



Policy and Resources Committee - 5 July 2010

Homelessness Grant 2010/11

Summary

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

Attachment(s)

'Housing Services in East Northamptonshire' Z Card Guide - to be circulated at the meeting.
Appendix 1 - Criteria for External Grants

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides more detailed proposals for how the Homelessness Grant 2010/11 should be administered.

2.0 Background

2.1 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. For 2010/11, the Council has received a grant of £30,000.

2.2 A report was taken to the last meeting of the Committee on 7 June 2010, seeking Member approval for proposed administration arrangements. The following was agreed (minute 37 refers):

'That recommendations for grants from the Homeless Grant 2010/11 be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval and that, should a grant be needed urgently, the Council's Urgency Procedure be used.'

2.3 This report seeks Member approval to draw down funds from the grant within the next few weeks for two specific projects; and for further detailed proposals on expenditure of the remaining money.

3.0 Proposed Projects

3.1 The first of these projects is the 'Housing Services in East Northamptonshire' Z Card guide. This pocket sized guide to all housing services in the District was designed by the Housing Services Officer, and was first produced in December 2008.

3.2 Since then it has proven very popular with external organisations and the public; and nearly 9,000 in total have been distributed. Officers feel, taking into account feedback received, that the guide is a valuable resource and that it should be continued.

3.3 The guides cannot be reprinted in-house, due to a copyright on the Z Card format. The cost of a print run is approximately £2,600 for 5,000 copies; and approval is requested for the draw down of funds from the grant for this purpose.

3.4 The second of the projects is the North Northamptonshire Housing Co-ordinator (NNHC). This post, hosted by the Borough Council of Wellingborough, was set up in April 2008 as a joint initiative between the four authorities.

3.5 The post has been jointly funded by the four authorities and the East Midlands

Regional Assembly (now known as East Midlands Councils) for the last two years. It has been instrumental in achieving a number of outcomes; and the following particularly relating to homelessness prevention:

- Co-ordinating Sub-Regional Forums – such as the County Operational Homelessness Group; which enables Local Authorities across the whole county to develop and strengthen partnership working, allowing exchange of working practices and knowledge plus discussions on current homeless trends through figures collated quarterly.
- Co-ordination and chairing of the North Northamptonshire Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Management Group. This group would not exist without the NNHC in post, due to the resources required to run it. It is a key partnership which seeks to raise housing management standards for tenants. A significant part of this involves establishing support services to prevent tenants from becoming homeless through eviction.
- Contribution to the Northamptonshire sub-regional Homelessness Group on behalf of the North Northamptonshire local authorities. One key outcome from this group has been the development of a Northamptonshire RSL homelessness prevention protocol.
- Co-ordination of a North Northamptonshire Housing and Homelessness Strategy on behalf of the four authorities. Work is due to start soon on the drafting of this new strategy; which will ensure that there is a partnership approach to tackling homelessness.
- Involvement in the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) Single Conversation process. The Co-ordinator has been undertaking work on behalf of the North Northamptonshire authorities; pulling together a set of priorities for HCA funding. This will ultimately help to attract funding for new affordable homes which is a key part of homelessness prevention.

3.6 Funding is required to continue the post. £25,000 has been secured from East Midlands Councils; which will enable the post to continue until June 2011 if match funding from Local Authorities is forthcoming. The funding required is £5000 from each local authority in North Northamptonshire, and this has been agreed by the other three authorities.

3.7 Officers would therefore like to propose that £5,000 of the Homelessness Grant 2010/11 is utilised to continue this post until June 2011.

4.0 Future Expenditure

4.1 Should Members be minded to approve expenditure on the two projects set out above; this would leave £22,400 of the Homelessness Grant remaining.

4.2 Further reports will be brought to this Committee, at appropriate intervals, to request approval for expenditure.

4.3 It is proposed that the majority of the remaining money be spent on awarding grants for specific projects to external organisations; and a small contingency be held for any unforeseen miscellaneous items that may require funding.

4.4 Examples of projects funded in previous years include the Rushden Night Shelter, a weekly substance misuse clinic in Rushden, and an additional money advice service in Rushden for households facing repossession.

4.5 Officers would like to propose that £5,400 be held as a contingency, and £17,000 be awarded as grants. However, the exact split is open to discussion.

4.6 Proposals for expenditure from the contingency would still be brought back to this Committee for approval.

5.0 Process for Awarding Grants

5.1 Information relating to the availability of the grant, and the process for applying, will be placed upon the Council's website. This will be accompanied by an application form, and criteria.

5.2 Draft criteria are attached for Members' consideration.

5.3 Upon receipt of an application for grant; a report will be brought back to this Committee with a recommendation by Officers. Applications will be assessed against the criteria, and on a first come first served basis.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Approve expenditure from the Homelessness Grant 2010/11, on the two projects identified at paragraphs 3.1 and 3.4 in the report.
- 2) Agree the proposed split between expenditure from the remaining Homelessness Grant 2010/11 on a) grants and b) the contingency element; as set out at paragraph 4.4.
- 3) Approve the attached draft criteria (appendix 1) for external grants from the Homelessness Budget 2010/11.

Implications:	
Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy	
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"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial	There are no financial implications at this stage <input type="checkbox"/>
	There will be financial implications – see paragraph 3.3, 3.7, 4.4. <input checked="" 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"/>
Risk Management	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"/>
Staff	There are no additional staffing implications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Additional staff will be required – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/>
Equalities and Human Rights	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	Power: Homelessness Act 2002
	Other considerations:

Background Papers: Policy and Resources Committee Minutes 12 October 2009 Policy and Resources Committee Minutes 7 June 2010				
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Date: 10 June 2010				
CFO		MO		CX

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 21)

East Northamptonshire Council Homelessness Grant 2010/11

Application Criteria

Homelessness Grant

The Council will receive a grant during 2010/11 from the Government; which should be spent on projects and activities which seek to prevent homelessness in East Northamptonshire. The majority 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 2011, and applications will be accepted up until the end of February 2011. 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.