

To: City Executive Board

Date: 3rd March 2010

Item No:

Report of: Head of Community Housing and Community Development

Title of Report: Allocation of Homelessness Revenue Budget

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: Oxford City Council has been awarded £640,000 Revenue Funding from Communities and Local Government's (CLG) Homelessness, Overcrowding and Worklessness Directorate (HOWD) for inclusion in its budget allocation for 2010-2011, together with the Council's own *expected* homelessness grant budget of £442,279. This report outlines the allocation of both the HOWD funding and Oxford City Council's homelessness grant budget to a variety of voluntary sector agencies, with the purpose of meeting the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.

Key decision: Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Ed Turner

Report approved by:

Finance: Gillian Chandler

Legal: Jeremy Thomas

Policy Framework: Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Recommendation(s):

1. Recommend Council agree the allocation of the HOWD grant for 2010 – 2011 as follows:
 - a) Rough Sleepers' Street Services and Reconnection Team (CRI) - £238,218
 - b) Reconnection and Referral Co-ordinator (Under 25s) (CRI) - £37,245
 - c) Severe Weather Beds - £4000
 - d) 2 Education, Training and Employment Workers (Aspire) - £64,000
 - e) 1 Life Skills Worker (Simon House) - £39,024
 - f) 1 Specialist Alcohol Worker (O'Hanlon House) - £34,223
 - g) 1 Tenancy Sustainment Worker (O'Hanlon House) - £34,223
 - h) 1 Multiple Needs worker (Elmore Community Services) - £39,278

- i) 6 Subsidised Beds for Under 25s (Simon House) - £4,165
- j) 6 Subsidised Beds for Under 25s (Lucy Faithful House) - £4,662
- k) Joint funding of the Joint Housing Team and Supported Lodgings Scheme, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council - £30,000

2. Recommend the allocation of Oxford City Council's homelessness grant budget for 2010-2011 as follows:

- a) O'Hanlon House Day Centre - £133,432
- b) One Foot Forward - £42,992
- c) Elmore Community Services - £42,230 (6 Months initially)
- d) The Gap - £95,938 (6 Months initially)
- e) The Gatehouse - £9,502
- f) Steppin' Stone - £51,250
- g) Simon House - £11,637
- h) Emmaus Oxford Furniture Store - £28,505
- i) Aspire Oxfordshire - £25,543

3. Recommend to Council to approve delegated authority to the Head of Service of Community Housing and Community Development to allocate the balance of the HOWD budget (£110,962) and the homelessness grants budget (£1,250)

Background

1. Oxford City Council receives an annual grant from Communities and Local Government's Homelessness, Overcrowding and Worklessness Directorate. The grant has been £640,000 for years 08/09, 09/10 and 10/11 with £30,000 ring-fenced to the Joint Housing Team at Oxfordshire County Council for the prevention of youth homelessness.
2. This is part of a £200 million investment by government to prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping nationally.
3. The grant is not ring-fenced and as such it is up to Oxford City Council how it is allocated. It is however given on the condition that it is used to help tackle all aspects of homelessness within the district and the expectation is that OCC will have due regard for Government targets when deciding how and when to spend this money, with specific regard to rough sleeping and non-statutory services.
4. A further commissioning budget of £442,279 is also currently available from the City Council's own grant funds.
5. In light of the cross-commissioning agenda and cross-strategy advantages, a multi-agency steering group is responsible for advising on and monitoring these budgets. The group comprises of representatives from Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council's Joint Housing Team, PCT, DAAT and Oxfordshire County Council's Supporting People Team.

Strategic Framework

6. The long-term vision for preventing homelessness in the City is to create choice and to realise the potential of people experiencing, or at risk, of homelessness.
7. This vision is embedded in OCC's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 which aims to: -
 - Prevent homelessness
 - Reduce the impact of homelessness on people's lives
 - Ensure homelessness services in the city:
 - Are of a high quality
 - Meet the need of vulnerable people
 - Reflect the city's diverse population
 - Are delivered in partnership, and
 - Offer value for money
8. This strategy sits within a framework of policy across the city, the county, the South East region and national housing and homelessness priorities.

National Rough Sleeping Strategy

9. In November 2008, government published its strategy on rough sleeping entitled "No One Left Out – Communities Ending Rough Sleeping." This signalled a new energy and renewed focus to end rough sleeping by 2012 and replaces its previous strategy "Coming in From the Cold" which achieved its target of reducing rough sleeping by two-thirds from 1998 baseline figures.
10. The full strategy can be found on www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/roughsleepingstrategy
11. The strategy's main principles are reflected in OCC's Homelessness Strategy, Objective 4: "To support rough sleepers into settled accommodation and develop clear pathways into independent homes, training and employment."
12. Therefore, the following priorities have been identified and used as a framework to allocate the funding: -
 - Assertive outreach and reconnection.
 - Better access to education, training and employment
 - Modern and effective hostels and day centres with specialist workers.
 - Good move-on into both the social and private sectors.
 - Successful tenancy sustainment.

