

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 106

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	DCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant 2011/12		
Date of Meeting:	16 February 2011		
Report of:	Jugal Sharma, Lead Commissioner Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Richard Denyer-Bewick	Tel: 29-2960
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Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No. HSG 19217	
Wards Affected:	All		

For General Release

The public are likely to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix B of this report as it contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 to schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Homelessness Prevention Grant is utilised by the Local Authority with the primary aims of preventing homelessness and helping the most vulnerable in the city to work towards achieving and sustaining a level of independence through funded support services and initiatives.
- 1.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) budget announcements on 20th October 2010 gave assurances that homelessness services for vulnerable people would be protected within financial settlements. Both the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government and the Housing Minister Grant Shapps have written to Local Authorities detailing their clear commitment to protecting the Homeless Prevention Grant and minimising reduction to the Supporting People Programme; to quote Mr Shapps: *"This reflects the Government's commitment to tackling homelessness and to protecting the most vulnerable groups in society."*
- 1.3 Locally in terms of prevention, housing support and tackling deprivation, the authority has achieved significant progress against commissioning priorities through our strategic partnership approach; involving both commissioned and non-commissioned services in the delivery of the City's Housing, Homelessness, Supporting People, Turning the Tide and Community Safety Strategies. This has reduced the cycle of deprivation in the city and improved pathways to independence. Our prevention work around housing support and homelessness is exemplified by our successful Supporting People commissioning strategy.
- 1.4 The performance outcomes from the 2010/11 grant allocation for services and initiatives are set out in Appendix A of this report and individual proposed financial settlements for current and future work is detailed in Appendix B. It should be noted that in the proposals to maintain funding for current services,

no inflation increase has been built into the allocation, which represents one way in which the local authority can aim to deliver further value for money from homelessness services currently working together in the city.

1.5 The recommendations outlined in Appendix A are based on:

- Maximising all opportunities to deliver the same outcomes for service users by re-configuring and integrating services/contracts to maximise the social return on investment (e.g. merging contracts to deliver more flexible/responsive services to better meet service user support needs)
- Consultation with providers, commissioners and stakeholders on local priorities / needs for support services in the city.
- An assessment of each service/contract against the Homeless Strategy, Single Homeless Strategy and Youth Homeless Strategy to include: strategic relevance; quality; performance; value for money and outcomes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To note the progress and outcomes of the homelessness strategies and commissioned services through the 2010/11 Homelessness Grant funding as set out in this report and Appendix A.

2.2 To approve the carry over of any identified underspend from the 2010/11 budget to the Homelessness Prevention Grant budget 2011/12.

2.3 To approve the recommended allocation of the confirmed 2011/12 and 2012/13 Homelessness Prevention Grant funds as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B which is presented in Part 2 of the meeting.

2.4 That the Cabinet Member for Housing agrees that subject to confirmation of the DCLG grant funding for 2013/14 and 2014/15, the recommended allocation of funds in 2.3 can be extended for a further two years as detailed in Appendix B.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

Financial Settlement

3.1 DCLG has dramatically reduced the number of its named revenue grants from 31 to 4 in 2011/12, with only 2 going forward from 2013/14. All other grants have been rolled into formula grant. It is important to note that 'Preventing Homelessness Grant' is one of only 2 DCLG revenue grants that will remain outside formula grant funding. This is because its success as a targeted grant has been fundamental to achieving the staggering fall of over 75% in homeless acceptances and 50% in the number of households in temporary accommodation over the last 5 years nationally.

3.2 On 13th December 2010 the Local Government Finance Settlement was announced which included the Homelessness Prevention Grant figure for Brighton & Hove City Council, which is £1,300,000. This represents a 52% increase from the previous three years' allocation of £855,000. DCLG acknowledged Brighton & Hove as a national leader in delivering homelessness services and the increase was partly due to these successes.

