

To: City Executive Board

Date: 12th March 2014

Report of: Head of Housing and Property

Title of Report: ALLOCATION OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUNDS IN 2014/15

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: This report outlines the proposed allocation of Homelessness Prevention funds with the purpose of meeting the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.

Key decision: Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Scott Seamons

Policy Framework: Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018

Recommendation(s):

1. Recommend the allocation of the Homelessness Budget for 2014 – 2015 as per paragraph 21 of this report.
2. Recommend delegated authority to the Head of Housing and Property in consultation with the board member to allocate the balance of the Preventing Homelessness Funds.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Risk Register

Background

1. In January 2014, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) confirmed Oxford City Council's Preventing Homelessness Grant for the next financial year. The money is paid as Revenue Support Grant with a percentage rolled into the Business Rate Retention Scheme (BRRS) and the allocation of the Homelessness Preventing Grant is visible within. This is a change to the funding mechanism and not the grant.

2. This budget is identified in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
3. Whilst the grant is not ring fenced, Oxford City Council remains committed to ending rough sleeping within the city and supporting homeless people or those threatened with homelessness or rough sleeping into sustainable accommodation, in line with its Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018. As such, Oxford City Council will allocate this whole budget to support this work.
4. A further commissioning budget is also available from the City Council's own grant funds.
5. The strategic framework within which both these funds are allocated is the same and therefore for the purpose of future commissioning will be considered as one main budget.
6. In order to deliver its work, the City Council will continue to explore the strategically relevant opportunities to jointly commission with our partners at Oxfordshire's Joint Commissioning Team, Oxford Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group.
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 Commissioning Team, Joint Housing Team and Public Health (Drug and Alcohol Team), Oxford Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Key Developments over the past 12 months.

No Second Night Out (NSNO)

8. NSNO continues to embed itself in Oxford, providing a rapid response to new rough sleepers as well as those who are entrenched on the streets. Over 250 individuals have accessed the 7 bed hub since it opened in July 2012 with an average of 43% currently accessing on their second night.
9. The average number of nights a newly verified rough sleeper has to wait in order to access a NSNO bed has been reducing gradually over time and is currently 6 (January). It remains a challenge due to the lack of movement through the pathway due to restricted move-on options, especially within the private rented sector which are affordable.
10. A review of No Second Night Out in early 2013 brought together some 20 organisations from the statutory and voluntary sectors in order to:-
 - To highlight operational changes to deliver NSNO effectively and to recommend adjustments to the policy to take these into account.
 - To highlight strategic gaps and systemic issues that may have been exposed as a result of NSNO and to recommend appropriate routes for

further discussion and development (e.g. the impact on other providers and pathways)

- To build and develop our collective partnership between statutory and voluntary sector organisations and to become expert in the process of co-design as a way of working in the future.
11. The review concluded a number of strategic issues for consideration (e.g. move-on issues, addressing the complex support needs of clients) as well as amendments to the policy to include access for non-verified rough sleepers whilst preserving the priority for those who are verified on the streets.

Entrenched Action Plan

12. The aim of this action plan, in conjunction with No Second Night Out is to reduce rough sleeping in Oxford City to zero as entrenched rough sleeping is very damaging for individual rough sleepers' physical and mental health. There are also longer-term cost implications for the costs of accommodation and support if rough sleepers continue to live on the streets as needs will increase and conditions worsen.
13. In order to deliver the objectives of this action plan, several initiatives have progressed over the last 12 months including:-
- Project FLOW – a collaboration between the Arts at the Old Fire Station, Crisis and Oxford City Outreach Team to explore ways of using artistic interventions to engage people regarded as service resistant entrenched rough sleepers.
 - Personalisation Worker successfully funded by Broadway from the Homeless Transition Fund to join the Outreach Team for 12 months to focus on entrenched rough sleepers only.
 - Housing First successfully launched, providing very intensive accommodation-based support, now with 3 properties in their portfolio with tenancies being successfully maintained to date.

Making Every Adult Matter

14. Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) is a coalition of four national charities – Clinks, DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind – formed to influence policy and services for adults facing multiple needs and exclusions. Adults with multiple and complex needs often:-
- **experience several problems** at the same time, such as mental ill health, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, offending and family breakdown. They may have one main need complicated by others, or a combination of lower level issues which together are a cause for concern. These problems often develop after traumatic experiences such as abuse or bereavement.
 - **have ineffective contact with services.** People facing multiple needs usually look for help, but most services are designed to deal with one problem at a time and to support people with single, severe conditions. As a result, people with multiple needs are often seen as 'hard to reach' or 'not my problem'.

