

OFFICER DECISION REPORT FORM

(NB. all decisions should comply with Article 13.2 of the constitution)

1. Decision made

To allocate a total of £241,941 currently unallocated MHCLG homelessness prevention funding as follows:

1. £166,941 to Cheltenham Borough Homes' Housing Options Service for the period 2021/22;
2. £49,000 towards the costs of Cheltenham Borough Council's Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer post for a further 2 years from April 2021;
3. £26,000 to support the provision of intensive housing support services for rough sleepers with complex needs living in independent housing, for a period of 12 months from April 2021.

2. Identity of the Decision Maker

Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner – Housing Services

3. Date of Decision

January 2021

4. Reasons for Decision

1. Background

CBC currently holds £329k funding from MHCLG which is ring-fenced for activities that will support the reduction of homelessness.

A funding 'buffer' has been purposely created as homelessness prevention funding from MHCLG (the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government) has varied considerably in recent years, and remains unpredictable. This can be shown by the following funding allocations to CBC of £96,463, £252,577, £435,171 and c.£360k for each of the years from 2018/19 to 2021/22 respectively.

Given that funding announcements for the following financial year are usually made at the end of December/early January in the current financial year, it is prudent to continue to retain a buffer in order to manage in a more timely manner any consequences arising from possible future reductions in homelessness prevention funding by MHCLG. We will of course keep this position under review should future MHCLG homelessness prevention funding levels begin to stabilise.

2. Reasons for decision

2.1. Allocation of £166,941 to Cheltenham Borough Homes Housing Options Service for the period 2021/22

This funding will enable the continuation of homelessness prevention services previously approved by Cabinet in their decisions dated 12th February 2019 and 9th June 2020. Links to these reports are provided below:

https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s27874/2019_02_12_CAB_Flexible%20Homelessness%20Support%20Grant.pdf

https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s32480/2020_06_09_CAB_Allocation%20of%20Homelessness%20Prevention%20Funding_report.pdf

2.2. Allocation of £49,000 towards the costs of CBC's Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer post for a further 2 years from April 2021

This post was originally created in April 2019, and part-funded through a combination of homelessness prevention funding and HRA finance. It is intended that a similar arrangement continues so that the post can be remain available without any impact on the General Fund. This post will ensure there continues to remain greater capacity within CBC to focus on its strategic housing functions, which in turn will support our aims to reduce homelessness.

2.3. Allocation of £26,000 to support the delivery of intensive housing support services for rough sleepers with complex needs living in independent housing, for a period of 12 months from April 2021

This funding will be part of a county-wide contribution (made up of neighbouring local housing authorities and the county council) to support the commissioning of intensive housing support services for rough sleepers who have been placed in independent housing, and who have complex needs. Its purpose is to increase the range of housing options that can be made available to rough sleepers. It will therefore include, for instance, intensive housing support provision within the 6 properties that CBC is making available via Cheltenham Borough Homes for entrenched rough sleepers, thereby maximising the opportunities for these tenancies to remain successful.

3. Future funding allocations

At the time of making this decision, MHCLG had recently announced that 2021/22 homelessness prevention funding allocation for CBC will be c. £360k. A further decision is therefore likely to be made during 2021 to confirm how this additional funding will be allocated.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

None

6. Background documents

Cabinet reports dated 12th February 2019 and 9th June 2020.

7. Any Consultation undertaken

Consultation has been taken with Peter Jeffries, Cabinet Member – Housing & Homelessness, and Paul Jones, Executive Director – Finance & Assets

8. Results of consultation (where undertaken)

TBC.

9. Any Conflict of Interest declared by an Executive Member who is consulted on the decision

None

10. Dispensation

Was a dispensation given by the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) to Cabinet Members to participate in consultation on officer (or Cabinet Member) executive decisions where they have a conflict of interest in respect of any declaration of interest listed at 9 ?

Date of dispensation Yes N/A

11. Supporting Report

Final report attached ? Yes No
Appendix 1 provides a summary breakdown of homelessness prevention funding and expenditure from 2018/19 to date, and includes estimated expenditure for 2020/21 through to 21/22.

12. Confidential or Exempt Information

Confidential or Exempt information ? Yes No
Name of document(s) which are confidential or exempt...