



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price
Report by: Alan Carter
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing 24/9/2015
Scrutiny Committee
Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge East Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington West Chesterton

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT FUNDING PROGRAMME 2016-17

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

This report follows on from recommendations, approved at this committee in January 2015, to implement changes to the assessment and monitoring of homelessness prevention grant funding to ensure that the Council can unequivocally demonstrate that value for money is being achieved across all grant funded services.

This report will outline the new systems and processes, which have been introduced since the earlier report. The principle of openly and transparently publishing the rationale for the grant programme was approved at the January committee, along with the principle that formal approval for all grants in excess of £5000 would fall to this committee and that responsibility for approval of grants under £5000 would lie with the Head of Strategic Housing.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 1) To agree, subject to any changes that may be made as part of the budget setting process and the formal adoption of the 2016/17 budget by Council, the proposed grant funding allocations as outlined in appendix 1 of this report.

- 2) To support the assessment and decision making processes for future grant allocation and discontinuation of grants as outlined in this report.

3. Background

The homelessness prevention grant programme is entirely funded from the General Fund. The programme is specifically designed to relieve pressure on the Council's statutory and non-statutory homelessness services and, while most recipients are from the voluntary and charitable sectors, the Council will consider funding statutory partners where there are demonstrable homelessness prevention or alleviation outcomes.

4. Value-for-money review

4.1 The Council has implemented new grant assessment and monitoring systems in order to provide a more effective and robust method of assessing the value-for-money provided by grant recipients. This includes the introduction of a new grant application form and the standardisation of monitoring processes.

4.2 The new grant application form is designed to capture:

- Strategic relevance against four headline areas listed in the Housing Strategy (preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, minimising the use of temporary accommodation and maximising use of longer term housing solutions, enabling people to make informed choices about their housing, promoting sustained and settled lifestyles and minimising social exclusion)
- Financial viability
- Commitments to measureable outcomes
- Assessment of other funding sources (including other sections/departments within the City Council and pending applications)
- A breakdown of project expenditure
- An assessment of the organisation's reserves position.

4.3 The revised monitoring process is designed to capture

- Hard outcomes – against stated aims agreed through the grant application process

- Soft outcomes (e.g. case studies, social accounting data (for example, the *Outcomes Star* <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/>)
- Added value
- Financial viability / assessment of funding requirements

4.4 The reporting and monitoring requirements are set on a sliding scale based on the annual value of the grant and are contained in the table below.

| Grants | Report frequency | Monitoring visits |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| under £5k | 1 report end October | 0 |
| £5-20k | 2 reports at October and April | 1 at October |
| above £20k | Quarterly reports at July, October, January and April | 2 at July and January |

- 4.5 Aside from the monitoring measures outlined at 4.3 one service provider is modelling a social value tool, which estimates the savings the interventions made by the service delivers to the public purse. Officers are looking at this as a pilot to assess whether it makes a valuable contribution to the grant monitoring process and can be applied to other services.
- 4.6 Officers propose to bring grant proposals annually to committee in the autumn cycle.
- 4.7 Next year's report will offer greater detail on grant monitoring assessments along with the rationale for proposed renewal or discontinuation of grant funding

5. Discontinuation of grant funding

- 5.1 Following the annual review process, grants to recipient organisations will be discontinued if one or more of the following conditions apply:
- Agreed outcomes are not being met
 - The project is not financially viable
 - The organisation does not require the funding
 - The service is no longer strategically relevant or is no longer a priority for the Council

- The Council no longer has the funds to support the service
- 5.2 Where grants are discontinued, but the Council still has a strategic need for the service, or a similar service, the opportunity to bid for funds will be openly advertised
- 5.3 Equally, where the Council wishes to invite grant applications for new areas of service the opportunity to bid for funds will be openly advertised.
- 5.4 The Council may choose to grant fund internal projects or services where there is a strategic case to do so.
- 6. Grant Proposals for 2016-17**
- 6.1 Proposals to award and discontinue grants for 2016-17 are contained at appendix 1
- 6.2 Included in the list of funding recipients at appendix 1 is Crime Reduction Initiatives (Street and Mental Health Outreach Service). This is a contract and not a grant. It is included in this report because it delivers a homelessness and rough sleeping prevention service. The service is due for re-tendering from 1st April 2016 so a separate report has been brought to this committee requesting permission to re-tender the service.
- 6.3 Only one grant, funded in 2015-16 (Cambridge Central Aid), is recommended for discontinuation. This funding was awarded as a contingency measure in the event that the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS) was discontinued. However, the County Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee agreed an allocation of £513k to CLAS in 15-16, with an aim of building it into the baseline budget in 16-17.
- 6.4 A new grant of £13,260 is proposed to the County Council to continue the Rapid Response Service. This service provides support to customers using the Council's single homelessness service and has been funded by external grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) since 1st April 2013. The funding would support a scaled-down version of this service.
- 6.4 The total homelessness prevention grant budget in 2015-16 is £682,100. With an inflationary uplift of 2% this will rise to £695,750 in 2016-17

5. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The financial implications of the homelessness prevention grant programme are outlined at appendix 1.

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

There are no City Council staffing implications

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

The services outlined in this report are targeted at vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups or those suffering financial disadvantage. There are no proposals to remove or reduce funding to any of these organisations except Cambridge Central Aid and this funding was awarded for 2015-16 as a contingency measure in the event that the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS) was discontinued. However, as funding for CLAS has been renewed an Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

(d) Environmental Implications

+L - funding of furniture recycling by Cambridge Reuse helps to prevent landfill. There are no known adverse implications arising from the award of funding to any of the organisations contained within this report.

(e) Procurement

The Street and Mental Health Outreach Service contract exceeds the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) thresholds for service contracts and will be the subject to an OJEU compliant tender process when the service is re-tendered next year. A separate report is being brought to this committee seeking permission to re-tender the service.

(f) Consultation and communication

As part of the full grants value-for money review process planned during 2015 and the Housing Strategy review, partners have been consulted on strategic direction for homelessness prevention services via the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group in alignment with the Housing Strategy consultation.

(g) Community Safety

The contract for Street and Mental Health Outreach Services is specifically shaped to improve community safety by supporting efforts to tackle street-

based anti-social behaviour, as is the grant funding for the street life police officer. Cambridge Women's Aid provides refuge and support for victims of domestic violence and makes a significant contribution to community safety in so doing. Evaluations of the Chronically Excluded Adults Service have shown significant reductions in costs to the Criminal Justice System.

6. Background papers

None

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Homelessness Prevention Grant and contract awards 2016-17

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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