

**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** 12 March 2015

**Report of:** Head of Housing and Property

**Title of Report:** Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds in 2015/16

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To agree the 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, Board member for Housing and Estate Regeneration

**Policy Framework:** Meeting Housing Needs

**Recommendations:** That the City Executive Board:

1. Allocate the full sum of the funds associated with 'Preventing Homelessness Grant' to the Homelessness budget, the majority of which shall commission services to prevent homelessness.
2. Agree the allocation of the Homelessness Grant Budget for 2015/16 as detailed in paragraph 23.
3. Delegate authority to the Head of Housing and Property Services in consultation with the Board member for housing and estate Regeneration to allocate the balance of the Preventing Homelessness Funds.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Risk Register

## **Background**

1. In September 2014, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) confirmed Oxford City Council's Preventing

Homelessness Grant for 2015/16 at £942,403. The money is paid within the Business Rate Retention Scheme (BRRS); this is a change to the funding mechanism rather than the grant itself.

2. This budget is identified in the Council's medium term financial plan and is included in the Council's overall budget agreed on 18/2/15.
3. The grant is not ring fenced; however Oxford City Council remains committed to ending rough sleeping within the City by supporting homeless people, those threatened with homelessness or rough sleeping into sustainable accommodation.
4. A further commissioning budget is also available from the City Council's own grant funds of £442,279.
5. The strategic framework within, which both these funds are allocated is the same and therefore funds will be considered as if they are from one budget.
6. In order to deliver its work, the Council will continue to explore the strategically relevant opportunities to jointly commission with our partners at Oxfordshire County Council'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), and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

**Key Developments over the past 12 months.  
No Second Night Out (NSNO), Sit-Up service**

8. Throughout the year we have reviewed our front line services that work with rough sleepers and other single homeless groups. Having reviewed the needs and the resources available we plan to remodel services to ensure they are efficient and effective. Procurement for a revised service has been completed which is the subject of a separate report to CEB.
9. No Second Night Out continues to provide a rapid response to new rough sleepers as well as those who are entrenched on the streets. The success of the response in the past year has been restricted due to the lack of 'move on' from the supported housing projects in Oxford. As a result we have introduced the 'Sit-Up Service' where individuals are allowed to access a place of shelter away from the streets whilst an assessment is taking place. Currently this service operates from O'Hanlon House. Provision consists of roll mats and chairs. Once suitable options are identified clients are expected to move on to hostels, other supported housing or private rented accommodation.

10. The average number of nights a newly verified rough sleeper has to wait in order to access a NSNO bed has increased from last year primarily as a result of there being a lack of move on from supported housing projects. For this reason we have offered a private rented sector solution to hostels to move clients outside of the County where private rented properties are more affordable.
11. Oxfordshire County Council have been consulting on a reduction of Housing related support grants (previously known as Supporting People grant), which has an impact on services we commission. The consultation closed in September 2014 and the reductions were approved by the County Council Cabinet on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Oxford City Council has taken part in discussions looking at the design of the pathway for the next three years. Oxfordshire County Council have specified that the pathway needs to be fully commissioned by themselves including the NSNO hub, NSNO team and the Sit-up service. This means that Oxford City Council will continue to fund these services for the transitional year, with a possible transfer of the commissioning role to Oxfordshire County Council next year.

#### **Mayday Trust Pilot (jointly commissioned with the County Council)**

12. The aim of this pilot project was to test out a new model of working with the non-statutory single homeless individuals. It is a model imported from the US and evidence shows that it works well with young people. Mayday Trust approached both Oxford City Council and the Oxfordshire County Council to look at the opportunity to test this on an adult cohort. The pilot project is for a period of 2 years; funded by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County council, Mayday Trust and Lankelly Chase Trust. This pilot project will not require further funding for the duration.

#### **Making Every Adult Matter**

13. 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 and offending.
  - **have ineffective contact with services.** People facing multiple needs usually find that one service is unable to deal with all their needs, which means other needs are missed or not addressed.
  - **live chaotic lives.** Facing multiple problems that exacerbate each other, and lacking effective support from services, which ends up with people living chaotic lives where escape seems difficult.

