

**Subject: Homelessness Funding**

**Report to: ELT, 13 January 2020**

**Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee, 23 January 2020**

**Report by: Housing Director**

**SUBJECT MATTER / RECOMMENDATIONS**

**This report provides details of the additional government funding for 2020/21 to support work on reducing homelessness and sets out how the funding will be used.**

**It is recommended that Committee note the report.**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. On 23 December 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released details of additional homelessness funding for authorities across England and Wales in 2020/21. This funding has been made available to further support and aid Councils in reducing homelessness.
- 1.2. Homelessness funding was first received in 2017/18 and constitutes two separate funding streams:
  - Flexible Homelessness Support Grant – this replaced previous funding to support temporary accommodation costs/
  - Homelessness Reduction Grant – also known as New Burdens funding. This funding was introduced reflecting the additional costs on local authorities as a result of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 1.3. In 2020/21, the Council will receive an allocation of:
  - £107,037 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant
  - £178,346 Homelessness Reduction Grant
- 1.4. The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding allocation for 2020/21 has been held at the level of funding awarded in 2019/20, whilst there has been a significant increase in the Homelessness Reductions Grant from the £76,511 received in 2019/20.

## **2. Use of the funding**

2.1. Historically the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Grant monies has been used to:

- Pay for additional posts reflecting the increased workload following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 from 1 April 2018
- Fund the purchase and ongoing support costs for a bespoke IT system to support work in relation to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requirements and the new housing application system.
- Pay for training
- Meet unrecoverable costs associated with Bed and Breakfast expenditure
- Fund the provision of damage deposits
- Pay the cost of a Private Property Officer to support homeless clients to access private rented properties.

2.2 With the additional funding available in 2020/21 the following options will be explored in addition to continuing to fund the above areas:

- Funding provision of transitional housing – for homeless applicants or those who are at risk of homelessness, who need a period of housing with support to be able to successfully maintain a long-term tenancy.
- Extend the Private Property Officer post until March 2022.
- Funding the provision of training on how to successfully maintain a tenancy and live independently for vulnerable clients and those who have never held a tenancy before
- Re-introduction of a second Homeless Link Worker post (12-month fixed term post) to support applicants at risk of or who are homelessness including applicants in temporary accommodation. The post will build strong links with the Herring House Trust Pathway workers, who engage with rough sleepers to identify and resolve barriers to mainstream accommodation.
- Develop a scheme/fund to provide furniture and furnishings for those homeless households who have none.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The Council has not fully spent previous allocations of homelessness funding, reflecting the requirement to keep a reserve to fund the cost of fixed term

posts which have run over more than one financial year. The funding allocation for 2020/21 provides an opportunity to extend the use of the homelessness monies, to provide a more preventative approach which supports tenancy sustainment for those homeless clients who are at risk of repeated homelessness or who may otherwise become rough sleepers.

## 4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The funding received supports the Council to meet its statutory duties in relation to homelessness and allows for more innovative and flexible approaches along with ensuring initiatives are delivered without impacting on core services.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 In 2020/21, the Council will receive a significant increase to the funding available to it to reduce homelessness across the borough. This will allow the Council to introduce a number of new initiatives to address and prevent repeat homelessness, whilst also continuing to fund staff and other resources which have proven to support the Council to prevent and relieve homelessness.

*Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so, how have these been considered/mitigated against?*

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Management Team/ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Management Team/ELT
Existing Council Policies:	Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy
Financial Implications:	Covered in report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	N/A
Risk Implications:	Covered in report
Equality Issues / EQIA assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Every Child Matters:	N/A