

## Decision by Portfolio Holder



**Report reference: HSG-007-2018/19**

**Date of report: 08-August-2018**

**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Housing – Councillor S Stavrou**

**Author: Roger Wilson (Ext 4419)**

**Democratic Services: J Leither**

**Subject: Additional Government Flexible Homelessness Support Grant Funding 2019/2020**

**Decision:**

(1) That the additional Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding of around £358,000 received from the Government for one further year be used to extend the initiatives in 2019/2020 (set out in Paragraph 1 of the report), which have already been agreed by the Cabinet for 2017/2018 & 2018/2019; and

(2) That the increased amount of Grant funding for 2019/2020 of £45,000 (compared to the previous year) be used in equal amounts for additional rental and damage deposit guarantee and preventing re-possession loans.

**ADVISORY NOTICE:**

*A Portfolio Holder may not take a decision on a matter on which he/she has declared a Pecuniary interest.  
A Portfolio Holder with a non-pecuniary interest must declare that interest when exercising delegated powers.*

I have read and approve/~~do not approve~~ (delete as appropriate) the above decision:

Comments/further action required: None

Signed: Cllr S-A Stavrou

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2018

*Personal interest declared by Portfolio Holder/  
conflict of interest declared by any other  
consulted Cabinet Member:*  
None

*Dispensation granted by Standards Committee:*  
Yes/No or n/a

N/A

**Office use only:**

Call-in period begins: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Expiry of Call-in period: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018

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Democratic Services IMMEDIATELY***

**Reason for decision:**

To agree the use of the additional Government Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding for 2019/2020.

**Options considered and rejected:**

To use the additional Government Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding received for 2019/2020 for different homelessness initiatives.

## **Background Report:**

1. In order to combat the problem of homelessness and to assist in meeting with the requirements of the new duties introduced under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council received a new Flexible Homelessness Support Grant from Government which is required to be ring fenced to be used on homelessness services. The Grant was in the sum of £277,000 in 2017/2018 and £313,000 in 2018/2019. At its meetings on 15 June 2017 (Minute 10 refers) and 12 October 2017 (Minute 54 refers) the Cabinet agreed that the Grant be used on the following initiatives:

- To place up to 9 single homeless applicants (or parent and child applicants) at the Zinc Arts accommodation in Ongar with a budget of £15,000 for the remainder of 2017/2018 and £23,000 for 2018/19 in order to meet the “top-up” funding representing the difference between the agreed rent levels and the relevant Local Housing Allowance. This will assist in reducing the numbers of applicants being placed in costly bed and breakfast accommodation;
- A budget of £60,000 in both 2017/2018 and 2018/19 to fund the Management Fees for Genesis Housing Association (previously met by the DWP Temporary Accommodation funding which was replaced by the new Grant) who have provided private rented accommodation to the Council’s homeless applicants for many years in order to prevent homelessness;
- A budget of £8,000 in 2017/2018 and £8,000 in 2018/2019 to provide landlord incentive payments, in partnership with Genesis Housing Association, of £2,000 per property in order to increase the number of units available, paid on the basis that the property is secured for the Council’s homeless applicant for a minimum period of 2 years;
- The appointment of an additional temporary part-time (18 hours) Deputy Hostel Manager at the Council’s Homeless Persons’ Hostel Norway House at a cost of £13,700 in both 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 in order to assist with the increasing numbers living at the Hostel and the introduction of the modular accommodation at the site for single homeless applicants;
- A budget of £2,500 in 2017/2018 and £8,000 in 2018/2019 to fund an external company to provide specialist services to rough sleepers in the District;
- Following the withdrawal of Housing Related Support funding by Essex County Council at the young parents scheme Railway Meadow, Ongar a budget of £29,000 in both 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 to allow the much needed service to continue;
- An additional £80,000 in 2017/2018 and £80,000 in 2018/2019 for further rental and damage deposit guarantee loans; and
- The re-introduction of the Preventing Repossession Fund with a budget of £40,000 in 2017/2018 and £65,000 in 2018/2019 in order to provide small loans to assist those threatened with homelessness to overcome “income shock” and help them to remain in their current accommodation.

