

To: City Executive Board

Date: 9th March 2011

Item No: 11

Report of: Head of Community Housing and Community Development

Title of Report: Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant and Oxford City Grant for Homelessness Services

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: Oxford City Council has been awarded £1,042,000 Homelessness Prevention Grant from Communities and Local Government's (CLG) Homelessness Directorate for inclusion in its budget allocation for 2011-2012. This is in addition to the Council's own homelessness grant budget of £442,279. This report outlines the allocation of both the Homelessness Prevention Grant funding and the 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: No

Executive lead member: Councillor Joe McManners

Policy Framework: Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Recommendation(s):

1. Recommend Council agree the allocation of the Homelessness Prevention grant for 2011 – 2012 as follows:

- a) Street Services and Reconnection Team (Crime Reduction Initiatives) - £238,218
- b) Reconnection and Referral Co-ordinator (Under 25s) (Crime Reduction Initiatives) - £37,245
- c) Reconnection Rent (O'Hanlon House) - £520
- d) Severe Weather Beds - £10,000
- e) 6 Subsidised Beds for Under 25s (Simon House) - £4,165
- f) 6 Subsidised Beds for Under 25s (Lucy Faithful House) - £4,179
- g) Mental Health Practitioner at Luther Street – £25,000
- h) 2 Education, Training and Employment Workers (Aspire) - £60,519
- i) 1 Specialist Alcohol Worker (O'Hanlon House) - £34,223

- j) 1 Multiple Needs Hostel worker (Elmore Community Services) - £40,757
- k) Service Broker – Big Issue - £18,750
- l) Unallocated £568,424

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

- a) O'Hanlon House Day Centre – homeless hostel for 25+, jointly commissioned with Supporting People - £133,432
- b) One Foot Forward – homeless hostel for 16-25 year olds, jointly commissioned with Supporting People - £42,992
- c) Elmore Community Services – Complex Needs Floating Support Service for clients in Oxford City Council temporary and permanent stock - £40,757
- d) Elmore Community Services, Anti Social Behaviour Service – £20,000
- e) The Gatehouse – café for the homeless - £9,502
- f) Steppin' Stone – day centre providing emergency provision and meaningful activity - £55,000
- g) Simon House Hostel – provision of respite beds at an abstinence based hostel - £11,596
- h) Emmaus Oxford Furniture Store – recycling store attached to the Emmaus Community £25,000
- i) Aspire Oxfordshire – social enterprise providing work opportunities for homeless and ex-homeless people - £104,000 (to be confirmed)
- k) Unallocated – nil

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 Homelessness Prevention Grant (£568,424) and any amendments to the homelessness grants budget

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Grant Shapps' Letter to the Housing Sector

Appendix 2 – Local Government Spending Review letter to Leaders

Appendix 3 – Risk Register

Background

1. On 13th December 2010 the Local Government Finance Settlement was announced which included the Homelessness Grant figure for Oxford City Council. The good news is that this figure is £1,042,000 which is a 40% increase on the previous Homelessness Grant. This level is guaranteed for each of the years 2011/12 and 2012/13 and is likely to be set at a similar level for 2013/14 and 2014/15. However, it is worth noting that there is a possibility in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 that a formula may be applied nationally to the funding which could impact adversely in Oxford. The grant will be paid to the Authority as an Area Based Grant entitled "Homelessness Prevention".
2. This is part of a £400 million investment by government to reflect the need to provide specific funding to enable work in the field of rough sleeping and homelessness prevention to continue. Various correspondence from Ministers (See Appendix 1 and 2) indicate the

expressed expectation that whilst the grant is not ring-fenced that local authorities use it in the spirit it is intended, i.e. to ensure that the most vulnerable in society are rightly protected.

3. This additional funding will allow the Authority to explore certain gaps in the City's provision and further develop our work in the field of complex trauma, psychological interventions and personalisation to continue our sustained drive to reduce rough sleeping to as close to zero as possible by 2012.
4. A further commissioning budget of £442,279 is also currently available from the City Council's own grant funds.
5. In order to deliver all this work, the City Council will explore the strategically relevant opportunities to jointly commission with our partners at Supporting People, the DAAT and the future GP consortia and will be committed to working with Supporting People over the coming year as they begin their strategic review of homelessness services and as the DAAT engage with the new National Drugs Strategy which makes particular reference to joint commissioning.
6. All of this work and commitment has been recently recognised by DCLG as Oxford has been awarded the status of Regional Single Homelessness Champions and we shall look forward to developing a close relationship with Homeless Link – helping with the national rough sleeping agenda and disseminating examples of good practice to both our neighbouring and regional authorities.
7. 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, Primary Care Trust, Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Oxfordshire County Council's Supporting People Team.

