

To: City Executive Board
Date: 20 March 2018
Report of: Head of Housing Services
Title of Report: Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds for 2018/19

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To approve the allocation of homelessness prevention funds with the purpose of helping meet the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.
Key decision:	Yes
Executive Board Member:	Cllr Mike Rowley, Housing
Corporate Priority:	Meeting housing needs
Policy Framework:	Housing and homelessness strategy
Recommendations: That the City Executive Board resolves to:	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the allocation of Homelessness Prevention funds to commission homelessness services in 2018/19 as outlined in paragraph 36 below; 2. Recommend to the Head of Financial Services that probable savings from 2017/18 budget allocations for Homelessness Prevention activities are carried forward at the end of the financial year in order to fund necessary services in 2018/19 and 2019/20, and agree to delegate to the Head of Financial Services authority to make any minor variations to this allocation that may be required; and 3. Delegate to the Head of Housing in consultation with the portfolio holder for Housing the discretion to revise the intended programme within the overall budget if required.
Appendices	
Appendix A	Strategic priorities for meeting the needs of vulnerable people and rough sleepers [Extract from the Council's Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2018-21]
Appendix B	Commitments and year end forecast 2017/18
Appendix C	Proposed allocations 2018/19
Appendix D	Map of services funded by Oxford City Council for rough sleepers and single homeless people
Appendix E	Risk assessment

Introduction and background

Core funding 2018/19

1. On 19th February the Council agreed its budget and Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22 which included a base budget of provision of £941k per annum. A further commissioning budget is also available from the Council's own grant budget of £442,279.
2. The budget for 2018/19 is enhanced by a further £161,700, allocated via reserves accumulated from 2016/17 to support the Council's participation in the countywide Adult Homeless Pathway.
3. It is also assumed that the City Council will continue to receive a total contribution from the Oxfordshire District Councils towards SWEP provision of £3,000.
4. In light of the cross-commissioning agenda and cross-strategy advantages of homeless prevention and ending rough sleeping work, a multi-agency steering group is responsible for advising on the monitoring of this pooled budget. The group comprises of representatives from Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council Joint Commissioning Team, Public Health and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Services for rough sleepers and single homeless people - additional funding 2018/19b

5. In recognition of the fact that Oxford City Council has taken on the commissioning of additional units of supported accommodation [Project 41, Mayday Trust and the re-provisioning of services at Simon House], an additional £100,000 is planned to be drawn from the Council's Homelessness Reserve (reflected in Appendix 3 of the budget report approved by CEB in February) to support the delivery of services for rough sleepers and single homelessness people in 2018/19. A further £200,000 has also been identified in the budget report for inclusion in the base budget from 2019/20 onwards. These increases in the Council's allocation of funds reflects its' commitment to maintaining and extending services and support for rough sleepers and single homeless people.
6. A total of approximately £142,906 has been accumulated in the current financial year for re-profiled activity into 2018/19 [subject to approval by City Executive Board] – anticipating the significant increase in the Council's commissioning of supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homelessness people from 2018/19 onwards and with the intention of maintaining so far as possible other housing related support services for this group.
7. The strategic framework within which these funds are allocated remains the same, providing a total budget for 2018/19 of approximately **£1,834,853** representing a total increase of £100,000 on the 2017/18 budget and excluding the proposed managed carry forward of funds from and reserves committed to the Acacia Housing First Project in 2017/18.

City Conversation on Rough Sleeping - additional funding 2018/19

8. The Council has also agreed to allocate additional funds drawn from the Council's Homelessness Reserve in 2018/19 to support the development of a citywide partnership to tackle issues relating to rough sleeping and single homelessness in

the City. The proposed allocation of this additional funding is discussed at paragraphs 39-41.

Context and key developments 2017/18

Increase in number of people sleeping rough

9. Rough sleeping continues to be a significant issue in the City, with high numbers of rough sleepers being contacted by Oxford SPOT each month – 93 unique people were seen rough sleeping in October 2016, 76 in November and 89 in December.
10. The Council's official street count in November 2017 was 61, an increase from 33 in November 2016. However, in the period April to December 2017, there were 244 positive interventions with individual rough sleepers, to assist them off the streets. In the 16/17 year, there were such 383 positive interventions.
11. The Council also carries out an estimate of the number of people sleeping rough in the City. Oxford's most recent estimate – also carried out November 2017 - was 89, significantly higher than the estimates for Cherwell 9, South Oxfordshire 2, Vale of White Horse 10 and West Oxfordshire 7.
12. As a result of the latest estimates, it is clear that the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board's target to "ensure that the number of people estimated to be sleeping rough in Oxfordshire does not exceed the baseline figure from 2016/17 (79)" has not been met.
13. Instead the number of people sleeping rough has increased to 117 people, representing an overall increase between November 2016 and November 2017, in Oxfordshire of 48% (38 people). The numbers fell in two district council areas (Cherwell and South Oxfordshire), but rose in the other three (Oxford City, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire). The increase was most significant in Oxford City, which saw an 89% increase (42 people) based on the estimate figures. West Oxfordshire also shows a significant change from zero to seven people in their estimate.

