



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Policy and Resources Committee – 2 July 2012

Homelessness Grant – Request for Release of Funds

Purpose of report

This report seeks member approval for the release of funds from the Homelessness Grant 2012/13, for the Sanctuary Project.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Homelessness Grant is a grant paid to the council annually by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) for use in the prevention and reduction of homelessness. The grant for East Northamptonshire for 2012/13 is £50,000.
- 1.2 At the meeting held on 2 April 2012, this Committee resolved to administer the grant in the following way for 2012/13:
 1. That the release of £5,000 from the Homelessness Grant 2012/13, for the Rent Advance Scheme be approved.
 2. That the split of £15,000/£30,000 for specific grants and contingency for specific purposes respectively be also applied in 2012/13 but in the event of funds remaining in the homelessness grant budget at the end of the financial year, the money be used for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) where it would prevent homelessness.
- 1.3 A request for funding for £5,000 from the 'contingency' element has been received for the Sanctuary Project, which Members are invited to consider.

2.0 Sanctuary Project.

- 2.1 The Sanctuary Project enables victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, through the fitting of additional security equipment. This assists in preventing perpetrators from gaining access to properties whilst the police are on their way.
- 2.2 If necessary, this can involve the creation of a 'panic room' – a safe and secure area within a property that can be used in case of an emergency; again whilst awaiting the arrival of the Police.
- 2.3 The Sanctuary Project enables adaptations to be tailored to the specific needs of the victim – what may be the right measure for one person may not be appropriate for another.
- 2.4 The project directly contributes towards preventing homelessness, as it means that victims do not have to leave their homes.
- 2.5 In 2011/12 11 high risk victims received additional security measures. Security measures fitted ranged from 10 window shock alarms at a cost of £35 to a 'panic room' at a cost of £1,318.
- 2.6 Funding has been provided to the Sanctuary Project from the Homelessness Grant for the last 5 years, with each year the allocation being £5,000. An allocation of funding for 2012/13 is required to enable the service to continue.
- 2.7 Despite increases in labour and materials costs, officers have managed to maintain

the availability of the Sanctuary Project without an increase in the funds requested. Members are asked to note that this may not be possible if demand dramatically increases or a number of 'panic rooms' are required.

3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

3.1 The provision of funding for this project will have a positive impact on women, as they are the largest affected group in terms of domestic violence. The criteria for awarding the Homelessness Grant has been subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment Screening, which has concluded that there are no perceived negative impacts of the criteria.

4.0 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications.

5.0 Risk Management

5.1 The Sanctuary Project reduces the risk of vulnerable people being exposed to domestic violence and/or becoming homeless.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are sufficient funds available in the Homelessness Grant 2012/13.

7.0 Corporate Outcomes

7.1 Allocation of the Homelessness Grant 2012/13 contributes to the following corporate outcomes:

- Good quality of life – Safe and Healthy
- Good Value for Money
- Effective Partnership Working
- Strong Community Leadership

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 of £5,000 from the Homelessness Grant 2012/13 for the Sanctuary Project.

(Reason: to assist with the continued delivery of the Sanctuary Project to protect people at risk of domestic violence)

Legal	Power: Homelessness Act 2002	
	Other considerations: Housing Act 1996	
Background Papers:		
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Date: 28 May 2012		
CFO	MO	CX