

Homelessness Prevention Grant

Date: 10.03.2022

Report of: Housing Options Manager (Interim)

Report to: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) is an annual grant given by the Government to all Local Authorities to run their homelessness prevention services. The HPG replaces several other grants into one single grant. The allocation for Leeds for 2022/23 is £2,344,705. There is an additional grant of £84,766 specifically to assist with the new burdens imposed on homelessness services by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The total allocation is therefore £2,429,471.¹
- The grant is administered by Leeds Housing Options (as the statutory homelessness service) on behalf of Leeds City Council.
- The grant should be used to deliver services to prevent and relieve homelessness in line with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) Part VII.
- The provision of a high quality and effective housing options service contributes to the council's ambition to be a compassionate city and to improve health and wellbeing.

Recommendations

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment is requested to:

- a) Approve acceptance of the allocated Homelessness Prevention Grant.
- b) Approve the approach to budget allocation set out to be applied to the Homelessness Prevention Grant for future years.
- c) Authorise the 2022/23 budget allocation set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-prevention-grant-2022-to-2023>

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) is an annual grant given by the Government to all Local Authorities to run their homelessness prevention services. The HPG replaces several other grants into one single grant. The allocation for Leeds for 2022/23 is £2,344,705. This is the same as the allocation in 2021/22. There is an additional grant of £84,766 specifically to assist with the new burdens imposed on homelessness services by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The total allocation is therefore £2,429,471.
- 2 The Leeds Housing Options Service is the statutory homelessness service for Leeds. It is the busiest homelessness service in the country as well as being one of the most effective.²
- 3 Previous experience has shown that using the HPG to fund a mixture of staff, prevention fund, temporary accommodation costs, and cross-council projects has resulted in effective service provision and high achievement in line with Government KPIs.
- 4 This report therefore seeks approval for proposed budget allocations and spend for 2022/23, as well as endorsement and approval for the continuation of these budget allocations in future years.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 5 The proposal will enable the effective delivery of a successful housing options service, meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable citizens of Leeds and contributing directly to better health and wellbeing.

Budget Allocation Parameters

- 6 While the local authority has wide discretion as to how it uses these funds – they must be used for activity relating to the prevention and relief of homelessness and the fulfilment of duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). The following allocations fulfil these criteria.

a) *Leeds Housing Options Staffing*

The main cost of running the Housing Options Service is staffing. A proportion of the grant will be used towards staffing costs to ensure that the service is able to meet demand.

b) *Prevention Fund*

The prevention fund is a pot of money that can be used creatively to prevent or relieve homelessness. Housing Advisors have access to this fund to enable them to effect preventions and reliefs that require a financial input. All spending is subject to a 'spend to save' check – ensuring that any prevention fund spend releases a greater saving to the council in another area, usually temporary accommodation costs. The use of the prevention fund has been a key pillar of the successfulness of our prevention approach – with over 88% of cases approaching at the 'threatened with homelessness' stage being successfully prevented – compared the national average of 60%.

c) *Temporary Accommodation Costs*

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

There is a legal obligation for the local authority to ensure an adequate provision of temporary accommodation to meet its statutory duties under s.188(1), s.190(2), s.199(A)(2) and s.200(1). Alongside formal commissioned temporary accommodation, the service needs the flexibility to spot purchase flexible accommodation (such as B&Bs) to meet demand.

d) *Contingency*

A small reserve is necessary to ensure that unforeseen costs can be met.

7 In addition, the Council makes a range of budget allocations in respect of schemes and services designed to assist in the prevention and relief of homelessness as follows:

a) *Street Outreach*

£72k is allocated to Change Grow Live for their Street Outreach Team, the Council's commissioned rough sleeping service. This money is to facilitate extra outreach support/shifts

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

8 No consultation has been carried out in relation to the setting of the HPG budget.

What are the resource implications?

9 The proper allocation of the HPG will ensure that the service is able to run effectively which in turn means that numbers of households placed into temporary accommodation are low. This has a direct impact on the council's financial position as temporary accommodation is expensive and a rise in TA would result in a budget pressure, potentially in the tens of millions.

What are the legal implications?

10 The budget allocations in this report will enable the Council to meet its statutory duties arising from Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

11 While the local authority has wide discretion as to how it uses these funds – they must be used for activity relating to the prevention and relief of homelessness and the fulfilment of duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). The allocations in this report fulfil these criteria.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

12 The proposals set out in this report will enable the Council to fulfil its legal duties relating to the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) Part VII. The Housing Options Service has significant experience in delivering a homelessness service and will ensure that the budget is effectively managed and that key outcomes are achieved.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

13 The proposal will enable the effective delivery of a successful housing options service, meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable citizens of Leeds and contributing directly to better health and wellbeing.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

14 No other applicable options.

How will success be measured?

- 15 The HPG will be monitored closely to ensure budget provision meets service demand and all proposed spend is in line with the service objectives.
- 16 The service measures its success by low numbers in temporary accommodation, high rates of successful prevention and a higher rate of initial assessment as prevention as opposed to relief.

What is the timetable for implementation?

17 To be actioned in the relevant financial year.

Appendices

18 Appendix 1 – HPG allocations 2022/23.

Background papers

19 None.

Appendix 1 – Allocation of Budget for 2022/23

Set out funding with links

The break down allocation of budget for year 2022/23 is as follows:

Breakdown	Budget	Notes
Base Staffing	808,026	Based on 22-23 staffing costs
Out of Hours Service at Crypt	100,000	Initially Pilot of £25k
CGL Outreach Support	72,000	<i>Previously classed as substance misuse</i>
A&H Commissioning - emergency accommodation	350,000	
A&H Commissioning – Housing First worker Basis	10,000	
Private Sector Temp Accom	103,000	
Homeless Prevention Fund	550,000	
Homelessness in Hotels – previously linked to COVID	250,000	
Contingency	101,680	
Total	2,344,706	
DA/Refugees - move on from Ladybeck	84,766	