Changes to funding for housing related support services

14. Oxfordshire County Council agreed in February 2016 to maintain its' Housing Related Support budget at £500,000 per annum. The County Council had been expected to follow through on its' previously declared intention to cut this budget by 100% (previously £1.5m per annum), with the withdrawal of funding starting April 2017 and completed by March 2019. Whilst this unexpected decision is welcome, it is not yet clear what this will mean for future joint commissioning arrangements between the County and District Councils.
15. Oxfordshire County Council previously funded all supported accommodation for single homeless people and rough sleepers across the County through its' Housing Related Support budget. A total of 285 units of supported accommodation were provided across the County, with 252 of these based in the City but included provision for people from the Districts.
16. To mitigate the impact of these cuts, Oxford City Council, together with the Oxfordshire District Councils, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group agreed in autumn 2016 to contribute to a pooled budget and enter into joint commissioning arrangements for a period of three years [2017/18 to

2019/20]. Oxford City Council's contribution to the pooled budget was agreed by CEB in September 2016 at £161,700 per year for three years.

17. The pooled budget is significantly less than the previous level of Housing Related Support – £2.9m over three years - and therefore provides a significantly reduced number of beds for homeless people and rough sleepers across the County - 141, instead of the current 286.
18. Year 1 (2017/18) of the pooled budget has been allocated significantly more funds due to the transition from current services to new arrangements that will be in place for Year 2 (2018/19) and Year 3 (2019/20).
19. The following provision is funded by the pooled budget from April 2017:-

Current provision	Total Units	Year 1 2017/18	Units (City use)	Year 2/Year 3 2018/19, 2019/20	Units
O'Hanlon House	56	O'Hanlon House	56 (27)	O'Hanlon House	56 (27)
Simon House	52	Simon House	52 (22)	Simon House	0
Connection Support	31	Connection Support	31 (31)	Connection Support	31 (31)
Mayday Trust	31	Mayday Trust	31 (31)	Mayday Trust	21 (21)
Julian Housing	83	Julian Housing	0 ¹	Julian Housing	0
Vineyard (South and Vale)	13	South and Vale	13	South and Vale	13
Horsefair (West Oxon)	6	West Oxon	6	West Oxon	6
Banbury (Cherwell)	13	Cherwell	13	Cherwell	13
Total	285	Total	202	Total	140

Ensuring sufficient provision to meet Oxford City's needs

20. It has been estimated that Oxford City needs at least 150 beds to meet demand, based on snapshot counts of use of the pathway from 2015 to 2017. Whilst there has been a significant increase in the number of people sleeping rough on the City's streets, a high proportion of these are people with no connection to Oxford City who are not eligible to access the Oxford adult homeless pathway, and would not therefore be included in any needs assessment. Any additional supported accommodation that the City needs over and above what can be funded by the pooled budget must therefore be funded from City's Homelessness Prevention Funds.

¹ Julian Housing's contract with County Council for the 83 supported units ends on 31st May 2017

21. During 2017/18 [Year 1] – in order to maintain the supply of beds for people with a connection to Oxford City - the City Council took over the commissioning of 41 beds following the County Council’s de-commissioning of Julian Housing. This – together with the City Council’s independent commissioning of beds via the Acacia and Housing First projects ensured that there was sufficient supply to meet the City’s needs in 2017/18.
22. In Years 2 [2018/19] and 3 [2019/20] the pooled budget will fund a total of 79 beds for City use, comprising 27 in O’Hanlon House, 31 Connection Support and 21 with Mayday Trust. In order to maintain a minimum supply of 150 beds, the City Council needs to commission at least 71 units of supported accommodation.
23. During 2017/18 City officers worked hard to identify commissioning options for additional beds spaces from 2018/19, and to identify how Homelessness Prevention Funds might be re-prioritised to accommodate this increase in commissioning costs from 2018/19.
24. In September 2017 CEB agreed to allocate funding for 5 years from 2019/20 for the delivery of a new facility for rough sleepers and single homeless people to be built in the Cowley area of the City comprising 22 units of supported accommodation for people with complex needs and a further 15 units of move on accommodation. CEB also agreed to fund a transitional service for people with complex needs at Simon House during 2018/19, to maintain capacity in the City while the new facility is being built. The Council will also take over from Oxfordshire County Council commissioning of 10 units of supported accommodation with Mayday Trust.
25. The following table summarises the planned provision in the City for 2018/19:

Service	Provider(s)	2018/19	2019/20
O'Hanlon Hse – City	Homeless Oxfordshire	27	27
Mayday Trust	Mayday	21	21
Connection Support	Connection & Response	31	31
Total Oxfordshire Adult Homeless Pathway commissioned for City use		79	79
Project 41	Homeless Oxfordshire	41	41
Simon House (20-25) - transition 2018/19	A2Dominion	25	
Rymer's Lane - Complex Needs Entry	A2Dominion		22
Mayday Trust	Mayday	10	10
Housing First		5	5
Acacia – existing	Response	5	5
Acacia - capacity increase	Response	5	5
Total City Council commissioned for City use		91	88
Total available for City use		170	167

Estimated City requirement [CEB report, December 2016]		150	150
Additional capacity available for City use			
O'Hanlon Hse - City - SIT UP	Homeless Oxfordshire	10	10
Rymer's Lane - Complex Needs Move On	A2Dominion		15
Additional emergency bed in the young persons pathway	via County Council	1	1
Total available for City use		181	193

Strategic framework for commissioning and funding 2017/18

26. The Council's priorities in terms of tackling rough sleeping and single homelessness are set out in Priority 2 [Prevent homelessness and meet the needs of vulnerable people and rough sleepers] of its Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021 summarised at Appendix A – Strategic Priorities for preventing homelessness and meeting the needs of vulnerable people and rough sleepers.
27. Significant consideration is also given to the national rough sleeping strategy titled “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.

Use of unused fund from 2017/18 Homelessness Prevention Fund budget

28. A total of approximately £142,906 has been accumulated for re-profiled activity into 2018/19 [subject to approval] – anticipating the significant increase in the Council's commissioning of supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homelessness people from 2018/19 onwards and with the intention of maintaining so far as possible other housing related support services for this group.
29. The exact amount of resources available will not be known until the end of the financial year, but the forecast position is shown at Appendix B. The reasons for the re-profiling in year include:
- Payment by Results elements of a contract with the Big Issue Foundation not being required due to failure by the provider to achieve the performance targets.
 - Delay in commissioning additional Acacia units to ensure that essential mental health support for clients is in place
30. Whilst the position may change slightly, it is recommended that these funds are carried forward and (re) allocated in 2018/19 within the budget towards the 2019/20 pooled funding arrangement together with £43,800 [unspent reserves] towards the delivery of additional Housing First / Acacia units in 2018/19 and 2019/20

Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds 2018/19

Consideration of future funding issues

31. During 2018/19 the Council will continue to increase its commissioning of supported housing units in order to provide and maintain sufficient supply to meet need. The Council will:

- Continue its' commissioning of the Project 41 supported housing project [taken over as a result of County Council funding cuts in 2017/18]
- Take over from the County Council the commissioning of 10 units of supported accommodation with Mayday Trust
- Follow through on its' commitment to maintain and increase essential supported accommodation for people with complex needs through the provisioning of a transitional service of up to 25 beds at Simon House (that would otherwise have closed as a result of the County Council's funding cuts), pending the development of a new facility in the Cowley area in 2019/20.

32. Officers will also continue to work with County and District Councils to secure commitment from them to ensure sufficient contributions to meet district clients' needs and a commitment to future contributions to the pooled budget and joint commissioning arrangements.

33. This will increase pressure on the already stretched budget in 2018/19 however there is also a need to anticipate pressures on the 2019/20 budget including the £161,700 contribution to joint commissioning arrangements for the Adult Homeless Pathway.

34. To mitigate these expected pressures, the 2018/19 budget has allocated additional funding of £100,000 drawn from the Council's Homelessness Reserves in 2018/19. A further £200,000 has been included in the base budget annually from 2019/20. This together with the proposed carry forward from 2017/18 [see paragraph 26] will go some way towards easing the pressure on the budget in 2019/20.

Proposed allocations 2018/19

35. With this in mind, the proposed allocation for 2018/19 is shown at Appendix C. Key points to note are as follows:

- **Managed carry forward into 2019/20** – the proposed allocation allows for a substantial planned and managed carry forward into 2019/20 in order to sustain essential services.
- **Increased funding for supported accommodation** - proposed increase of over £300,000 reflecting whole year commitment to Project 41, new commissioning of 10 supported accommodation beds with Mayday Trust, providing up to 25 beds at Simon House 2018/19 and additional funding for SWEPP [severe weather emergency protocol].
- **Street engagement** – Funding maintained to ensure effect street presence and engagement, including funding for Oxford SPOT maintained at current value, slight reduction in funding for TVP [from £40,000 to £30,000], and slight increase in for City Centre Ambassador [from £10,000 to £17,500]
- **Preventing homelessness** – funding maintained at current level and including funding for Elmore Community Services tenancy sustainment officer.

