
 - vii. 1.5 posts at the Family Support Service (CRI) - £60,000
 - viii. 1 Alcohol Worker (Nightshelter) - £31,727
 - ix. 1 Tenancy Sustainment Worker (Nightshelter) - £31,727
- a) Approve the following Oxford City Council posts/initiatives for 2005-2006
 - i. Partnership Support Officer - £14,000
 - ii. Innovative Solutions Budget - £11,580
 - Severe Weather Beds
 - Young Persons subsidised beds at Simon House
 - Activate – Pre-detox substance misuse project at ECHG
 - iii. Rent Deposit Guarantee Fund - £20,000
- a) Approve delegated authority to the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit Manager to allocate the balance of £37,890

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Oxford City Council has been successful in an award of £570,000 Revenue Funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Homelessness Directorate to commission services with the purpose of meeting the following objectives:
- Keep levels of rough sleeping as close to zero as possible (at least two-thirds below the level in 1998, or lower)
 - Ensure B&B hostels are not used to accommodate homeless families with children, except in emergencies and even then for no longer than six weeks; and
 - Tackle homelessness more effectively through implementation of the homelessness legislation and delivery of the homelessness strategy.
- 1.2 The Rough Sleeper section of OCC's Homelessness Strategy has more specific aims and objectives:
- Maintain the number of rough sleepers to below 8 on any one occasion (a count is carried out every six weeks)
 - Maintain the reduction of street drinkers and reduce to as near zero as possible
 - Maintain the reduction of begging incidences and reduce to as near zero as possible.

- 1.3 Other targets (developed in the contractual agreements made with the individual organisations) include:
- No of people leaving hostels who do not return to sleeping rough
 - No of those using substances who are engaging with treatment
 - No of people engaging in training and/or educational activity
 - No of hostel residents who are accessing voluntary or paid employment
 - No of clients who have maintained accommodation for 3, 6 and 12 months.

- 1.4 Executive Board is asked to recommend to Council, in agreement with the ODPMs Homelessness Directorate, that the following specialist posts be funded from the 1st April 2005 until 31st March, 2006 and to waive the Council's Contract Procedure Rules because of the specialist nature of the projects in order to enable the award of the necessary individual grants.

a) English Churches Housing Group (Lucy Faithful House)

**Two full-time Resettlement and Floating Support Workers (extended funding).
£56,000**

Based at the hostel, these workers support residents to move on to alternative, independent accommodation. The team will split their time between working with clients in the hostel, preparing them for resettlement and supporting those who have moved out to sustain their tenancies.

b) Elmore Community Support Team

**Two, full-time Complex Needs Floating Support Workers (extended funding)
£71,199**

To provide support to clients in the community and also have the flexibility to carry out street work when a client presents with complex and multiple needs. The Elmore Team has a history of working with clients who can potentially fall between the gaps of statutory and voluntary agencies.

c) Oxford Nightshelter

**i) One, full-time Alcohol Resettlement Worker (extended funding)
£31,727**

Based at the Wet Room in the Nightshelter, this post is to assess the support and resettlement needs of street drinkers be that detox, rehab or other supported accommodation.

**ii) One full-time Tenancy Sustainment Worker (extended funding)
£31,727**

Providing support to clients resettled into Julian Housing, supported accommodation or independent forms of accommodation.

d) The Bridge Oxford/Gap Project

**One, full-time Resettlement and Prevention Worker (extended funding)
£29,377**

Based at the Gap Day Centre, working primarily with 16-25 year olds who also access The Bridge Oxford to assess their housing and support needs with a view to moving them on to more stable accommodation.

e) Crime Reduction Initiative

i) One, full-time Alcohol/Drugs Specialist (extended funding)

£33,000

Based at Simon House Hostel, providing 1:2:1 and group work to residents at the hostel and clients who are resettling in the community but who have substance misuse issues.

ii) Street Services Team (extended funding) - One Project Leader and 3 Full-Time Project Workers

£138,000

To carry out assertive outreach work with rough sleepers. The team are contracted to keep the number of rough sleepers found on any one count to 8 or below, working to a count of as close to zero as possible. This is the team primarily responsible for ensuring that OCC's ODPM target is met on a quarterly basis.

It should be recognised that the SST's work also plays a very important part in reducing anti-social behaviour within the City.

iii) Contact (formerly St Thomas' Befriending Scheme) – One full time worker

£35,500

To recruit and co-ordinate a team of 30 volunteers who support people from vulnerable backgrounds to develop their independence and actively engage in the community where they live. The contract will initially be awarded on a 6-month basis, depending on performance.

iv) Family Support Service – One full time team leader and part time project worker

£60,000

Working with up to 25 families per annum, providing them with floating support to sustain their temporary accommodation and help them plan for the next move. Ensure that parents and children are supported in accessing relevant services including childcare, education, GPs and Social Services.

Oxford City Council Posts

f) Partnership Support Officer (extended funding)

£14,000

To provide support to the Street Homeless Co-ordinator, facilitate partnership working across the homeless network and run the database which tracks and collates statistics on rough sleeping and single homelessness.

g) Innovation Fund (Extended Funding)

£11,580

Enabling small initiatives to be piloted:

- 4 Subsidised beds for Young People at Simon House
- Severe Weather Beds provision at the Nightshelter
- Activate – a motivational programme for substance misusers at ECHG

f) Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

£20,000

To provide rent deposits for non-statutory singles moving on from hostel accommodation into the private rented sector. This is a part of a drive to unblock the City's hostels.

- 1.6 Executive Board is asked to approve delegated authority to the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit Manager to allocate the balance of £37,890. A mapping exercise is currently underway to determine the need for a liaison post to co-ordinate and prevent young offenders leaving prison and sleeping rough. This group features highly in our rough sleeper counts. This is an early indication of where the money will be spent.

2. STAFFING CONSEQUENCES

- 2.1 All external staff will be funded on fixed-term contracts.
- 3.1 There will be quarterly performance monitoring meetings with Oxford City Council's Housing and Homelessness Steering Group to review and ensure the delivery of services and that outcomes and targets are achieved.
- 3.2 All Oxford City Council ODPM funded staff will be employed by the City Council on temporary contracts. The funding of these posts does not include any costs that might be incurred to the Council for redundancy or for unfair dismissal. Post holders are on time-limited contracts but there is no financial risk to the Council to cover any such costs.
- 3.1 The HMD funding programme will be managed by the existing Street Homeless Co-ordinator in the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The funding allocation has to be spent by the end of the financial year 2006.
- 3.2 There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY:

Andy Collett: Finance and Asset Management Business Unit
Julie Thomlinson: Legal and Democratic Services Business Unit
Val Johnson: Business Unit Manager, Neighbourhood Renewal
Cllr Ed Turner: Portfolio Holder for Housing