- **live chaotic lives.** Facing multiple problems that exacerbate each other, and lacking effective support from services, people easily end up in a downward spiral of mental ill health, drug and alcohol problems, crime and homelessness. They become trapped, living chaotic lives where escape seems impossible, with no one offering a way out.
15. Oxford City Council with partners across a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector partners submitted an Expression of Interest to the MEAM coalition in early 2013 to become a pilot area for the South East and was chosen as one of nine local authority areas to work with the national partners to deliver improved outcomes and interventions for people with multiple needs.
16. Oxford City Council will be the lead agency for this work. Partners include the following organisations:-
- Oxfordshire County Council (including Mental Health, Housing Related Support and Young People's Commissioning, Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Vulnerable Adults Teams)
 - Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group - mental health commissioning
 - Oxford Health - statutory mental health
 - Thames Valley Probation
 - Thames Valley Police
 - Voluntary sector representatives including those working with people with mental health problems, homeless and complex needs.
 - Homeless Link (Local Network Team from national coalition)
 - Mind (Local Network Team from national coalition)
17. Although this initial pilot phase will be focussed on the City, learning, good practice and implications can be shared across the County.

Other Key Considerations

18. Oxfordshire County Council will be re-commissioning the Young People's pathway during 2014 with a view of having new services on line by April 2015.
19. Mental Health services (both statutory and the Supported to Independent Living pathway) are also due to be re-commissioned during 2014-2015 within an outcomes based framework.

Strategic Framework for Commissioning and Funding in 2014-2015

20. Significant consideration is given to the national rough sleeping strategy entitled "No One Left Out – Communities Ending Rough Sleeping" and "Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide" which signalled a new energy and renewed focus to end rough sleeping. The Council's priorities in terms of rough sleeping and single homelessness are set out in its Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 as follows:-

- Prevent and Respond to Rough Sleeping
- Deliver and review the impact of No Second Night Out
- Develop services to tackle the issue of entrenched rough sleepers
- Improve pathways through supported specialist accommodation for former rough sleepers
- Ensure sufficient specialist accommodation and support to meet the needs of single homeless clients in the City
- Review anti-begging campaigns and message and support organisations who work to get people off the streets

Allocation of the Homelessness Budget 2014-2015

21. It is proposed that the following specialist services and posts be funded from the 1st April 2014 until 31st March 2015:

Organisation and Purpose of Grant	Allocation for 14/15
Assertive Outreach, Reconnection, Move-on	
Oxford City Outreach (Broadway Homelessness and Support) - One FTE Manager, 4 FTE Outreach Workers and 1 FTE Reconnection Worker (seconded to the NSNO Team) This is the last year of an initial 3 year contract.	£235,000
NSNO Pathway Leader (Broadway Homelessness and Support) and Management Costs This role manages all referrals in and out of the NSNO hub and across the homeless pathway. It is crucial to the success of NSNO. This allocation extends the current contract from July 2014 until March 2015.	£31,530
NSNO Assessment Worker and Rent (O'Hanlon House) This role is part of the NSNO team and carries out assessments of clients accessing the NSNO hub and the Single Service Offer on from the hub. Rent allocation is for office space. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2014.	£35,248
Specialist Homelessness Liaison Police Officer (Thames Valley Police) This post is crucial to reducing street numbers, liaising closely with Oxford City Outreach 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. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate	£40,000

funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2014.	
O'Hanlon House (Oxford Homeless Pathways) This grant jointly commissions the service with the County Council. The money specifically commissions the day service that works with vulnerable adults who present with needs such as substance misuse, mental health and alcohol needs. The day service aims to provide a bridge between the services users and other meaningful services such as the GP, Social services, DAAT teams and mental health teams.	£133,432
Severe Weather Provision This funding is to cover the cost of running additional services for rough sleepers during periods of severe weather.	£15,000
Improving Mental Health/Complex Trauma	
Mental Health Practitioner (Luther Street Medical Centre) This post has continued to be a success and it is recommended that funding in partnership with Oxford Health is continued for this post. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.	£25,000
One FTE Multiple Needs Worker Hostel Worker (Elmore Community Services) This post focuses 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. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.	£40,757
Elmore Community Services This funds one post within the Elmore team; the post is called a Tenancy Sustainment officer. The officer works with residents of OCC who are finding it difficult to manage their tenancies.	£40,757
Tackling Worklessness and Improving Positive Activities	
Aspire Oxfordshire (Core) Aspire provide social enterprises, work placements, employment opportunities and benefits' advice to Oxford's homeless network in order to develop progression pathways into sustainable independent living.	£56,345
Two FTE Education, Training and Employment Workers (Aspire)	£60,519

