

Homelessness Prevention Grants to Agencies 2026-27

To:

Mike Todd-Jones, Cabinet Member for Safety, Wellbeing & Tackling Homelessness, Cabinet 13/01/2026

Report by:

Simon Hunt, Strategic Housing Advice Lead – Housing Advice

Tel: 01223 457932 Email: simon.hunt@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

All

Director Approval: Director of Communities, Sam Scharf, confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for Safety, Wellbeing and Tackling Homelessness for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <p>Approve the award of homelessness prevention grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2026-27, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.</p>
2.	Purpose and reason for the report
2.1	<p>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 2026-27 awards.</p>

3.	Alternative options considered								
3.1	<p>As detailed later in the report, where, having tested services over a number of years, we see clear advantages to be achieved in contracting services under multi-year arrangements rather than awarding one-year grants, we have taken the opportunity to do so. We will continue to explore such opportunities in the future.</p>								
4.	Background and key issues								
4.1	<p>Each year the Council invites agencies and organisations to submit bids for funding for homelessness-related services from its annual central government homelessness grant. The 2026-27 bid round opened for applications on 1st August 2025 and closed on 22nd September 2025. A communications and publicity plan was implemented to promote the grant fund.</p> <p>Members may wish to note that bids received totaled £553,912 against available funding of £400,000. This figure excludes a sum of £50,000 set aside from our homelessness grant as winter provision for rough sleepers under a 3-year contract and a further £70,000 set aside to fund an employment advice service for those who are homeless, or at risk of losing their home, also under a 3-year contract.</p> <p>When the amounts set-aside for the winter provision and employment advice are included, the total sum available to partner organisations for homelessness projects is nearly £520,000, as set out in the table below – an increase of £79,000 on the sum that was available last year.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Recommended grants to agencies</td> <td>£399,740</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Winter provision contract</td> <td>£50,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employment advice contract</td> <td>£70,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2026/27 total</td> <td>£519,740</td> </tr> </table> <p>Applications were initially considered by individual officers using a common assessment matrix and then moderated by those officers meeting as a panel.</p>	Recommended grants to agencies	£399,740	Winter provision contract	£50,000	Employment advice contract	£70,000	2026/27 total	£519,740
Recommended grants to agencies	£399,740								
Winter provision contract	£50,000								
Employment advice contract	£70,000								
2026/27 total	£519,740								

Given the significant excess of claims over available funding, not all bids could be supported in full, leading to some difficult recommendations. Nonetheless, most 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.

A number of the grant recommendations are for long-standing initiatives with a proven record of assisting the City Council in its efforts to tackle homelessness and which we have funded for a number of years.

The Cabinet Member for Safety, Wellbeing & Tackling Homelessness attended a meeting with officers to review the recommendations. The final recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.

5.	Corporate plan
5.1	A decision to approve the recommended grant awards to partner agencies will support the City Council in its following key priorities, as set out in the Corporate plan 2022-27: -Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need -Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness
6.	Consultation, engagement and communication
6.1	Consultation has been carried out with the Cabinet Member for Safety, Wellbeing & Tackling Homelessness. 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 since then

	<p>but are due for review in 2026.</p> <p>The Government has confirmed its intention to offer a multi-year homelessness grant to Local Authorities from 2026/27 onwards and we may be in a position to offer funding assurance in the form of multi-year grants to some applicant groups from 2028/29, subject to developing appropriate eligibility criteria.</p>
7.	Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact
7.1	Grants to partner agencies will benefit individuals across the city who are homeless or threatened with homelessness for a variety of different reasons. The work undertaken by partners as a result of these grants will support the City Council in its statutory responsibilities to prevent and relieve homelessness. It is a condition of the grant that agencies provide monitoring information to the City Council detailing outcomes and impact achieved from the grant award.
8.	Implications
	Relevant risks
8.1	Any slight risk of a partner agency getting into financial difficulties and being unable to deliver a project is mitigated by the financial checks that we run as part of the application process, the monitoring arrangements that we put in place once a grant is awarded, and payment by instalment to reduce our losses in the event that an organisation can't deliver on a project.
	Financial Implications
8.2	<p>As set out in 3.2 and Appendix 1.</p> <p>The award of the recommended grants is subject to the receipt of the annual homelessness grant from central government. The Government has made clear its commitment to tackling homelessness and announced in November that it will be making £2.4 billion available nationally from April 2026 as part of a multi-year settlement to</p>

	<p>address homelessness and rough sleeping, with a further £969M being made available for addressing pressures connected with temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Local authorities were notified of their provisional district grant allocations on 17th December 2025. The recommended total award of just under £400k in grants to agencies is subject to this provisional settlement being confirmed as final.</p>
	Legal Implications
8.3	None.
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications
8.4	<p>Some of the grant awards are for projects specifically targeted at groups with a protected characteristic. However, all bidding organisations must be able to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010 in delivering their services and submit their equality and diversity policies with their applications.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed.</p>
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications
8.5	No positive or negative impact identified as the services recommended for grant aid are broadly similar to those supported in former years.
	Procurement Implications
8.6	None.
	Community Safety Implications
8.7	None.
9.	Background documents Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to

	Information) Act 1985
9.1	No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.
10.	Appendices
10.1	Appendix 1: Summary of award recommendations.
	If you have a query on the report please contact Simon Hunt, Strategic Housing Advice Lead. Tel: 01223 457932. Email: simon.hunt@cambridge.gov.uk