2. The Housing Portfolio Holder is asked to note progress made since April of this year on the use of the Grant which is as follows:

- There are currently 6 single or parent and child applicants being accommodated at the Zinc Arts premises
- Genesis Housing Association is providing 12 units of private rented accommodation to the Council’s homelessness applicants through the leasing direct scheme
- The Council has provided 1 landlord incentive payment through Genesis Housing Association which has increased the number of properties available for homelessness applicants

- The Council has now set up arrangements with Churches Homeless Emergency Support Scheme (CHESS) to provide a specialist service to rough sleepers in the District
- The Council has provided 19 rental and damage deposit guarantees loans
- The Council has provided 1 Preventing Re-possession Fund loan

***Additional Flexible Homelessness Support Grant Funding 2019/2020***

3. The Council has received notification from the Government that the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding will be extended by a further year to 2019/2020 when the Council will receive around £358,000.

4. Due to the success of the Council’s Homelessness Prevention initiatives already agreed by the Cabinet for the first two years funding, which is confirmed by the fact that around 90% of all homelessness presentations have been prevented during this period, the Housing Portfolio Holder is asked to agree that the Grant continues to be used in accordance with the decision of the Cabinet for one further year in 2019/2020 with the increased in funding of £45,000 (compared to the previous year) being used in equal amounts for much needed additional rental and damage deposit guarantee and preventing re-possession loans.

**Resource Implications:**

Additional Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding from Government of around £358,000 received for one further year in 2019/2020

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None

**Background Papers:**

Cabinet reports – use of grant in previous 2 years 15 June 2017 & 12 October 2017

**Risk Management:**

**Equality Analysis**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading. The equality information is provided as an appendix to this report.

**Key Decision (Y/N): Yes**

This Key Decision was published on the Key Decision List on the 18 June 2018.

<p><b>Initialed as original copy by Portfolio Holder:</b></p>
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# Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, i.e. have due regard to:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
  - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
  - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
  - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
  - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
  - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
  - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

## Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: Homelessness – Housing Options

If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: N/A

Title of policy or decision: Additional Flexible Homelessness Support Grant Funding 2019/2020

Officer completing the EqIA: Roger Wilson Tel: Extension 4419 Email: [rwilson@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:rwilson@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

Date of completing the assessment: 18 July 2018

## Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	<p>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? No, an extension of existing arrangements</p>
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):</p> <p>To agree that the additional Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding received from Government for 2019/2020 is used to continue with the initiatives agreed by the Cabinet for the previous two years.</p> <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (i.e. decommissioning or commissioning a service)?</p> <p>As above</p>
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• service users</li> <li>• employees</li> <li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities?</li> </ul> <p>The decision will be of benefit to persons who are threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? No</p>
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? No as the additional grant in from Government and is ring-fenced only for use on preventing homelessness</p>
2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p>Yes, the additional funding will enable the Council to meet with the objectives set out in its Homelessness Strategy</p>

### Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup>

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, e.g. service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	<p>What does the information tell you about those groups identified?</p> <p>In 2017/2018 510 homeless persons presented to the Council with 447 (88%) being prevented. These figures do not take into account the large numbers of residents who seek general Housing Advice and Assistance either through one-to-one interviews or through contact by telephone. The additional funding will enable the Council to continue with its successful work in preventing homelessness. As each case is different generalisations cannot be made about the impact on any group.</p> <p>It should be noted that 123 homelessness applications were made, with the full housing duty being owed in 63 cases.</p>
3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p> <p>Not necessary</p>
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</p> <p>Not necessary</p>

## Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	No impact as the additional funding will be used to assist certain persons threatened with homelessness	L
Disability	As above	L
Gender	As above	L
Gender reassignment	As above	L
Marriage/civil partnership	As above	L
Pregnancy/maternity	As above	L
Race	As above	L
Religion/belief	As above	L
Sexual orientation	As above	L

## Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No x	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If 'YES', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.



## Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.
None	None	N/A

## Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Director: Alan Hall	Date: 1 August 2018
Signature of person completing the EqIA: Roger Wilson	Date: 1 August 2018

### Advice

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, e.g. after a consultation has been undertaken.