

**Report of:** Neighbourhood Renewal Manager

**To:** Executive Board

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2005

**Item No:**

**Title of Report :** ODPM Homelessness Directorate Revenue Funding

### Summary and Recommendations

#### **Purpose of report:**

Oxford City Council has been successful in an award of £570 Revenue Funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate (HHSD). This report outlines the division of the allocation to a variety of voluntary agencies, with the purpose of meeting the objective and target of 8 rough sleepers.

**Key decision:** Yes

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Ed Turner

**Scrutiny Responsibility:** Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Ward(s) affected:** All

#### **Report Approved by:**

Ben Liddar (Legal and Democratic Services)

Councillor Ed Turner

John Johnson (Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager)

Andy Collett (Financial and Asset Management)

#### **Policy Framework:**

Homelessness Strategy

Enhancing Community Safety

Making Oxford a safer City.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

1. Approve the drawing down of the government allocation for the financial year April 06 – March 07.

2. Approve the following financial grants for 2006-2007 to external agencies: -  
4 posts at the Street Services Team - £153,994



- 1 Substance Misuse worker at Simon House - £40,620  
 2 Resettlement Workers at ECHG - £57,680  
 1 Alcohol Worker at the Nightshelter - £32,568  
 1 Tenancy Sustainment Worker at the Nightshelter - £32,568  
 1 Prevention and Resettlement Worker at the Bridge Project - £30,258  
 1 Multiple needs worker at the Elmore Team - £36,668  
 Innovations Fund to include: -  
 Severe Weather Beds - £3,500  
 Subsidised Service Charge for 4 x Young People at Simon House £2,100  
 Activate – pre-detox course at ECHG - £6,000
3. Approve the following Oxford City Council posts/schemes for 2006-2007: -  
 Partnership Support Officer (Neighbourhood Renewal) - £14,000  
 Priority Needs Funding, Supported Lodgings Scheme (Housing Services) - £28,000  
 Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (Housing Services) - £20,000
4. Approve the decommissioning of the following posts: -  
 Rough Sleeper outreach worker (The Elmore Team)  
 Family Support Team (CRI)
5. Approve the commissioning of the following posts: -  
 1 new, full time post in the current Street Services Team - £32,718
6. Approve delegated authority to the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit Manager to allocate the balance of £79,326.

### **Background**

1. Oxford City Council has been successful in the 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
2. The Rough Sleeper section of Oxford City Council'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 6-8 weeks)
  - % of clients not returning to rough sleeping
  - % of clients using substances engaged in treatment
  - % of clients accessing training /education
  - % of clients engaged in voluntary or paid work
  - % of clients maintaining a tenancy for 3,6 and 12 months

3. In order to maintain the number of rough sleepers to 8 on any one occasion, the following priorities have been identified and used as a framework to allocate the funding: -

- Assertive outreach, contact and assessment.
- Modern and effective hostels with specialist workers.
- Good move-on into both the social and private sectors.
- Successful and sustainable tenancy sustainment.

4. Executive Board is asked to recommend to Council, in agreement with the ODPM's Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate, that the following specialist posts be funded from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007

### **Crime Reduction Initiative**

#### **Street Services Team**

**One Manager and 3 Full Time Outreach Workers (extension of funding)  
£153,994**

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 that is primarily responsible for ensuring that Oxford City Council's target is met and plays an important part in reducing anti-social behaviour within the City.

#### **One full-time Substance Misuse worker (extension of funding)**

**£40,620**

Based at Simon House, 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 with an overall aim of reducing eviction and negative abandonment rates.

#### **English Churches Housing Group (Lucy Faithful House)**

**Two full-time resettlement workers (extension of funding)**

**£57,680**

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. These posts are essential to maintain a flow through the hostel and prevent bed blocking.

#### **Oxford Nightshelter (O'Hanlon House)**

**One, full-time Alcohol Specialist Worker (extension of funding)**

**£32,568**

Based at O'Hanlon House this post is to assess the support and resettlement needs of street drinkers accessing the Day Centre and especially the Wet Room. The post also has a strategic remit, holding a broad overview of the City's needs in terms of alcohol provision and to support the City Council's



Street Homelessness Co-ordinator in identifying these gaps and finding innovative ways of plugging them.

**One, full-time Tenancy Sustainment Worker (extension of funding)**

**£32,568**

Providing floating support to clients who have moved on from the Nightshelter into supported accommodation, the Council's move-on accommodation or increasingly the private rented sector.

**The Bridge Oxford**

**One, full-time Resettlement and Prevention worker (extension of funding)**

**£30,258**

Based at the Gap Day Centre, working primarily with 16-25 year olds who may access The Bridge, to assess their housing and support needs with a view of keeping them in accommodation and preventing them from falling out once accessing.

