



Policy and Resources Committee – 12 March 2012

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 two applications for funding.

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 Policy and Resources Committee on 14 February 2011 (minute 388).
- 1.3 At the meeting on the 4 July 2011, Policy and Resources 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 Since then £10,000 has been allocated to two projects:
 - East Northants Community Service (the night shelter)
 - Private Sector Leasing (Rockingham Forest)
- 1.5 Following the allocation of funding to these projects, there is now £5,000 remaining to be allocated as an external grant.
- 1.6 Two applications for this funding have been received, which Members are invited to consider.

2.0 East Northants Community Services

- 2.1 An application for funding has been received from East Northants Community Services (ENCS) for £4,080. 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 The application seeks funding for the provision of the following support services:
 - The provision of autism / aspergers technical support for clients and their families in a specialist unit. This would be run in conjunction with the specialist support provider "Alderwood Lifelong Learning", to a maximum of 3 hours per week.
 - To provide specialist support to tenants at the ENCS residential 'Stepping Stones I' project (flats) and residents at the Sanctuary project (night shelter). This would comprise a series of sessions focussing on basic Life skills and Wellbeing which would be run in conjunction with Neighbourhood Learning, Northamptonshire.

- 2.3 Both of these services would be in addition to the services that ENCS currently offer, and they state that they will 'significantly enhance the holistic nature of the moving on care that they aim to give to all of their clients'.
- 2.4 The funding would cover the following costs:
- Specialist Support from Alderwood Lifelong Learning (3hrs per week x £10 x 52 weeks) 1,560
 - Hire of room: 10 weeks x £20 x 4 courses 800
 - Specialist training provision: 10 weeks x £25 x 4 courses 1,000
 - Materials: 10 weeks x £10 x 4 courses 400
 - Refreshments: 10 weeks x £8 x 4 courses 320
- 2.5 Officers are of the view that, whilst this proposed support and training may prove to be very beneficial to their clients, the services have a somewhat tenuous link with the eligibility criteria.
- 2.6 It could be argued that the second objective set out at 2.2 above would prevent homelessness, through providing life skills training which would enable those clients to be able to sustain future tenancies. The first objective however, is very specialised technical support which does not appear to be specifically centred around preventing homelessness. Officers are of the view that this type of very specialist support is best provided by the County Council.
- 2.7 If Members were minded to fund the second objective of the project, this would require £2,000 to be allocated.

3.0 Bromford Support

- 3.1 An application for funding has been received from Bromford Support for £4,500. 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.
- 3.2 Bromford is a housing and support organisation, currently providing housing related floating support across the district, and a weekly drop-in support 'surgery' in Rushden.
- 3.3 Housing related support is support provided to people, usually within their own homes, primarily to enable them to maintain their tenancies or home ownership. It can range from budgeting and debt advice, to help with completing forms and help with independent living.
- 3.4 Bromford have for a number of years operated a support service, funded by the County Council, delivering free support to people at home. However, they have found that there is a very high demand for the service, which has led to a long waiting list. In the meantime the situations of those households waiting could be deteriorating, which can lead to them becoming homeless.
- 3.5 In recognition of this, Bromford extended their service in 2011, to provide a twice weekly drop-in facility in Rushden, which has enabled households on their waiting list or those just looking for some short term advice to access a service. Appointments are also available. This service has been very successful as during the last 6 months of 2011 there were 54 drop-in clients who received support, directly relating to homelessness prevention.
- 3.6 This grant is sought to enable a similar drop-in support service for the north of the district. Bromford have established, through looking at the take-up of their current services, that there is a significant need for such a service.

3.7 A significant proportion of individuals who are referred to Bromford's floating support service have a level of need that can be met through the provision of drop-ins alone, and do not actually need the full, planned support service. As there is currently a waiting list for the floating support service, those people in northern East Northants who are referred have two choices:

1) wait until they have reached the top of the waiting list – this could be many weeks, or possibly months;

2) access the drop-in service in Rushden which would most likely require using public transport – which potentially could have both cost and accessibility problems.

3.8 The funding would cover the following costs:

- Two one hour sessions per week over a 12 month period.
- 4.5 hours of support worker time per week; comprising 2 hours of drop in service over 2 venues per week and 2.5 hours setting up, preparation and travel time per week.
- 1 Hour Service Manager time per week to oversee the project.
- Up to 3,200 miles travel, as the service will be provided in the northern part of East Northants.

3.9 The new drop-in service would be provided from various community locations, on a rota, covering the northern section of East Northants. It is proposed that there will be agreements in place with a wide selection of venues so that the service can be very adaptable, using whichever locations are needed to meet the greatest local need.

3.10 Registered Providers (housing associations) do currently provide some very basic support for their tenants. However, this would be much more specialised and focussed on those who need it.

3.11 Officers have assessed the application against the grant criteria attached at appendix 1, and feel that it fully meets the criteria. The service would directly prevent homelessness, by helping people to maintain their tenancies and mortgages. Officers are also of the view that this application presents very good value for money, as it will provide a new service for twelve months for less than £5,000.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 There are potential equality and diversity implications associated with the first application from ENCS, and in particular the element relating to autism and aspergers clients.

4.2 Officers have carefully considered the potential disadvantage to this client group that could arise should funding not be allocated to this element of the application.

4.3 The affected individuals would still be able to access housing related support via the second element of the project should it be funded. In addition, officers would work with the applicants to explore other more appropriate funding sources.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation below.

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 There are no risks associated with the recommendation below.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 In total, there is currently £11,000 remaining in the Homelessness Budget 2011/12.
- 7.2 There is £5,000 remaining in the external grants 'element' of the budget, and therefore only enough to allocate funding to one of the projects set out above.
- 7.3 There is a further £6,000 available in the wider budget and therefore enough to fund both projects. However this would result in a higher expenditure on external grants at the end of the year than originally approved.

8.0 Corporate Outcomes

- 8.1 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

9.0 Resource Requirements

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

10.0 Recommendation

- 10.1 The Committee is recommended to

- (1) Approve the release of £4,500 from the Homelessness Grant 2011/12, for the project set out at section 3 above.
- (2) Consider the release of £2,000 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:					
Person Originating Report:	Cat Hartley , Housing Strategy Manager chartley@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk 01832742078				
Date: 8 February 2012					
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.