Strategic Framework for Commissioning and Funding in 2011-2012

8. Significant consideration is given to the national rough sleeping strategy entitled "No One Left Out – Communities Ending Rough Sleeping" which signalled a new energy and renewed focus to end rough sleeping by 2012. This document forms the framework for the Council's commissioning and is combined with specific local issues and need in Oxford.
9. Therefore, key objectives for the next 2 years are:-
10. Reduce and sustain the reduction in rough sleeping numbers
 - Assertive outreach
 - Reconnection
 - Intensive, targeted and multi-disciplinary services
 - Personalisation and further modernisation of services

- Focus on young people
- Tackling rough sleeping amongst new migrants (UK Border Agency Pilot, Voluntary repatriation, fast tracking in to work)
- Prevention
- Enhanced Options
- Access to the private rented sector for those with lower or no support needs

11. Improving mental health treatment for homeless people

- Developing effective support techniques that can be used in hostels and in day centres
- Work on complex trauma and enhance the emotional and psychological interventions for rough sleepers.

12. Improving positive activities

- Positive activities that empower and motivate to give hope, build skills, increase confidence and self-esteem and strengthen positive relationships
- Day centres should be places of engagement, inspiration and involvement drawing on:-
 - neighbourhood links
 - Partnerships with local learning providers
 - Theatre, football and sport
 - Improving skills such as soft skills
 - Managing time and working in teams
 - Information adult learning
 - Formal training and education

13. Tackling worklessness

- Raising expectations and supporting people to get a job
- Promoting social enterprise
- Jobs in homelessness services
- Working hostels/accommodation

14. Improve access to health and social care

- Access to health and social care services
- Tackling severe, complex and multiple health needs amongst the homeless population
- Joint working between outreach/dry environments/mental health workers/nurses/addiction nurses
- Reducing health inequalities and reaching out to excluded groups
- Childhood trauma and complex needs

15. Service user involvement is an integral part of all services that we fund and commission.

16. It is worth noting that there may be changes to the counting guidelines over the next 12 months, with a possibility that the focus will shift to the “numbers sleeping rough for a second night”. This could potentially have an impact on the way services are commissioned.

17. Therefore, in terms of commissioning, the following priorities have been identified:-
- An assertive outreach service that incorporates reconnection (including Accession States Migrants (A10s)), personalisation and management of young people's services.
 - Development of complex trauma programme to include training for front line services and emotional and psychological interventions for rough sleepers
 - Further development of social enterprise, education, training and employment opportunities, positive activities and enhanced options
 - Prevention and advice services
 - Continued investment in move-on and the private rented sector.
 - Development of community participation through mentoring and befriending

Allocation of the Homelessness Prevention Grant 2011-12

18. It is proposed that the following specialist services and posts be funded from the 1st April 2011 until 31st March 2012:-

19. Street Services and Reconnection Team (Crime Reduction Initiatives)

One FTE Manager, 4 FTE Outreach Workers and 1 FTE Reconnection Worker - £238,218

On 1st April 2008 a 3-year contract was awarded to CRI. This contract ends on 31st March 2011 but has the option for an additional two years for 2011/12-2012/13. It is recommended that an additional year's contract is exercised as this team is primarily responsible for meeting the City Council's rough sleeping target through assertive and intensive outreach, reconnection work, and personalisation work for entrenched rough sleepers who do not engage with traditional services.

20. One FTE Referral and Reconnection Worker for Under 25s (Crime Reduction Initiatives)

£37,245

Following the County-wide procurement of young people's services, CRI was awarded a 3-year contract 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 is based within the Street Services and Reconnection Team and funding is to be allocated for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

21. Reconnection Rent (O'Hanlon House)

£520

To cover the rent of the Street Services Team's Reconnection Worker who is based at O'Hanlon House.

