

Homelessness Prevention Grants to Agencies 2024-25

To:

Gerri Bird, Executive Councillor for Housing, Housing Scrutiny Committee,
23/01/2024

Report by:

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Wards: All

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details the annual bid round for grants made to organisations providing homelessness prevention services. It provides an overview of the process, the grant eligibility criteria and the budget. Appendix 1 details the applications received with recommendations for 2024-25 awards.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the award of homelessness prevention grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

3. Background

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Bid round process and award recommendations

- 3.1 Each year the Council invites agencies and organisations to submit bids for funding for homelessness-related services. The 2024-25 bid round opened for applications on 1st August 2023 and closed on 2nd October 2023. A communications and publicity plan was implemented to promote the grant fund.
- 3.2 Members may wish to note that bids received totaled £441,000 against available funding of £307,000, excluding a further sum of £50,000 set aside as winter provision for rough sleepers, which was approved as part of last year's grants bid under a 3-year contract. (When the proposed winter provision set-aside is included, the total sum available is £357,000 – an increase of £32,000 on the sum that was available last year).
- 3.3 Bids were initially considered by individual officers using a common assessment matrix, and then moderated by those officers meeting as a panel.
- 3.3 Given the significant excess of claims over available funding, not all bids could be supported in full, leading to some difficult recommendations. Nonetheless, all bids were approved for some funding, if not the amount that was requested as part of the application. Individual bids were assessed principally against the degree to which the proposed service would prevent or relieve homelessness, with services that could directly evidence the prevention of homelessness being particularly favoured. More broadly, officers considered the strategic and operational value of the proposed service, whether the proposed service duplicated or overlapped with an existing service, and the ability of the submitting agency to self-fund in whole or in part.
- 3.4 The Executive Councillor attended a meeting with officers to review the recommendations. The final recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

As set out in 3.2 and Appendix 1.

Members are reminded that the award of any recommended grant is subject to the receipt of the annual central government homelessness prevention grant (HPG). On 23 December 2022 the Council was notified of its award of HPG for 2023-24 and 2024-25 and we can therefore be confident of funding the grant sums recommended at Appendix 1.

The three-year winter provision contract commenced in November 2023, meaning that funding is secure for the first two years of the contract. Year 3 funding can also be confidently assumed, given that in its various iterations HPG has been made available in steadily-increasing amounts for more than two decades.

b) Staffing Implications

None.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An EqIA has been completed and is attached as Appendix 2.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

No positive or negative impact identified as the services recommended for grant aid are broadly similar to those supported in former years.

e) Procurement Implications

None.

f) Community Safety Implications

None

5. Consultation and communication considerations

Consultation has been carried out with the Executive Councillor. In addition, extensive consultation was carried out with partners on the grant application process and eligibility criteria, ahead of the annual bid round in 2022. The process and eligibility criteria have remained the same for 2023.

6. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of award recommendations

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

8. Inspection of papers

If you have a query on the report please contact Simon Hunt, Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice. Tel: 01223 457932. Email: simon.hunt@cambridge.gov.uk.