



To: Executive Councillor for Housing
Report by: Liz Bisset, Director of Customer and Community Services
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 17/3/2011
Wards affected: All Wards

**DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG)
HOMELESSNESS GRANT ALLOCATION 2011-12 & 2012-13
Key Decision**

1. Executive summary

The City Council is a recipient of a Homelessness Grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). DCLG commonly refers to the grant as a homelessness prevention fund but it is not, technically, ring-fenced. In previous years, decisions on allocation of this grant have been made by delegated authority by the Head of Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Housing. However, the report is being brought to committee on this occasion for Members' information and approval for three reasons:

1. The grant allocation has been increased by around 40% from £401,000 in 2010-11 to £575,470 per annum for the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2013
2. The Government has written to local authorities in receipt of a Homelessness Grant Allocation asking that the grant is protected for the purposes of tackling and preventing homelessness
3. That forthcoming changes to the welfare benefits system and other significant reductions in government expenditure are likely to lead to significantly increased pressure on homelessness services.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To note and approve the proposed Homelessness Grant distribution for 2011-12

- 2.2 To delegate authority for grant distribution in 2012-15 to the Head of Strategic Housing in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Housing, Chair and Spokesperson on the understanding that a report is brought back to committee for approval for the subsequent spending review period
- 2.3 To note the relevance of the report on forthcoming welfare benefits changes (as contained at appendix 1) to measures designed to tackle and prevent homelessness

3. Background

- 3.1 The Housing Options and Homeless section is the recipient of a two-year Homelessness Grant settlement for 2011-13 and the confirmed allocation of £575,470 is expected to be retained for the final two years of the spending review (i.e. 2013-15)
- 3.2 The grant is not ring-fenced, in line with freedoms and flexibilities afforded to local government in a number of funding areas. It is important to note that 'Preventing Homelessness Grant' is one of only 2 DCLG revenue grants that will remain outside formula grant funding. This is because its success as a targeted grant has been fundamental to achieving a significant fall of over 75% in homeless acceptances and 50% in the number of households in temporary accommodation over the last 5 years.
- 3.3 The Council and its partners have managed to stabilise rough sleeping numbers in the City and our local target of 6 has only been missed once in the last 4½ years
- 3.4 Statutory homelessness acceptances in the City have remained relatively stable throughout the recession at around 140 per annum and the Council has managed to reduce numbers in temporary accommodation to around 70-75 households
- 3.5 The net cost of bed and breakfast placements has fallen from a yearly average of £92,106 in the period 2004/5 to 2008/9 to £65,687 in 2009/10 and £53,134 to the end of January (pro-rata projected expenditure to the end of this year is £63,760)
- 3.6 Despite encouraging performance locally, achieved through the development of a combination of efficiency measures and a greater emphasis on prevention work, all the indicators suggest that pressure on homelessness services is likely to increase. The national homeless statistics for England published on December 9th (covering the end of

September 2010 quarter) record that the number of households accepted as homeless is 14 per cent higher than the same quarter last year. This is also 12 per cent higher than the previous June 2010 quarter. Following a long-term downward trend since 2004 acceptances have now increased nationally in two consecutive quarters for the first time since 2003. While quarterly figures can occasionally be misleading, it is worth noting that homelessness acceptances rose by 32% in Cambridge in the third quarter of 2010, an increase of 23% on the previous quarter.

3.7 The Council is conscious that it needs to plan for the combined impact of a number of economic, housing and government policy pressures that are likely to considerably increase demand for our service in 2011. The most significant of these are the forthcoming changes to the welfare benefits system highlighted in the December 2011 briefing attached at appendix 1.

3.8 In assessing the merits of each funding proposal with our homelessness grant allocation, we have devised 12 priority categories for consideration – the funding proposal must contribute to at least one of these areas in order to be approved. The priority categories are as follows:

1. Increase prevention of homelessness against the four main causes of statutory homelessness (parental evictions, friends and family evictions, end of Assured Shorthold tenancy and domestic violence)
2. Minimise rough sleeping and keep it as near to zero as possible
3. To ensure the delivery of more effective services for single homeless people and help them to sustain settled accommodation
4. To contribute to the Council's overall objectives to use housing stock more effectively
5. Ensure adequate turnover of temporary housing, for statutory homeless households by presenting a range of housing options for service users and, in so doing, make best use of temporary accommodation
6. Develop and maintain a strategic approach to:
 - a) Engaging with our customers to seek feedback on services
 - b) Consulting with customers about the future development of services and policies
 - c) Effecting service changes based on a & b
7. Expand the use of the private rented sector as a housing option
8. To promote better co-operation and partnership working between local authorities and Registered Providers to meet housing needs and prevent homelessness

9. Working with other agencies to prevent worklessness and debt
10. Contribute to social and/or financial inclusion
11. Services that we have an obligation to provide e.g. temporary accommodation to meet an interim duty to homeless households, cold weather provision etc
12. We are already committed to an existing contract for forthcoming year.