- **Access to health and social care** – funding withdrawn in the expectation that the costs of a dedicated mental health practitioner at Luther Street Medical Centre will be borne through Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group commissioning.
- **Positive activities & help to get into work** – funding maintained at current level for a range of services and support with Aspire Oxford, The Porch, day services at O’Hanlon House and Emmaus, with a slight reduction in funding for Emmaus.
- **Priority Services for Young People** – funding maintained for one additional emergency bed within the Young Person’s pathway for use by Oxford City.
- **Other** – funding maintained for core staffing in the Council’s Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Team and Oxford CHAIN database.

36. A diagram outlining the Adult Homeless Pathway and other services funded by the Council for the benefit of rough sleepers and single homeless people is provided at Appendix D.

37. It is recommended that the Head of Housing has the delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio holder, to administer any necessary changes to these allocations.

City Conversation on Rough Sleeping

38. The rapid and very visible increase in the number of people sleeping rough on the City’s street has generated widespread public concern – about the issue itself and what is being done about it. As part of its response, the Council has initiated a citywide conversation on rough sleeping which commenced with a major event 28th November 2017 at the Town Hall, drawing together organisations and individuals to explore the causes and possible solutions to the problem.

39. The meeting agreed a vision which would see rough sleeping eradicated in the City of Oxford and an interim steering group has since been tasked with moving the conversation forward. It is hoped that a Rough Sleeping Charter for Oxford will be agreed and that a partnership will be formed to implement this.

40. As part of its contribution to these developments, the Council’s budget approved in February 2018 included additional funding drawn from the Council’s reserves in 2018/19. At the City Conversation in November, Councillor Bob Price signalled the Council’s intention to commit £25,000 towards the development of a Rough Sleeping Charter for Oxford and citywide partnership. A further £50,000 will be committed in 2018/19 to fund additional staffing capacity within the Rough Sleeping and Single Homeless Team to co-ordinate and support the Council’s engagement with the developing Charter and partnership. The budget proposes that the similar levels of funding are also made available in 2019/20, representing a total commitment of £150,000 over the two years, again funded from the Council’s Homelessness Reserve.

Financial implications

41. The budgeted spend on homelessness prevention for 2018-19 is estimated at £1,834,853 funded as follows :

	£'s	£'s
Planned savings to be carried forward from 2017-18		
Acacia Housing First Project	43,800	
Rough sleepers and single homeless people	142,906	186,706
Homelessness base budget		941,168
SWEP provision contribution		3,000
Voluntary sector grants budget		442,279
Transfer from reserves		261,700
Total		1,834,853

At the 1/4/2017 the homelessness reserve was £951k. At Council on 19th February 2018 an amount of £93k was added to the reserve and a further £187k is to be added over the life of the Medium Term Term Financial Plan.

Performance monitoring

42. In distributing this budget, the Council will ensure that there are clear outcomes and targets in each organisation's service specification which are reported on quarterly. An executive summary of all data and performance is produced on a quarterly basis by the Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Team for the steering group and wider corporate comment.
43. Quarterly performance monitoring meetings will be scheduled between all services and Oxford City Council's Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Team to ensure that outcomes and targets are achieved and issues are addressed in a timely and professional manner.

Legal issues

44. All services funded from Homelessness Prevention Funds have Service Level Agreements in place. The SLAs covers obligations for services as well as consequences for not fulfilling these obligations.

Level of risk

45. The Risk Register is attached as Appendix E.

Equalities impact

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

Conclusion

47. The City and Oxfordshire District Councils are faced with unprecedented challenges going forward due to County Council cuts to Housing Related Support. Additional funding has been identified to help maintain essential supported accommodation services for individuals with a connection to the City.

48. It is recommended that the City prioritise funding of supported accommodation, including the pooled budget and other services that help to support rough sleepers and single homeless people, whilst maintain a managed underspend in 2018/19 which – with the appropriate approvals – can be carried forward into 2019/20 to help maintain these services.

49. It is also recommended that the City continue to make representations to the Oxfordshire Districts and County to request that they consider making further financial contributions to services to meet county wide needs.

50. The proposed funding allocation for 2018/19 will ensure that the Council continues to provide important ‘wrap-around’ services for single homeless people and rough sleepers to prevent and tackle rough sleeping, and support individuals to live and sustain independent lives.

51. Thorough review and evaluation of all services funded in 2018/19 will be carried out in year and inform any funding decisions for 2019/20.

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Background Papers:
1 None