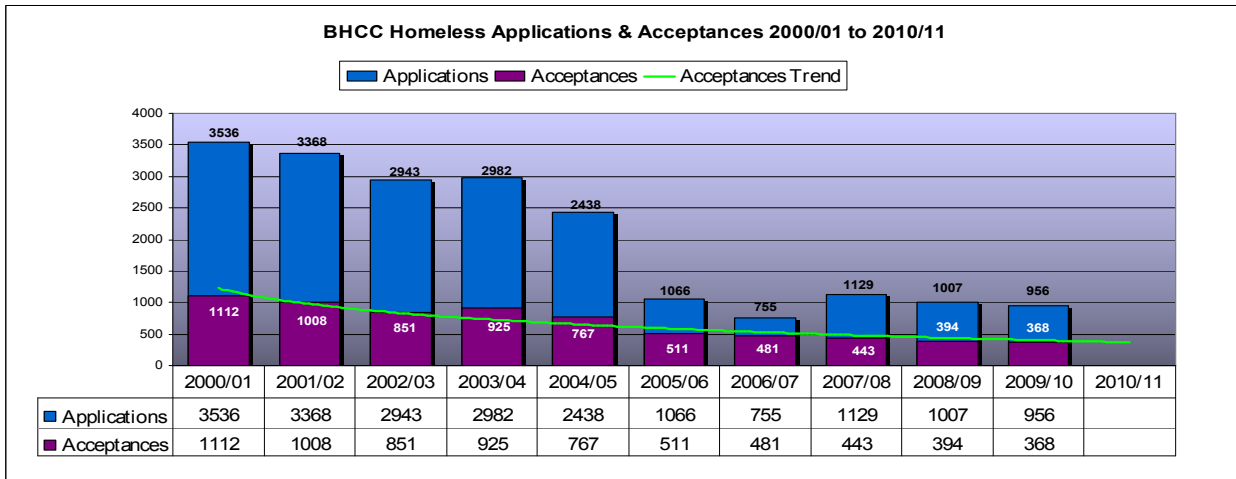
- 3.3 This level of grant is guaranteed for each of the years 2011/12 and 2012/13 and is likely to be set at a similar level for 2013/14 and 2014/15 therefore covering the full 4 years of the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement.
- 3.4 The DCLG also approved £120,000. of supplementary Homelessness Grant funds to the Local Authority in December 2010. This will increase capacity to deliver homelessness services and was granted in part as an acknowledgment of the excellent outcomes Brighton & Hove City Council has achieved in preventing homelessness and maintaining rough sleeping to low levels in the city. This has been added to the total budget for 2011/12 in order to be allocated by the Cabinet Member for Housing (Detailed in Appendix B).
- 3.5 There is also a potential underspend from the 2010/11 budget. It's impossible to be sure of the exact end of year financial position due to the Severe Weather Emergency Protocols (See Appendix A) which may or may not require extra funding dependent on weather conditions; however the carry over requested for approval is expected to be in the region of £40,000 and not expected to exceed £50,000. The DCLG have written to Brighton & Hove City Council and authorised the carry over of funds. The intention is to use the underspend to fund the 11/12 Severe Weather Emergency Protocols (See Appendix A and B).

Intended Use of Grant

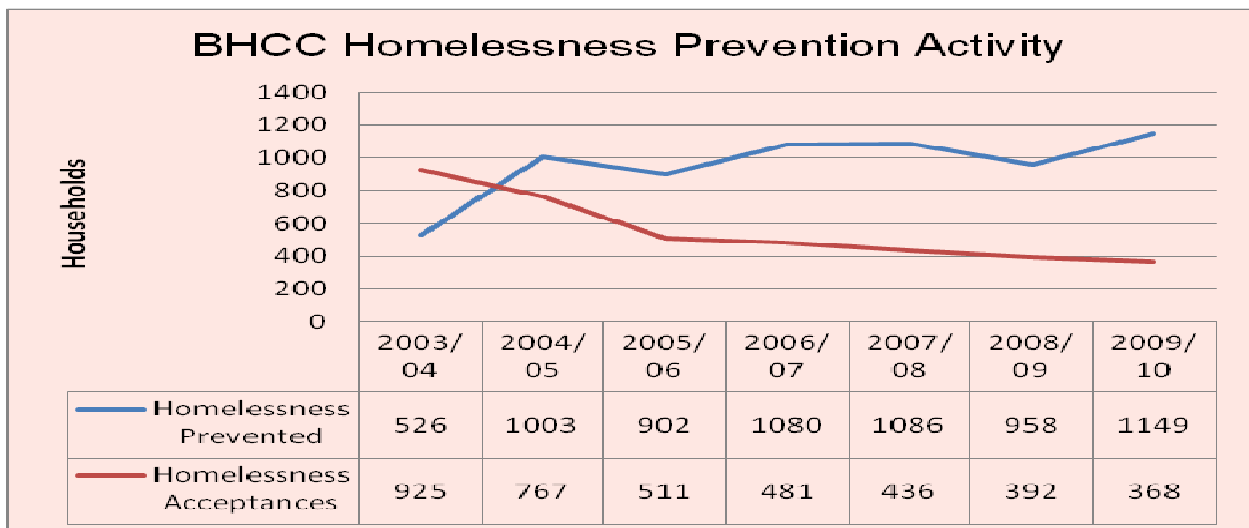
- 3.6 We welcome the fact that the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement reflected the importance of the prevention agenda and the clear line from DCLG on protection of Homelessness Grant and ongoing commitment to Supporting People funding and Disabled Facilities Grant as well as provision of funding for Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
- 3.7 The local authority intends to fully utilise the funds available over the next four years. The key outcomes will be to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping and to ensure people have access to the housing, advice and support that they need. Full details can be found in Appendices A and B.
- 3.8 Reducing the use of temporary accommodation, tackling youth homelessness; provision of Severe Weather Emergency Protocols and development of schemes to address worklessness in every locality are key areas where the funding can be effectively directed. The underspend from 2010/11 is intended to be used for delivering Severe Weather Emergency Protocols in 2011/12 and to support roll out of the Housing Options Plus programme