22. Severe Weather Beds (O'Hanlon House)

£10,000

The City's severe weather policy was re-written in October 2010 in order to be better prepared for the extremely severe winters. As a result the policy has been significantly enhanced and now involves a cascading system that involves all of the City's hostels to increase provision to ensure that no one is left sleeping rough in extreme weather. Based on spend in winter 2010-2011, it is recommended that the budget provision for this service is increased from £4,000 to £10,000.

23. Two FTE Education, Training and Employment Workers (Aspire Oxfordshire)

£60,519

Following an extremely successful pilot project over the last 18 months, it is recommended that funding for these two posts continues to further develop Aspire's social enterprises, work placements, employment opportunities and benefits' advice to Oxford's homeless network in order to develop progression pathways into sustainable independent living.

24. One FTE Alcohol Specialist Worker (O'Hanlon House)

£34,223

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 service specification for this post has been refreshed and looks to deliver low threshold work including motivational interviewing, preparation for treatment, identification of training needs, group work development and the identification of best practice in the field of alcohol.

25. One FTE Multiple Needs Worker Hostel Worker (Elmore Community Services)

£40,757

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.

26. Elmore Community Services was successful in their bid for the Complex Needs Service, part of the Supported to Independent Living Mental Health Pathway and it is therefore recommended that this post continues with the Elmore.

27. Mental Health Practitioner (Luther Street Medical Centre)

£25,000

Following on from the successful piloting of this post in 2010-2011 it is recommended that funding in partnership with the Primary Care Trust is continued for this post.

28.6 subsidised beds for under 25s (Simon House)

£4,165

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

29.6 subsidised beds for under 25s (Lucy Faithful House)

£4,662

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

30. One FTE Service Broker (Big Issue Foundation)

£18,750

This post tackles the lack of engagement of Big Issue sellers with accommodation offers and to improve the partnership working with this organisation.

31. Specialist Homelessness Liaison Police Officer (Thames Valley Police)

This post is fully funded until March 2012 from the 2010-11 budget. It is crucial in reducing street numbers, liaising 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.

32. Additional Proposals being considered

Other proposals that are to be considered and further developed in 2011-2012 are funding for:-

- Complex needs and Psychological Interventions for Rough Sleepers.
- Youth Homelessness
- Developing of mentoring and coaching schemes
- Development of Enhanced Options
- Home Choice and Lord Mayor's Guarantee Scheme
- Domestic abuse services
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Development of prison discharge work
- Fraud Investigation
- Housing Advice
- Scoping of further social enterprise schemes

33. Given the relatively recent announcement of the Homelessness Prevention funding and the on-going uncertainty with regards to the Supporting People budget, the Homelessness Prevention grant is not fully allocated at this point. Until such clarity is received it is recommended that the remainder of the budget (£568,424) remains unallocated so that the City can respond to these demands. For example, a 20% cut to the £2.5m Supporting People allocation to Homelessness services would equate to £500k.

34. Where there is opportunity the funding will be directed to the areas needing development which are referred to in paragraph 32.

Oxford City Council's Homelessness Grant

35. A grant allocation of £442,279 has been allocated for the commissioning of homelessness services in 2011-2012.

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 2011-2012:-

| Organisation and Purpose of Grant | Allocation for 10/11 |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Young Peoples' Project - One Foot Forward (Bournemouth Churches Housing Association) | £42,992 |
| O'Hanlon House (Oxford Homeless Pathways) | £133,432 |
| Elmore Community Services | £40,757 |
| Elmore Anti-Social Behaviour Services | £20,000 |
| The Gatehouse Café | £9,502 |
| Steppin Stone Day Centre | £55,000 |
| Simon House (Respite Beds) | £11,596 |
| Emmaus Oxford Furniture Store | £25,000 |
| Aspire Oxfordshire | £104,000 |
| | £442,279 |

Level of Risk

38. Please see attached matrix (Appendix 3)

Climate Change/environmental impact

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

Equalities Impact

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

Financial Implications

41. The funding allocation for both grants has to be spent by the end of the financial year 2011-2012.

42. This is budget neutral as the line in the budget for the grant will be equal to the allocated spend.

43. There are no other financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

Legal Implications

44. 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

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

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

47. The Homelessness Prevention 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.

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List of background papers:

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