



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Policy and Resources Committee – 7 November 2011

Homelessness Grant 2011/12

Purpose of report

This report seeks member approval for the release of funds from the Homelessness Grant 2011/12, following receipt of an application for a specific project.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1: Homelessness Grant 2011/12 Criteria

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Homelessness Grant is a grant paid to the council annually by Communities and Local Government (CLG) for use in the prevention and reduction of homelessness. The grant for East Northamptonshire for 2011/12 is £50,000.
- 1.2 At its meeting on the 3 February 2011, the Finance Working Party recommended the allocation of the Homelessness Grant 2011/12 to the Homelessness Budget. This was approved by the this committee on 17 January 2011 (minute 388).
- 1.3 At the meeting on 4 July 2011, this committee agreed (minute 81) that £15,000 of the funding should be allocated as external grants, in line with the Criteria attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 An application for funding has been received which Members are invited to consider.

2.0 Application for Funding

- 2.1 An application for funding has been received from Rockingham Forest Housing Association (RFHA) for £5000. The full application is available to view on request from the officer detailed at the bottom of this report. It has not been appended to this report as it contains potentially sensitive financial information.
- 2.2 Funding is requested to extend the current Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme known as KeySolutions to provide a further 4 homes.
- 2.3 KeySolutions is a pilot scheme that was launched in September 2009 . It works on the principle that RFHA enter into a lease for a period of 3 to 5 years with owners of empty private rented properties in return for a guaranteed rental figure. RFHA manage the property and take care of the day to day repairs and maintenance and ENC nominate applicants to the properties. To date six family homes have been provided through the scheme.
- 2.4 The purpose of the scheme is to provide a private sector housing option alongside the standard range of initiatives available for preventing homelessness for families in East Northamptonshire.
- 2.5 There are many people who apply for re-housing because they are threatened with homelessness through no fault of their own, and this includes private sector tenants who are served notice by their landlord and must vacate the property.
- 2.6 Even when these applicants have been given a high priority, we are not always able to assist them, as they may require accommodation in areas where we do not have an

adequate supply of properties. Applicants are then faced with either finding their own property in the private sector - which is likely to only be available on a short term basis - or consider moving to another part of the district.

- 2.7 KeySolutions enables families to take on accommodation which offers security for a three to five year period thus allowing the family to plan their next housing move in a more considered way.
- 2.8 When the pilot scheme was introduced RFHA were given a start up grant of £7,500 from the 2008/09 Homelessness Grant, which was used to cover the cost of training, software programming, advertising, printing leaflets etc.
- 2.9 This funding was intended to cover the six original pilot properties, which have now been leased and occupied. This additional funding request is to cover the costs for a further 4 properties thus bringing the portfolio of privately leased properties to ten. These four properties will be available for a period of up to five years.
- 2.10 RFHA is operating the KeySolutions service on a non profit making basis. This application is to assist with the cost of advertising for property owners and the staff costs associated with running the project.
- 2.11 Officers have assessed the application and are of the opinion that it fully meets the Grant Criteria as set out in Appendix 1. KeySolutions is the type of service that Local Authorities are expected to be providing to prevent homelessness, and it is the delivery of initiatives such as this that have led to Communities and Local Government increasing the grant to ENC for 2011/12.

3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 3.1 There are no equality and diversity implications, as the services seeking funding are open to all.

4.0 Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation below.

5.0 Risk Management

- 5.1 There are no risks associated with the recommendation below.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are sufficient funds available in the Homelessness Budget for 2011/12.

7.0 Corporate Outcomes

- 7.1 Allocation of the Homelessness Grant 2011/12 contributes to the following corporate outcomes:
- A Good Quality of Life – Healthy
 - Good Value for Money
 - Effective Partnership Working

8.0 Resource Requirements

- 8.1 There are no additional resource requirements associated with the recommendation below.

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to approve the release of funds from the Homelessness Grant 2011/12, for the project set out at section 2 above.

(Reason: to enable officers to respond to the application for funding and administer the Homelessness Grant 2011/12.)

Legal	Power: Homelessness Act 2002				
	Other considerations: Housing Act 1996				
Background Papers: None					
Person Originating Report: Aine Cooper , Housing Enabling Officer acooper@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk 01832742038					
Date: 10 October 2011					
CFO		MO		CX	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)

East Northamptonshire Council Homelessness Grant 2011/12

Application Criteria

Homelessness Grant

The Council will receive a grant during 2011/12 from the Government; which should be spent on projects and activities which seek to prevent homelessness in East Northamptonshire. A proportion of this money will be allocated as small grants to external organisations, to support their work in this area.

This funding is only available until the end of March 2012, and applications will be accepted up until the end of February 2012. The maximum amount for any one application has been set at £5000.

Assessment Criteria

Projects / activities must:

- Benefit the residents of East Northamptonshire
- Come from a properly constituted group
- Directly contribute towards the prevention or reduction of homelessness

Funding will not be approved for projects / activities which have already been completed.

Applications will be assessed by the Council's Housing Strategy Manager; and a recommendation made to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee who will make the final decision.

Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply:

- Grants will be paid retrospectively
- The award of a grant is subject to the applicant meeting all statutory obligations; such as building consent and regulations, fire safety regulations, preservation orders and licensing. This includes obtaining Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks for all volunteers and workers dealing with vulnerable individuals and also complying with child protection procedures. A grant award does not give permission to proceed with any work without the correct statutory authorisation.
- Applications must be for a non profit making purpose.