



Policy and Resources Committee – 11 February 2013

Homelessness Grant 2012/13

Purpose of report

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

Attachment(s): Appendix 1 – Work Programme

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 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.
- 1.3 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. It was also agreed that any funds not allocated at the end of the year should be transferred to the Disabled Facilities Grant budget.
- 1.4 During 2012/13 the funding has been allocated, via this Committee, to the following projects:

Project	External Grant	Specific Projects
Rushden Sanctuary (night shelter)	5,000	
Rent Advance Scheme		5,000
Private Sector Leasing Funding		1,867
Severe Weather Protocol		2,000
Sanctuary Project		5,000
Total	5,000	13,867
Remaining	10,000	21,133

- 1.5 The first project listed above, the night shelter, is the only external application for funding that we have received. Therefore £10,000 remains available from the proportion of the grant earmarked for external grants/projects.
- 1.6 Officers have already transferred £10,000 from the remaining 'contingency element' of the grant to the Disabled Facilities Grant budget, in recognition of Members wishes.

2.0 Request for Funding

- 2.1 Funding is requested from this grant allocation to contribute towards the continued operation of the Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Co-ordinator.
- 2.2 This post, hosted by the Borough Council of Wellingborough on behalf of all local authorities in the County, has been in place since 2009.

- 2.3 Prior to 2012, the post was joint funded by local authorities and the Regional Housing Board (which has since ceased to exist). Funding for 15 months, commencing in January 2012 and due to end in April 2013, was secured from the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership; via the Housing Policy Development and Implementation Fund.
- 2.4 The funding is due to run out during April 2013, and therefore local authorities in the county have been working to identify funding sources. Unfortunately there are no funds available again from the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, and so currently four out of the seven local authorities in the county have already agreed to put a small amount of funding each into the project to enable it to continue. The remaining three authorities, including ENC are currently working to identify possible funding, hence this report.
- 2.5 The amount committed by these authorities is £6,000; and it is envisaged that this will keep the post going for another 12 months.
- 2.6 The post has been extremely valuable in the delivery of a number of key strategic housing objectives over the last 3 years. The key areas of work are set out below:
- Chairing and co-ordination of a number of key important forums including the Social Landlords Housing Management Forum, and Development Forum.
 - Regular visits to stock holding Registered Providers, to discuss key issues and monitor performance.
 - Chairing and co-ordination of the county Homelessness Operational Group.
 - Production of key homelessness protocols including the 'No Second Night Out' project, and the pre-eviction protocol.
 - Co-ordination of the project group for production of the North Northants Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and housing needs toolkit.

This is only a flavour of the work undertaken, and the full work programme is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

- 2.7 The work of the post holder has been particularly valuable to East Northamptonshire, due to the fact that the council has a very small strategic housing team; comprising of only 2.3 full time equivalent members of staff. For example, we would not have the time to meet regularly with all of our 22 stock holding Registered Providers, and therefore the forums and visits set out above are very important. Regular communication and liaison ensures that we can discuss key issues such as anti-social behaviour and housing management.
- 2.8 Officers have carefully considered whether this post contributes to the prevention and reduction of homelessness; and are of the view that it does due to the considerable number of homelessness projects that are undertaken.

3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 3.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.

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 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, of £6,000, for the project set out at section 2 above.

(Reason: to enable officers to administer the Homelessness Grant 2012/13.)

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 , 01832 742078					
Date: 17 January 2013					
CFO		MO		CX	

Appendix 1 – Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Co-ordinator Work Programme

Area of Work	Tasks
Northamptonshire Social Landlords Housing Development Forum	Chairing and co-ordination of the group including all agendas, minutes, feedback.
Northamptonshire Social Landlords Housing Management Forum	Chairing and co-ordination of the group including all agendas, minutes, feedback.
County Housing Strategy Officers Group	Chairing and co-ordination of the group including all agendas, minutes, feedback.
Housing Affordability Toolkit and Housing Needs Assessment Toolkit.	Co-ordination of project which led to production of the toolkits
Meetings with Registered Providers	Meeting RPs to discuss issues common to authorities across the County
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	Co-ordination of the project
County Homelessness Operational Group	<p>Co-ordination of emergency plan involving RPs for those made homeless by major incidents e.g. flooding in an area</p> <p>Chairing and co-ordination of the group</p> <p>Work on access protocols for Oasis House and No Second Night Out (facilities for homeless in county)</p> <p>Pre-eviction protocol</p> <p>Production of County homeless reports</p>
GTAA assessments across Northamptonshire	Co-ordination of project to undertake GTAA; and ongoing monitoring of progress in meeting requirements
Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group	County representative on this East Midlands Councils group
Landlords Forum	Currently working to establish a countywide private sector landlord forum

Joint Housing and Planning Meeting	Co-ordination of the group, agendas and minutes
HCA Quarterly Forum	Regular liaison with Homes & Communities Agency – and delivery of information via single, regular events to relevant forums rather than via series of individual meetings at each Local Authority
Low-cost home ownership data reporting for all four Authorities in conjunction with HomeBuy Agent.	Producing reports and discussing with Homebuy agent