<p>Oxford City Council continues to fund these two posts to further develop Aspire's social enterprises, work placements, employment opportunities to Oxford's homeless network in order to develop progression pathways into sustainable independent living.</p> <p>This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2014.</p>	
<p>Emmaus Oxford Furniture Store This money supports Emmaus to provide accommodation for homeless people but also gives them an opportunity to work in their social enterprise which is a second-hand furniture store.</p>	£25,000
<p>The Gatehouse Café This provides some core funding to the Gatehouse daycentre to open up six evening out of seven to engage with the hard to reach clients that traditionally do not use mainstream services. Funding for 6 months only allocated due to the Gatehouse carrying out a strategic review of service.</p>	£4,500
<p>Steppin Stone Day Centre This provides core funding to the Steppin Stones daycentre to work with vulnerable adults who are aiming to get back into training, education and employment. Steppin Stones also provide individuals with an opportunity to train in their social enterprises; their allotment, the daycentre kitchen or Porch Pickle enterprises. The daycentre is based away from the city centre, which allows for individuals to move away from the street activities such as begging, drinking and other anti-social behaviour.</p>	£55,000
<p>One FTE Service Broker (Big Issue Foundation) This post tackles the lack of engagement of Big Issue sellers with accommodation offers and to improve the partnership working with this organisation. This contract will be within a payment by results framework this year. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2014.</p>	£25,000
<p>Priority Services for Young People</p>	
<p>Young Peoples' Project – One Foot Forward (Bournemouth Churches Housing Association) This grant jointly commissions the service with</p>	£42,992

<p>the County Council. The hostel works with young people aged between 16 – 25 years old who are homeless or about to become homeless. This is the last year of this 5 year contract and is currently under review.</p>	
<p>One FTE Referral and Reconnection Worker for Under 25s (Crime Reduction Initiative via Oxfordshire County Council) This service is now based at One Foot Forward and co-ordinates all referrals into the Young People's pathway across the City. This is the final year of this contract and the service is currently under review as part of the YP re-commissioning.</p>	£37,677
<p>Prevention of Eviction Young People Beds (6 at Simon House and 6 at Lucy Faithful House) To cover the shortfall in service charge for 6 young people who are under 25 years old at Simon House. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2014.</p>	£9,391
<p>Emergency Bed (One Foot Forward) This funding provides one emergency bed at One Foot Forward for use by Oxford City. This service is also under review as part of the re-commissioning of Young People's services</p>	£6,134
<p>Homelessness Prevention or Statutory Homelessness</p>	
<p>Welfare Reform Outreach Team This funding contributes towards the work of the team focussing on the impact of welfare reform on the City Council and its tenants.</p>	£69,072
<p>Discretionary Housing Payments This money has been allocated to ensure that we can mitigate the impact of welfare reform.</p>	£100,000
<p>Target Hardening/Sanctuary Scheme Provided to ASBIT, this is a service for victims of domestic abuse to enable them to stay in their own homes.</p>	£30,000
<p>Connection – Single Homeless Service Advice services for single homeless people who may be sofa surfing to access housing, maximise their benefits and access work opportunities</p>	£52,800
<p>Business Rates at the Old Fire Station As required by previous CEB report to provide financial relief to Crisis and the Arts at the Old Fire Station in the first years of service.</p>	£3,152

22. The following services will not be funded in 2014-2015:-
- a. Respite Beds at Simon House due to lack of utilisation over the last year
 - b. Anti-Social Behaviour Service at Elmore Community Services due to contract end and a restructure within the work of the City Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team negating the on-going need.
 - c. Housing First at Julian Housing is a live contract, although has no allocation in this financial year as it was front loaded in 2013-2014.

23. It is to be noted that the Gatehouse will be given an initial 6-month contract at £4,500 due to the fact that the organisation is currently undergoing a significant strategic review to determine the future direction of the service.

Level of Risk

24. Please see attached matrix (Appendix 1)

Climate Change/environmental impact

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

Equalities Impact

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

Financial Implications

27. The expenditure identified within this report can be met from the allocated budgets and there is some scope for further allocations if new priorities emerge.

Legal Implications

28. In distributing this budget the Council should ensure that organisations are clear as to the outcomes that the Council expects them to achieve and these specifications and targets are monitored through service agreements.

Staffing Implications

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

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

31. This budget is managed by the existing Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager in Housing Services.

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