

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

7 September 2021

Housing Grants

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation:

- 2.1. **That Cabinet recommends to the Council that delegated authority is given to the Director of Housing and Communities to spend the grant funding received from Government set out in para 3.1 to 3.8 of this report in accordance with the terms of the grant.**

3. Background

The Homelessness Prevention Grant

- 3.1. The Homelessness Prevention Grant received from Government combines and uplifts what was previously the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Grant (New Burdens funding). The purpose of the Homelessness Prevention Grant fund is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness. Local authorities are expected to use it to deliver the following priorities:
- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness
 - Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention
 - Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six-week limit.
- In the Government's review of the Homelessness Reduction Act an assessment of the new burdens funding associated with the Act was undertaken and this is now reflected in the Homelessness Prevention Grant.
- 3.2. In June 2017 and July 2018 Cabinet gave delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for housing Services, to spend the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) and New Burdens Grant received in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. Since then the FHSG has been used to fund five additional posts aimed at preventing homelessness and the New Burdens Grant has been used to fund the upgrade of

the Council's IT system to accommodate the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

- 3.3. In 2020/21 the Council received Homeless Prevention Grant of £300,844 and £375,423 is expected in 2021/22. The grant is expected to continue in future years subject to government review.

Rough Sleeper Initiative Grant

- 3.4. The Rough Sleeper Initiative Grant is provided to prevent rough sleeping and support those who have experienced rough sleeping in their recovery. Moving on to settled accommodation is now key to this approach, and authorities must demonstrate a sustainable pathway of move on from first stage accommodation. This means specific housing support and housing led.
- 3.5. Authorities are invited to submit applications for the grant on an annual basis and these applications are worked up in conjunction officers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Grant allocations are subject to the Council entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with MHCLG setting out how the grant will be spent.
- 3.6. The Council has been advised that our bid for 2021/22 was successful and the Council has been allocated £323,978. The funding is ringfenced and has been awarded according to the principles set out in the grant notification.

Accommodation for Ex-Offenders

- 3.7. The Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFO) is provided to enable the Council to offer a comprehensive service to meet local need and provide help for ex-offenders who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and rough sleeping, and need additional support to access the private rented sector.
- 3.8. This year authorities were invited to submit applications for grant and the applications were worked up with officers from the MHCLG. The grant allocation is subject to the Council entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with MHCLG setting out how the grant is to be spent. The funding covers the intervention for 15 service users, funding towards a tenancy support worker and a financial support package. MHCLG will periodically assess and rate the delivery and financial management of the interventions with a RAG rating and payments will be dependent on successful delivery.
- 3.9. The Council has been advised that our bid for 2021/22 was successful and the Council has been allocated £80,914.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1. It is intended that the outcomes of the Homeless Prevention Grant are to prevent homelessness by offering advice and support to potentially homeless households and individuals at an early stage and consequently reducing the need for temporary accommodation.
- 4.2. The intended outcomes of the Rough Sleeper Initiative Grant are to prevent future rough sleeping, prevent ex-rough sleepers returning to the streets and to support ex-rough sleepers in their recovery and move on into settled accommodation.

- 4.3. The intended outcomes of the Ex-Offender Grant are to prevent ex-offenders becoming homeless and provide the support they need to secure settled accommodation on leaving prison.

5. Proposals

- 5.1. 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 funds in line with the government guidance issued with the notification of the grants and any Memorandum of Understanding entered into with the MHCLH.

6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1. Not applicable. The funds must be spent in line with the government guidance issued with the notification and any Memorandum of Understanding.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1. The grant funds have been expressly paid to the Council by Government for the purposes set out above.
- 7.2. The Government realises that the current guidance requiring local authorities to fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act, reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation accommodate, eliminate the use of bed and breakfast families and put an end to rough sleeping has generated additional expense for local authorities and so has provided the additional grant funding towards expenses incurred.
- 7.3. These grants are expected to adequately cover the employment costs of any additional staff.

8. Consultation

- 8.1. Consultation is not relevant as the use of the grants is either to provide statutory functions which the Council has a duty to undertake or their use is set out by government in the notification issued with the grant or a Memorandum of Understanding.
- 8.2. Where appropriate discussions are held with MHCLG and relevant partners such as Stonepillow prior to submitting a bid for grant.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1. The impact of the proposal will benefit residents of the district, potential rough sleepers and ex-offenders leaving prison. Additional resources will enable us to provide an effective response to the additional statutory and non- statutory responsibilities of the Council and will help us to deliver an efficient service.

10. Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following?		
	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder The additional services will have a positive impact by supporting rough sleepers and ex-offenders into settled accommodation.	Yes	
Climate Change and Biodiversity.		No
Human Rights and Equality Impact - A proportion of customers have protected characteristics and are therefore owed a duty under the Equalities Act 2010. This proposal will aid the Council to provide adequate services for those protected under the Act.	Yes	
Safeguarding and Early Help -The additional services will have a positive impact by preventing homelessness and supporting rough sleepers & ex-offenders into accommodation.	Yes	
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR		No
Health and Wellbeing – The additional services will have a positive impact by sprinting homelessness and supporting rough sleepers & ex-offenders into accommodation.	Yes	
Other (please specify)		

11. Appendices

None

12. Background Papers

None