**Elmore Community Support Team**

**One, full-time complex needs worker (extension of funding)**

**£36,668**

The Elmore Team has a history of working with clients who can potentially fall between the gaps in statutory and voluntary agencies. This post is to concentrate on in-reach work with clients placed in the City's hostels to help keep them in accommodation and prevent them from returning to rough sleeping.

**Innovation Fund**

**£11,600**

This pot of money enables small initiatives to be piloted:

- To cover shortfall in service charges for 4 x Young People at Simon House (£2,100)
- Severe weather beds provision at the Nightshelter (£3,500)
- Activate – a motivational programme for substance misusers at ECHG (£6,000)

**Oxford City Council**

**Partnership Support Officer (Neighbourhood Renewal) (extension of 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 non-statutory single homelessness.

**Supported Lodgings Scheme (Housing Services)**

**£28,000**

Set up by Oxford City Council and Social and Community Services Directorate, a Supported Lodgings Scheme recruits and supports a network of local people who offer a room in their home to young people who cannot live with their families or have left care. The scheme helps them develop practical

skills, which will help them to live independently in an emotionally nurturing environment.

### **Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (Housing Services)**

**£20,000**

To provide rent deposits for non-statutory singles moving on from hostel accommodation into the private rented sector. This is part of a drive to unblock the City's hostels. This service should be considered as part of the review of the Lord Mayor's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.

5. It is recommended that the following service be commissioned: -

### **Crime Reduction Initiative**

#### **Street Services Team – One, extra, full-time worker**

**£32,718**

One extra full-time worker to be deployed to the Street Services Team, which follows an assertive outreach model of working, to ensure that Oxford City Council continues to meet its rough sleeper target.

6. It is recommended that the following services be decommissioned: -

### **Crime Reduction Initiative**

#### **Family Support Team**

It is recommended that this service be decommissioned as it is not a priority for the strategic framework used to allocate this funding. There have also been efficiency issues due to the structure of the team and the need to make financial savings. However, it is in principle a valued service and options for the future of this service are as follows: -

- The service is decommissioned and not re-introduced.
- Supporting People are approached to consider funding this service.
- The service is brought in house, based in Housing Services, to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

### **Elmore Community Services**

#### **Multiple Needs Rough Sleeper Post**

It is recommended that the funding currently allocated to the Elmore Team to carry out rough sleeper outreach work be cut. Oxford City Council's Street Team Taskforce, set up in 2001 to tackle rough sleeping in Oxford, decided to adopt an assertive outreach, contact and assessment model in line with ODPM recommendations. The Elmore Team's service does not fit this model, and given the fact that there has been an increase in rough sleeping numbers in the city over the last 9 months, it is imperative that the focus remains on assertive outreach, accommodation and resettlement.

7. There are a number of other proposals/bids submitted by both the voluntary sector and Oxford City Council, which have not been funded. This is because the HHSD Steering Group deemed them not to be such high priority or as strategically relevant to the targets and objectives attached to the HHSD grant. They are listed here in order of priority should alternative funding or any underspend become available: -

- Employment and Training worker at Simon House - £27,000 (currently awaiting outcome of SEEDA application)
- Activities worker at O'Hanlon House, Nightshelter (SEEDA application turned down)
- Business Action in the Community Co-ordinator - £30,000 (currently awaiting SEEDA application)
- Riverside Court Mental Health Worker (due to SP cut)
- Temporary Accommodation Managers at Oxford City Council (due to SP cut)

8. Executive Board is asked to approve delegated authority to the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager to allocate the balance of the budget which is currently £79,326.

9. Oxford City Council, the DAAT and Supporting People are all looking at new commissioning practices for the next financial year, with a consultant currently employed to audit and write a report with recommendations. It is recommended that the allocation of this HHSD grant in 07-08 will also follow the recommendations of this report.

#### **STAFFING CONSEQUENCES**

10. All external staff are employed by external organisations for whom the Council has no liability.

11. The Partnership Support Officer is on a temporary contract and would be entitled to redundancy and redeployment by March 07 should the grant cease.

12. There will be quarterly performance monitoring meetings with Oxford City Council's Housing and Homelessness Directorate Steering Group to review and ensure the delivery of services and that outcomes and targets are achieved

13. The HHSD funding programme will be managed by the existing Street Homeless Co-ordinator in the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit.

#### **Financial Implications**

14. The funding allocation has to be spend by the end of the financial year 2007

15. There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report apart from those potential implications addressed in paragraph 11 above.

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#### **Background papers:**

Homelessness Strategy