14. Oxford City Council submitted an expression of interest to the MEAM coalition in early 2013 to become a pilot area for the South East and was successful.
15. During the year we have been working with local partners and the MEAM coalition service to develop and implement a MEAM pilot, which would meet our unique needs. As such our pilot aims to place a focus on a client's primary support worker. They are afforded the freedom to work additional time and have access to personalisation funds to aid engagement and motivation. It is hoped that learning from this pilot will support fundamental changes within services that operate in this sector and quite possibly the County.

### **Other Key considerations**

16. The staffing costs for the Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness team will now be fully funded from the combined budgets of the Preventing Homelessness Grant and Oxford City Council grant.
17. Young Person's Co-ordinator; this function will be undertaken differently going forward with external funding ceasing from March 2015. The service is likely to be delivered by Oxford City Council's Options Service from April 2015 – this will be in line with how the other districts in Oxfordshire deliver this service.
18. Pre-Tenancy course; this service aims to provide personalised training for tenants who need to learn the different elements to maintaining a tenancy. Funding for the pilot may be reviewed dependant on a positive review of this service in May 2015.
19. Oxfordshire County Council have re-commissioned the Young Persons pathway during 2014 with a view to having new services operational by April 2015.
20. Supported independent living pathway has been commissioned during 2014 within outcomes based framework. Both the Young Person and the Supported independent Living pathways will interact with the adults homeless pathway and therefore we need to ensure that where they interact in the smoothest possible way.
21. It is proposed to set aside a provision of £150,000 to top up Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). This is in light of the recent DWP settlement, where Oxford City's DHP allocation has significantly reduced, from £514,496 in financial year 2014-15, to £288,092 in 2015-16.

## Strategic Framework for Commissioning and Funding in 2015-2016

22. 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 2015-2016

23. It is proposed that the following specialist services and posts be funded for 15/16.

Organisation and Purpose of Grant	Allocation for 15/16
<p><b>Assertive Outreach, Reconnection, Move-on</b></p>	
<p><b>Single Homeless Outreach and Assessment service</b> – a team of 9 FTE with a combination of a Project manager, Outreach workers, Assessment workers and trainees.</p> <p>This service will incorporate the functions previously carried out by Oxford City Outreach, the NSNO Pathway Leader, NSNO Assessment Worker and the advice services for single homeless people who may be in precarious housing.</p>	<p>£350,893</p>
<p><b>Specialist Homelessness Liaison service (Thames Valley Police)</b> We have taken a different approach to last year where we are commissioning a service to be delivered by the City Centre Unit as opposed to a specific post holder. This may be delivered by the same individual but the focus will be for the unit to deliver specific outputs such as, number of outreach shifts, key meetings attended, tackling begging and anti-social behaviour, attending rough sleeping hot-spots and so on. This means that going forward the problems that need tackling are measured against their organisation as opposed to one individual. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the</p>	<p>£40,000</p>

council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.	
<b>O'Hanlon House (Oxford Homeless Pathways)</b> This grant jointly commissions the service with Oxfordshire 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 service users and other meaningful services such as GP practices, Social services, DAAT teams and mental health teams. There is a reduction of £8k to reflect the reduction that County council have made. However the saving from this will be used to develop alternative initiatives with other day centres.	£124,756.92
<b>Sit-Up service</b> The Sit-up service was commissioned to mitigate for the lack of move on from the Adults homeless pathway. This function will be taken into account when the new pathway/service is commissioned. The cost attached is only for a year and will end on in March 2016.	£54,903
<b>Severe Weather Provision</b> This funding is to cover the cost of running additional services for rough sleepers during periods of severe weather.	£15,000
<b>Housing First Project</b> Housing First will be commissioned for the next year; the project has shown that it can work with some of the most complex/entrenched clients and deliver positive outcomes.	£47,800
<b>Improving Mental Health/Complex Trauma</b>	
<b>Mental Health Practitioner (Luther Street Medical Centre)</b> This post has continued to be a success and it is recommended that funding in partnership with Oxford Health and Oxford Homeless Medical fund 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
<b>Complex Needs Service</b> This funding has been allocated to fund a joint project next year. The service will funded in conjunction with CCG and Public Health department to cater for a cohort whose needs are not met by both the Adults homeless pathway and the supported independent living pathway.	£40,000
<b>Elmore In-reach (1 month)</b> This service is being decommissioned but will be given a one month extension to ensure they have a 3 month period for a closedown period.	£3,394.40

