



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Cllr Catherine Smart
Report by: Director of Community Services
Relevant scrutiny committee: COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12th January 2012

Housing General Fund Grants to Voluntary Organisations for 2012/13 and 2013/14
Key Decision

1. Executive summary

This report reviews the grants that were awarded by Community Services Scrutiny Committee from the Housing General Fund for this year in the context of the corporate policy and makes recommendations to continue to grant fund the organisations during 2012/13 and 2013/14.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 1) To agree, subject to the budget setting process and formal adoption by Council of the 2012/13 and 2013/14 budgets, the funding to the voluntary sector organisations as detailed in this report
- 2) To agree to consider a further report to committee in March on a proposal, subject to the budget setting process, to offer a capital grant of up to £100,000 to be drawn from the existing Renewals and Replacements fund to upgrade the facilities at the primary health care service for homeless people at 125 Newmarket Road
- 3) To note, for information, the proposed Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Homelessness Prevention Grant budget allocation for 2012-13

3. Background

3.1 Housing General Fund (HGF) grants and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for 2011/12 were awarded by Community Services Scrutiny Committee as follows:

Grant Offered	Grant / SLA / Contract	Amount
Provision of independent specialist housing advice services through CAB.	SLA	£29,320
Supporting Women's Aid to provide accommodation for Women and children fleeing domestic violence.	SLA	£41,020
Supporting Cambridge Re-use (formerly SOFA) to provide furniture to those affected by poverty and disadvantage.	SLA	£7,650
Supporting Cyrenians to provide services to homeless people in need of support.	SLA	£11,100
The Learning & Development Service provided by Wintercomfort (see 3.5 below)	Contract	£57,500
Total amount to cover shortfall in discretionary business rate relief for Cyrenians, CWA, SOFA and Wintercomfort.	Grants	£7,290
Total		£153,880

3.2 The voluntary sector provides key services to homeless people, including services, which enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations. Housing grants enable the voluntary sector to provide services to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and, through the provision of specialist housing and support services, improve clients' quality of life, help tackle social exclusion and prevent repeat homelessness. The grants make a significant contribution to the

Council's Medium Term Objective to ensure that Cambridge is 'A city which recognises and meets needs for housing of all kinds – close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities'

3.3 The HGF grants budget was fully allocated for 2011/12 and services are being provided as planned. The Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) was brought in at short notice last year to fill the gap left by the Cambridge Law Centre. The CAB service has been closely monitored on a quarterly basis and is delivering some effective homelessness prevention services. The Council, therefore, proposes to extend the SLA with the CAB for a further year up until 31st March 2012 and an exemption from contract procedure rules is being applied for on the basis that the specialist money, debt and housing advice service offers a unique and bespoke service to the City Council.

3.4 HGF grants and SLA's proposed for 2012/13 (including a 2.7% inflationary uplift):

Grant Proposed	Grant / SLA	Amount (Maximum)
Provision of independent specialist housing advice services through CAB.	SLA	£30,110
Supporting Women's Aid to provide accommodation for Women and children fleeing domestic violence.	SLA	£42,130
Supporting Cambridge Re-use to provide furniture to those affected by poverty and disadvantage.	SLA	£7,860
Supporting Cyrenians to provide services to homeless people in need of support.	SLA	£11,400
The Learning & Development Service provided by Wintercomfort	Contract	£59,050

Total amount to cover shortfall in discretionary business rate relief for Cyrenians, CWA, SOFA and Wintercomfort.	Grants	£7490
Total		£158,040

3.5 Grants for 2013-14 will rise by the agreed inflationary uplift and a report will only be brought back to Community Services Scrutiny Committee if there are proposals to offer new grants or withdraw existing ones.

3.6 The City Council is working closely with Cambridge Community Services (CCS) NHS Trust to develop and enhance the primary health care service offered to homeless people at 125 Newmarket Road. In particular the Council is working with CCS NHS Trust on a proposal to offer a more holistic one-stop-shop health model at the surgery. As part of this plan, a significant upgrade to the building is required to ensure that patient consultancy rooms meet clinical standards, to upgrade the information technology services within the building to improve services to patients and to refurbish the building throughout for the first time in the 8 years since the City Council took on the ownership of the property. The building was purchased by the City Council with a grant from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) back in 2003 to provide a dedicated primary health care service for homeless people

3.7 Contained within the lease to CCS is a requirement for the City Council to set aside funds to conduct structural repairs to the building and for CCS to manage internal refurbishments and repairs. However, sufficient funds have not been available for CCS to do this. The Council currently has a repairs and renewal fund of £213,000 for the building and a recent assessment of requirements to 2020 showed that only £43,000 was required. Members are, therefore, asked to consider whether up to £100,000 could be released from the repairs and renewal fund for the building upgrade to take place

3.8 Officers propose to bring a more detailed report on the business case for these proposals back to committee in March for Members to consider

3.9 Officers brought a committee paper on the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Homelessness Prevention Grant in March 2011 and received approval to delegate authority for expenditure to the Head of Strategic Housing in consultation with the Executive Councillor, Chair and Spokesperson

until 2015. This process should be complete in between the drafting of this report and the committee meeting in January. The Council is expecting a minimum allocation of £575,470 and proposals for expenditure for 2012-13 are attached at appendix 1.

- 3.10 During the course of the financial year the Council offers additional small grants to voluntary sector organisations if funds allow. In 2011-12 FLACK, a magazine written and produced by homeless people received £5000, Against the Grain, a training organisation for homeless people received £2500 and a service user group named Cambridge Link-up received £3500.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications:

The grants detailed above can be contained within existing budgets and represent a continuation of the awards policy of the previous year with the exception of the proposal outlined in in 3.6 and 3.7 above.

(b) Staffing Implications:

There are no new staffing implications

(c) Equal Opportunities Implications:

These grants support disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. All agencies funded operate equal opportunity policies and work actively to promote equal opportunities awareness through the services they provide.

(d) Environmental Implications:

Funding of furniture recycling by Cambridge Reuse helps to prevent landfill. Wintercomfort has developed a social enterprise, part of which involves the production of eco-coffins.

(e) Community Safety Implications:

Work by Wintercomfort, Cyrenians and other groups help to reduce rough sleeping and thus impacts on community safety (e.g. by reducing aggressive begging). Cambridge Women's Aid provides

refuge and support for victims of domestic violence and makes a significant contribution to community safety in so doing.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

SLAs & Contracts with service providers
Draft one-stop-shop health model paper
125 Newmarket Road – renewals and replacement assessment to 2040 –
Oct 2010

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – draft homelessness grant allocation 2012-13

7. Inspection of papers

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

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