



Policy and Resources Committee – 5 November 2012

Homelessness Grant 2012/13 - Severe Weather Emergency Protocol

Purpose of report

This report seeks member approval for the release of funds from the Homelessness Grant 2012/13, for a specific project.

Attachment(s) : None

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 2012/13 is £50,000.
- 1.2 At the meeting on 2 April 2012, Policy and Resources Committee agreed (minute 459) that £15,000 of the funding should be allocated as external grants with the remainder for contingency / specific projects. This report relates to funds allocated for specific projects.
- 1.3 Although the homelessness grant is not ring-fenced, CLG have always strongly encouraged local authorities to use it to prevent and respond to homelessness in their area.

2.0 Application for Funding

- 2.1 Funding is requested from this grant allocation to provide a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) facility for the district over the winter period.
- 2.2 Every local authority is required to have a SWEP that is activated when the temperature is forecast to drop to zero degrees (or below) for three consecutive nights. The protocol is implemented on the first night of the forecast and applies to all local authorities, even those where rough sleepers may not usually be an issue.
- 2.3 Having the protocol ensures that the local authority can provide suitable accommodation quickly to prevent harm and death due to severe weather conditions.
- 2.4 East Northamptonshire Community Services (ENCS) has agreed to make available a room in the Full Gospel Church building that would be able to accommodate up to 5 people if required. This arrangement would only be over the winter period and only operational when either the Housing Strategy Manager or the Housing Services Officer gives authorisation. Officers will be using the Met office forecast in order to determine whether the SWEP is activated.
- 2.5 This arrangement was in place last year and worked very well. It is significantly cheaper than using hotel accommodation.
- 2.6 ENCS has agreed to provide a warm meal in the evening and a warm bed for the night. Staff operating the facility will engage with the clients while they are there to try and help them seek assistance to end their rough sleeping. The SWEP is not a permanent service and is a completely different project to the 4 bed Night Shelter.

2.7 The SWEP will be closed during the winter period if the temperature rises above Zero degrees Celsius at night. As a result it maybe that the SWEP is open and closed several times in the winter period. Last year the SWEP was used for a total period of 38 Nights.

2.8 ENCS has agreed to provide a SWEP for a nightly charge of £15 per client. As a result based upon last year's usage it is estimated that £2,000 would be a sufficient fund to provide the facility. Usage for 2012/13 will depend on the severity of the weather. It is proposed that ENCS will provide regular monitoring of clients using the SWEP and will invoice the local authority for clients that have used it. Any unused funds will remain in the budget.

3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

3.1 There are no equality and diversity implications, as the SWEP will be 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 finds available in the Homelessness Budget for 2012/13.

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.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 The Committee is recommended to approve the release of funds from the Homelessness Grant 2012/13, up to a maximum of £2,000, for the project set out at section 2.1 above.

(Reason: to enable officers to deliver a SWEP and administer the Homelessness Grant 2012/13.)

Legal	Power: Homelessness Act 2002				
	Other considerations: Housing Act 1996				
Background Papers:					
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Date: 9 October 2011					
CFO		MO		CX	