3.9 The table below represents Customer and Community Services' proposed allocation for 2011-12 – further detail on proposals categorised as new funding provision in the table below, or where there is a significant funding increase, is attached at appendix 2.

Organisation	Service description	Proposed allocation (£)	New or existing funding?	Increase or decrease on last year?	Priority category
Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI)	Street Outreach and mental health services - contract to 31.3.14	175,000	Existing	- £16,500 due to joint commissioning with the County Council - efficiency savings	2
Centre 33	Youth homelessness prevention - 2 year SLA to 31.3.12	27,720	Existing	No change	1,3,12
Riverside ECHG	Pre-tenancy work - preparing individuals moving on into permanent housing	28,280	Existing	No change	2,3,7
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	Street-life police officers – rough sleeping and associated street-based anti-social behaviour	30,550	Existing	No change	2
Jimmy's Cambridge	Floating Support to residents moving on from emergency provision*	25,270	Existing	No change	2,3,7

Organisation	Service description	Proposed allocation (£)	New or existing funding?	Increase or decrease on last year?	Priority category
To be determined	Housing options and homelessness – service quality assessments	15,000	New	N/A	6
Riverside ECHG (Cambridge Youth Foyer)	Emergency bed space for homeless 16-21 year olds	4,000	Existing	No change	1,3
Cold weather provision	DCLG directive on additional measures to tackle rough sleeping in cold weather	8,500	Existing	+£2000	2,11
Internal fund	Homelessness prevention fund / extension of discretionary housing payments**	50,250	Existing	+£42,750	1,2,3,7,10
Wintercomfort	Learning and Development Service - contract	25,000	Existing	No change	3,9,10,12
Internal fund	Private rented sector move on via the Access Scheme for single homeless people in hostels or shared houses	6,000	Existing	No change	3,7
Social Enterprise Funding	To support social enterprises employing homeless or formerly homeless people	20,000	New	N/A	3,9,10
Riverside ECHG	Training flats provided by CHS Group, supported by Riverside ECHG and used to intensively	14,000	Existing	+£7,000	2,3,8

Organisation	Service description	Proposed allocation (£)	New or existing funding?	Increase or decrease on last year?	Priority category
	prepare former rough sleepers for independent living				
Cambridgeshire County Council	Further contribution to a chronically excluded adults pilot in partnership with the County Council and Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust - to be used as a budget to augment packages of care	20,000	Existing	+£10,000	2,3,10
Internal	To resource targeted home visits to prevent homelessness	39,000	Existing	+ £32,000	1
Cambridge Mediation Service	Target group is young people living at home with parents and threatened with homelessness	1,500	Existing	N/A	1,3
Cambridge Women's Aid	Domestic violence – homelessness prevention work	3,250	New	N/A	1,5
Internal	To resource private rented landlord liaison work	32,000	New	N/A	1,2,3,5,7,9,10
Jimmy's Cambridge	To support the work of the Assessment Centre in tackling rough sleeping – funding ineligible for coverage by Housing Benefit or Supporting People	26,000	New	N/A	2,3,10

Organisation	Service description	Proposed allocation (£)	New or existing funding?	Increase or decrease on last year?	Priority category
Unallocated grant		24,150			
TOTAL		£575,470			

* Funding to cease at 31.3.2012 and be switched into the new Assessment Centre at Jimmy's

** Discretionary Housing Payment allocation for Revenues and Benefits for 2011-12 is circa £32,000.

4. Implications

- 4.1 The Homelessness Grant is an external funding source and does not draw directly on the Council's resources and DCLG does not require the Council to offer match funding for any of the areas of expenditure outlined above at 3.9.
- 4.2 The proposals to extend our homelessness prevention visiting service and private rented sector landlord liaison service involve adding to two fixed term full time equivalent posts to the Housing Options and Advice Team. This will allow the Council to build on the success of these initiatives. Our Access Scheme (rent deposit / rent guarantee scheme) has housed 37 households threatened with homelessness in the first 10 months of 2010-11. Our homelessness prevention service is recording a successful prevention outcome in around 40% of all cases.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
Homelessness acceptances data – DCLG (calendar years 2009 and 2010)

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Housing Benefit Changes: Update December 2010 –
Cambridge City Council Revenues and Benefits section

7. Inspection of papers

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

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