<b>Tackling Worklessness and Improving Positive Activities</b>	
<p><b>Aspire Oxfordshire</b> 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.</p> <p><i>We also fund Two FTE Education, Training and Employment Workers</i> 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 2015.</p>	£88,691.50
<p><b>Emmaus Oxford Furniture Store</b> This money supports Emmaus to provide accommodation for homeless people but also gives them an opportunity to work in their social enterprise; a second-hand furniture store. They have plans to taper the grant they receive from us; however this can only happen once they are operating their store from the new site on Barns Road.</p>	£25,000
<p><b>The Gatehouse Café</b> This provides some core funding to the Gatehouse daycentre. They open six evenings a week and engage with the hard to reach clients that traditionally do not use mainstream services.</p>	£5,580
<p><b>Steppin Stone Day Centre</b> 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><b>One FTE Service Broker (Big Issue Foundation)</b> 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 continue to be within a payment by results framework this year, where 25% of the total grant is paid out only upon evidencing certain set outcomes. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have</p>	£25,000

the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.	
<b>Priority Services for Young People</b>	
<b>Young Persons Pathway</b> This grant is part of Oxford City Council's contribution to joint commissioning of the Young Persons pathway (for vulnerable & homeless 16 – 22 year olds) with the County Council.	£42,992
<b>Prevention of Eviction Young People Beds</b> To cover the shortfall in DWP benefits received by someone under the age of 25 and those over the age of 25 in order to ensure under 25s can afford to paid their rent/service charge and thus prevent eviction. 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.	£5,000
<b>Emergency Bed (within Oxford City)</b> This funding provides one emergency bed for use by Oxford City.	£6,134.28
<b>Homelessness Prevention</b>	
<b>Welfare Reform Outreach Team</b> This funding contributes towards the work of the team focussing on the impact of welfare reform on the City Council and its tenants.	£75,188.15
<b>Discretionary Housing Payments</b> This money has been allocated to ensure that we can mitigate the impact of welfare reform.	£150,000
<b>Target Hardening/Sanctuary Scheme</b> Provided to ASBIT, this is a service for victims of domestic abuse to enable them to stay in their own homes.	£30,000
<b>Elmore Community Services</b> 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. 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.	£35,630
<b>Business Rates at the Old Fire Station</b> 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.	£3,152
<b>Pre-tenancy course</b> As mentioned before; this will be subject to a review of the service. Should the outcome be positive this will be renewed for the year 2015/2016.	£16,000
<b>MEAM pilot project</b> This amount will be set aside to provide flexibility in extending the pilot project.	£20,000
<b>CHAIN</b>	£8,093

The web-based database management system that currently collates all data and provides monitoring reports on rough sleepers. This service is being extended for a year with the expectation that this will be paid for by the County council as it will be used for the Adults pathway in its entirety.	
<b>Single Homelessness</b> The funding is to be used to contribute towards the Council's operational activity supporting the work assisting Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness activities.	£100,000
<b>Total</b>	£1,393,208.25

24. The report also recommends that the Head of Housing and Property has the delegated authority - in consultation with the Board member - to administer the budget provisions within this framework.

25. Any unspent funds, will be carried forward in Council reserves. In the case that in-year spend exceeds the relevant budget, funds will be drawn down from an earmarked reserve to cover the discrepancy. Any movements of funds to or from reserves will be made in conjunction with the Head of Finance. The Council is taking a prudent approach in light of the re-commissioning of the Adult Homeless Pathway and other pressures on rough sleeping services. Funding possibilities will be investigated when we are better aware of how the cuts from the County council affect the single homeless sector.

### **Level of Risk**

26. Please see attached matrix (Appendix 1)

### **Climate Change/environmental impact**

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

### **Equalities Impact**

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

### **Financial Implications**

29. 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**

30. 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**

31. All external staff are employed by external organisations for whom the Council has no liability.
32. 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
33. This budget is managed by the existing Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager in Housing and Property.

<b>Name and contact details of author:</b>
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**List of background papers:** None