Allocation of HOWD Grant 10/11

13. It is proposed that, in agreement with the CLG's HOWD, that the following specialist services and posts be funded from the 1st April 2010 until 31st March 2011:-

**Street Services and Reconnection Team (Crime Reduction Initiatives)
One FTE Manager, 4 FTE Outreach Workers and 1 FTE Reconnection
Worker**

£238,218

14. On 1st April 2008 a 3-year contract was awarded to CRI. This is the third year of the contract. The service carries out assertive outreach and reconnection work with the city's rough sleepers. 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, FTE Referral and Reconnection Worker for Under 25s (CRI)

£37,245

15. Following the County-wide procurement of young people's services, CRI were awarded this contract (previously based at the Gap Day Centre) to provide a referral service for 16-25 year olds into appropriate supported accommodation in the City, as well as a reconnection service for those without a local connection. This post will join the main Street Services and Reconnection Team.

Severe Weather Beds (O'Hanlon House)

£4,000

16. Extra provision (maximum of 12 places) based at O'Hanlon House at times of extreme weather. The City's severe weather beds policy will be refreshed in 2010-2011 in light of the exceptionally severe weather and demands on services this winter.

Two FTE Education, Training and Employment Workers (Aspire)

£64,000

17. A contract was awarded to Aspire Oxfordshire (1st October 2009 – 31st March 2011) to provide an Education, Training and Employment (ETE) resource to the homeless network of Oxford. This contract concerns the funding of two posts, focusing on providing work placements, employment opportunities and benefits advice for Oxford's homeless network. This was as a result of Oxford's leading homeless services (O'Hanlon House, Lucy Faithful House, Simon House, One Foot Forward, The Gap, Aspire, and The Elmore Team) individually identifying the need for an ETE resource for their organisation to engage with 'work-ready' service users in developing progression pathways into sustainable, independent living. To address duplication of work and ensure effective use of funding, it was decided to award a contract to Aspire Oxford to manage a resource available to all organisations across the network.

One FTE Life Skills Co-ordinator (Simon House)

£39,024

18. This post co-ordinates the group programmes and meaningful occupation activities in the hostel, providing clear pathways to education, qualifications, volunteering opportunities and employment,

enabling individuals to gain the skills needed for independent living. It also links to the work of the new ETE workers at Aspire.

19. This post has been initially awarded a 6-month contract and is to be reviewed.

**One FTE Alcohol Specialist Worker (O'Hanlon House)
£34,223**

20. 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 Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager in identifying gaps in services and finding innovative ways of solving them.

**One FTE Tenancy Sustainment Worker (O'Hanlon House)
£34,223**

21. This post provides floating support to clients who have moved on from the Night Shelter into supported accommodation, the Council's move-on accommodation or the private rented sector for a limited period before handing over to the City's generic floating support services.

**One FTE Multiple Needs Worker (Elmore Community Services)
£39,278 (initial 6-month contract)**

22. 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.

23. This post will be awarded an initial 6-month contract as the main Elmore Community Services contract will be re-tendered by the Primary Care Trust and Supporting People, as part of the County-wide re-tendering of all mental health services. The current timetable indicates that new services are due to start from 1st October 2010 and therefore the City Council are unable to commit to provision beyond this timescale.

**6 subsidised beds for under 25s (Simon House)
£4,165**

24. To cover the shortfall in service charge for 6 young people who are under 25 years old at Simon House.

**6 subsidised beds for under 25s (Lucy Faithful House)
£4,662**

25. To cover the shortfall in service charge for 6 young people who are under 25 years old at Lucy Faithful House.

**Youth Homelessness (Oxfordshire County Council)
£30,000**

26. This funding is allocated to the Joint Housing Team and Supported Lodgings Scheme, in partnership with Oxfordshire Council, working towards the reduction of youth homelessness. This allocation is ring fenced by CLG and is monitored directly by government.

HOWD Proposals Pending

Specialist Homelessness Liaison Police Officer (Thames Valley Police)

27. This post was commissioned in December 2009 for initially one year to liaise closely with the Street Services Team and other partners within the single homelessness and rough sleepers' network to identify and tackle problematic rough sleeper hot spots, to prevent rough sleeping and anti social behaviour. Outcomes and performance will be monitored over the coming year to inform future funding decisions.

