

# Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

3 July 2018

## Housing Grants and Resources

### 1. Contacts

**Report Author:**

Linda Grange – Divisional Manager Housing Services  
Telephone: 01243 534582      E-mail: [lgrange@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:lgrange@chichester.gov.uk)

**Cabinet Member:**

Jane Kilby - Cabinet Member for Housing Services  
Telephone: 01243 773494      E-mail: [jkilby@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:jkilby@chichester.gov.uk)

### 2. Recommendation

**2.1. That Cabinet recommends to the Council that:**

- 1. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Services, to spend the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant set out in para 3.2 of the agenda report and the Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens Grant set out in para 3.3 of the agenda report in line with the government guidance issued with the notification of the grants.**
- 2. The additional income received from the licencing of Houses in Multiple Occupation is used to fund the additional staffing and IT resources required to implement the new government regulations as set out in para 5.2 of the agenda report.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1. In June last year a report was taken to the Cabinet which outlined the proposed spend of the Flexible Homeless Support Grant (FHSG). The new grant, gave councils flexibility to spend the funds to support the full range of homelessness services.
- 3.2. The FHSG allocated to the Council for 2017-2018 was £128,047, and for 2018-2019 is £147,330. The Cabinet approved the proposal to create two new posts in the Housing Service; a Housing Welfare Officer and an additional Housing Interventions Officer, with any underspend being used to prevent homelessness including supporting the introduction of a new and improved IT system. The allocation of £187,823 for 2019/20 has since been announced. £245,000 in total over 3 years is already committed to the posts mentioned above, leaving £218,200 available to spend.
- 3.3. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was implemented on 3 April 2018. This requires more proactive work with potentially homeless people at an earlier

stage. It places additional demands upon the resources of the existing Housing Options Team and new burdens funding of £39,312 for 2017-2018 and £36,010 for 2018-2019 has also been received. A further one-off payment of £9,202 has been received towards upgrading the authorities IT system and any associated training or update of internal administrative processes that will enable reporting of case-level data on statutory homelessness to government.

- 3.4. In addition to this the Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018 extends the scope of the existing licensing scheme to include all properties occupied by 5 or more tenants who share facilities, irrespective of the number of storeys. Previously the property had to be 3 storeys or more to require licensing. Landlords affected by the new regulations must apply for their licenses by 1 October 2018 and local authorities have an 18-month period in which to issue the license.
- 3.5. The number of properties requiring a licence is expected to increase from 30 to over 180. The additional work required to undertake this function will include property inspection, monitoring, enforcement and administration. The Council will also need to update its IT system to ensure effective monitoring.

#### **4. Outcomes to be Achieved**

- 4.1. The FHSG is intended to allow flexible support for homelessness and is ring-fenced for this purpose. It is intended that the outcomes of the grant will be to prevent homelessness by offering housing options advice at an early stage and also ensuring residents are accessing all the benefits to which they are entitled.
- 4.2. The New Burdens Grant is intended to provide extra resources during the transition to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and to upgrade the Council's IT system.
- 4.3. The fulfilment of the Council's duty to issue licences for those properties included in the mandatory scheme, thereby increasing property standards in relation to facilities and safety.

#### **5. Proposal**

- 5.1. It is proposed to use the FHSG and New Burdens Grant to provide the staffing and IT resources to deal with the additional prevention and reporting work required by Homelessness Reduction Act, as well as implementing the new IT system, as required over the next two years. This includes the two new posts already approved by the Cabinet in June 2017
- 5.2. To use the additional licence fee collected to provide the additional staffing and IT resources required to deal with the extra licencing work. This will include undertaking property inspections, on-going monitoring, licencing administration and supporting the Senior Environmental Health Officers with regard to potential enforcement action.
- 5.3. In order to facilitate use of these ring fenced monies it is proposed that delegated powers be given to the Director of Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Services, to use the

funding in line with the government guidance issued with the notification of the grants.

## 6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1. It is not considered possible to absorb the additional HMO work within the existing team. The number of properties requiring a license is set to increase from 30 to over 180.

## 7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1. The FHSG and New Burdens Grant are expected to adequately cover the employment costs of any additional staff, the costs of implementing the new IT system and any costs associated with submitting government returns.
- 7.2. From the information currently held on the Council's HMO property database, an exercise has been undertaken to forecast the value of income the Council is anticipated to receive from license fees. Throughout a five-year period it is expected a minimum of £128,000 will be collected, however a disproportionate of this will be received in year one and the surplus will need to be retained to cover the five-year renewal cycle.

## 8. Consultation

- 8.1. Consultation is not relevant as these are statutory functions which the Council has a duty to undertake.

## 9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1. The impact of the proposal will benefit the residents of the district. Additional resources will enable us to provide an effective response to the additional statutory responsibilities of the Council and will permit us to deliver an efficient service.

## 10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		X
<b>Climate Change</b>		X
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b> A proportion of customers have 'protected characteristics' and therefore owed a duty under the Equalities Act 2010. The proposal will aid the Council to provide adequate services for those protected under the Act.	X	
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b> A proportion of customers has multiple needs and will therefore be referred for Early Help and/or safeguarding. Additional resources will enable the Council to respond to an increase in demand without compromising the level of care provided to vulnerable households	X	
<b>GDPR</b> Any new IT will need to be GDPR compliant	X	

**11. Appendices**

None

**12. Background Papers**

None