



## Policy and Resources Committee - 7 June 2010

### Homelessness Grant 2010/11

#### Summary

This report seeks Member approval for the proposed arrangements for the administration of the Homelessness Grant 2010/11.

#### Attachment(s)

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report puts forward a proposal for how the 2010/11 Homelessness Grant should be administered.

#### 2.0 Background

2.1 The Homelessness Grant is a grant paid to the Council annually by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for use in the prevention and reduction of homelessness. In 2010/11 the Council will receive a grant of £30,000.

2.2 The grant has been paid to all Councils since 2003. It has never been a ring-fenced grant, but in 2004 it was incorporated into the Homelessness Budget where it has been ever since. The amounts received have generally increased, and for the last two years the Council received £30,000 per year. Each year officers have sought to spend the grant on worthwhile projects, which contribute to tackling homelessness whilst also delivering value for money.

2.3 A report was taken to Policy and Resources Committee on 12 October 2009, seeking Member approval to continue with these arrangements (minute 181 refers). At the meeting Members agreed:

- That the Housing Strategy Manager, and Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning Services, be authorised to administer the annual DCLG Homelessness Grant in 2009/10.
- That in future years, the approach to be adopted be based on similar principles to those which now apply to grants for voluntary organisations, taking into account any ring-fencing and the administrative burden on organisations seeking grants below £3,000.

#### 3.0 Arrangements for 2010/11

3.1 As we are now in 2010, it is necessary to take forward confirmed arrangements for expenditure this year taking into account what was agreed on 12 October 2009.

3.2 Officers have looked into how the voluntary sector grants are administered and, whilst the Homelessness Grant could be distributed in the same way, it is felt that there are a number of disadvantages to this. These are:

- The grant is one which the Council receives for its own use, rather than a grant which the Council gives out.
- Distributing all of the money via grants restricts what the Council is able to use

the money for. For example, it would not be possible to use it to fund printing of homelessness leaflets, events or very small one-off costs.

- The Council might not get any applications for grant funding from external bodies, and this could result in the grant not being utilised effectively.

3.3 Consideration has been given to a number of options:

1. Distribute all of the money in the form of grants, in the same way as the voluntary sector grants.
2. Distribute some of the money as grants and retain a proportion for officers to utilise as they see appropriate to ensure maximum flexibility.
3. Seek delegation to utilise the money on the basis of officer recommendation subject to approval from the Lead Member for Planning Services and the Head of Planning Services.
4. Seek delegation to utilise the money as officers feel appropriate.

3.4 After considering all of the options above, officers feel that option 3 represents the best way forward. This is because it enables maximum flexibility (the money could still be used to award grants where appropriate and for one-off costs) whilst ensuring that Member approval is sought when money needs to be released.

3.5 Members recently approved a very similar arrangement in respect of the Homelessness Prevention Fund (Policy and Resources Committee 9 November 2009, minute 229 refers).

#### 4.0 Recommendation

4.1 Members are recommended to delegate authority to the Housing Strategy Manager to utilise the Homelessness Grant 2010/11 for the prevention of homelessness, subject to approval from the Head of Planning Services and the Lead Member for Planning Services.

<b>Implications:</b>		
<b>Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy</b>		
Good Quality of Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good Reputation <input type="checkbox"/>
Good Value for Money	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	High Quality Service Delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective Partnership Working	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong Community Leadership <input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge of our Customers and Communities <input type="checkbox"/>
Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other:</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Financial</b>	There are no financial implications at this stage <input type="checkbox"/>	
	There will be financial implications – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/>	
	There is provision within existing budget Homelessness Grant 2010/11 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Decisions may have potential for income generation <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk Management</b>	An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference - inherent risk score - <input type="checkbox"/> residual risk score - <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Staff</b>	There are no additional staffing implications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Additional staff will be required – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Equalities and</b>	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Human Rights</b>	There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Legal</b>	Power: Homelessness Act 2002				
	Other considerations:				
<b>Background Papers:</b> Policy and Resources Committee Minutes - 12 October 2009.					
<b>Person Originating Report:</b> Cat Hartley, Housing Strategy Manager, chartley@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk, 01832 742078.					
<b>Date: 7 May 2010</b>					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b>		<b>CX</b>	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 21)