Mental Health Practitioner (Luther Street Medical Centre)

28. In 2009-2010 OCC and the PCT jointly commissioned one full time Mental Health Practitioner to work with homelessness agencies in Oxford to: -

- Build capacity within homelessness agencies to work in a more therapeutic and psychological way with adults facing chronic exclusion.
- Provide support and training for agencies to run their own active engagement and pre-therapy treatment work, which will act as a stepping stone and prepare adults for entry into the Complex Needs Service, which is currently too difficult for this group to engage with.
- Carry a small caseload taking responsibility for co-ordinating multi-agency working so that service users make more appropriate use of mainstream services, especially looking at planned and appropriate interventions at key points of transition

29. OCC are due to receive monitoring data for this post's outcomes and performance and are in discussions with the Primary Care Trust with regard to the future funding arrangements for this post.

Withdrawal of HOWD Funding

30. Funding has been withdrawn from the Move-On Co-ordinator based at Simon House as this work is deemed integral to the new Supporting People contracts and therefore should not require funding from other sources.

31. Funding has also been withdrawn from CRI's Substance Misuse Worker based at Simon House due to the fact that the Drug and Alcohol Action Team have commissioned a wide-range of comprehensive substance misuse services in the City which are available to all homeless clients.

32. This is the final year of the current funding arrangements with Communities and Local Government and as such we do not have an indication of funding levels for 2011 going forward.

33. In light of potential significant changes to funding, the HOWD Steering Group will be undertaking a thorough review of provision funded by this grant over 2010-2011.

34. The City Executive Board is asked to approve delegated authority to the Head of Community Housing and Community Development to allocate the balance of HOWD grant, which is currently £110,962.

Oxford City Council's Homelessness Grant

35. A grant allocation of £442,279 has been allocated for the commissioning of homelessness services in 2010-2011.

36. In line with the City Council's prospectus and strategic objective "safer communities/homelessness", OCC are committed to the provision of accommodation, day centre support, a full range of day centre activities and meaningful occupation as well as tenancy sustainment from this grant.

37. It is recommended that the grant allocation be made as follows for 10/11:-

Organisation and Purpose of Grant	Allocation for 10/11
Elmore Community Services (Core Funding) Initial 6-month contract	£42,230
Young Peoples' Project - One Foot Forward (BCHA)	£42,992
O'Hanlon House (Oxford Homeless Pathways)	£133,432
The Gap (Core Funding) Initial 6-month contract	£95,938
The Gatehouse (Core Funding)	£9,502
Steppin Stone (Core Funding)	£51,250
Simon House (Respite Beds)	£11,637
Emmaus Oxford Furniture Store (Core Funding)	£28,505
Aspire Oxfordshire (Support Worker)	£25,543
	£441,029
	Unallocated
	£1,250

38. The Elmore Community Services will be initially awarded a 6-month basis as the main contract will be re-tendered by the Primary Care Trust and Supporting People, as part of the County-wide re-tendering of all mental health services. The current timetable indicates that new

services are due to start from 1st October 2010 and therefore the City Council are unable to commit to provision beyond this timescale.

39. The Gap will be initially awarded a 6-month contract. Its funding and services to its client group are currently under review, and funding the Gap for this time period will allow key commissioners at the County Council and the Primary Care Trust to analyse further data which is currently being recorded by the Gap and to find a shared way forward.

Level of Risk

40. Please see attached matrix (Appendix 1)

Climate Change/environmental impact

41. There are no significant climate change or environmental impact issues related to this report.

Equalities Impact

42. All services in receipt of funding are subject to rigorous monitoring which includes equality and diversity.

Financial Implications

43. The funding allocation has to be spent by the end of the financial year 2010/11.
44. This is budget neutral as the line in the budget for the grant will be equal to the allocated spend.
45. There are no other financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

Legal Implications

46. In distributing these grants the Council should ensure that the organisations are clear as to the outcomes that the Council expects to achieve.

Staffing Implications

47. All external staff are employed by external organisations for whom the Council has no liability.
48. There will be quarterly performance monitoring meetings with Oxford City Council's HOWD Steering Group to review and ensure the delivery of services, and that outcomes and targets are achieved
49. The HOWD funding programme and OCC's homelessness grant will be managed by the existing Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager in the Community Housing and Community Development Business Unit.

Recommendation(s):

50. Recommend Council agree the allocation of the HOWD grant for 2010 – 2011 as follows:

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List of background papers:

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