Achievements in Prevention & Reductions in Rough Sleeping

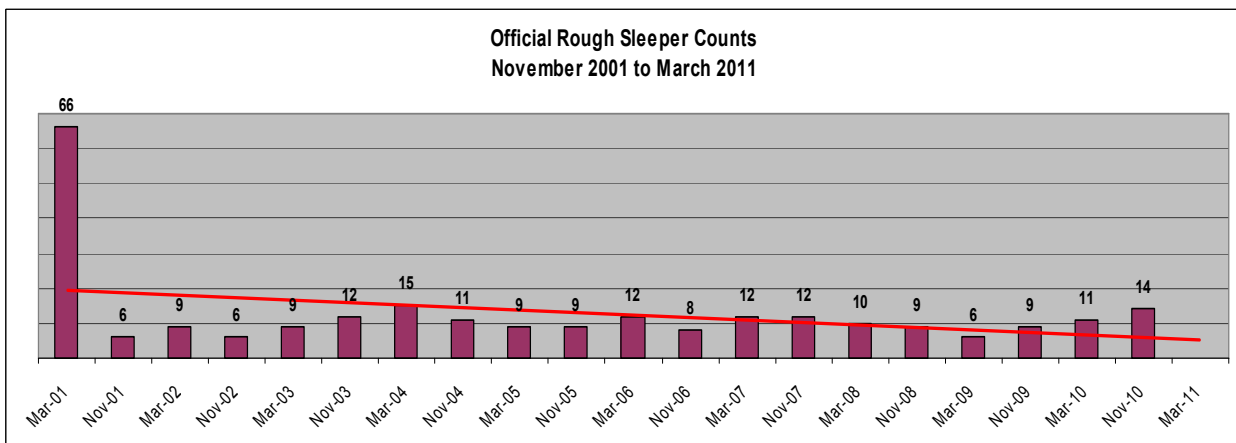
- 3.9 Through the 'invest to save' approach over the last 10 years, the local authority has reduced homelessness considerably and has recorded some notable achievements. From the peak of 3563 applications in 2000/01 homeless applications have reduced by more than two thirds and that since the implementation of the prevention approach in 2005/06 they have decreased further to 956 in 2009/10. Homeless Acceptances have continued on a downward trajectory reduced from 1112 in 2000/01 to 368 in 2009/10 representing a 16% reduction over the past two years and a 67% reduction since 2000/01.



3.10 This table shows the direct impact of the council's Housing Options service on Homeless Prevention and Homeless Acceptances. Preventions have risen from 526 in 2003/04 to 1,149 in 2009/10 an increase of 118 %.



3.11 Overall since March 2001, the number of rough sleepers found on official street counts has fallen by 89% and maintained an average of 10 since November 2001



- 3.12 The council also met the government's Temporary Accommodation Target by more than halving the number of households in temporary accommodation from 665 on 31st December 2004 to 316 on 31st March 2010.

Use of Private Rented Sector

- 3.13 The supply of Social Housing generates about a thousand general needs lettings per year with around eleven thousand people currently on the housing register. This challenge can be met partly by maximising the local authority's market share of Private Renter Sector accommodation, which makes up around 23% of the housing stock in the city. In order to prevent homelessness, Brighton & Hove City Council will continue to work hard in partnership with private sector, community and voluntary sector agencies to reduce any impact on Private Rented Sector supply in the city; the Homeless Grant is an important element in achieving this.
- 3.14 Some of the most successful homeless prevention initiatives are in accessing the private rented sector through a range of funded schemes in the city. Nationally, in 2009/10 nationally there were 165,000 preventions of which 60% were through accessing the Private Rented Sector. In 2009/10 Brighton & Hove City Council achieved 1129 preventions of which 53% were through accessing the Private Rented Sector. While this is good performance, there is opportunity to improve the ability to access a larger share of Private Rented Sector tenancies in the city.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 As part of the preparation of this report, the relevant legal and financial officers have been consulted
- 4.2 This report has also been consulted on throughout the BHCC management teams responsible for commissioning homelessness services in the city.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

"The Preventing Homelessness Grant, which replaces the former Homelessness Grant, has been confirmed as £1.3m for both 2011/12 and 2012/13 (£855k in 2010/11). This grant is not ring-fenced and members will therefore have discretion on the level of funding to be allocated. The current budget plans assume that this funding will be allocated in full to homelessness but this is still subject to approval by Council in March 2011 as part of the overall budget cycle. Subsequent years funding will need to be included in future year's budget strategies."

*Finance Officer Consulted: **Michelle Herrington***

Date: 27.01.11

5.2 Legal Implications:

"There should be an awareness of the Human Rights Act if any assertive intervention models are used. As this is unlikely on the whole it should not be a major factor. Many of the target group will be covered by the New Equalities Act

(those with physical and mental health difficulties), as this is a recognised cause of homelessness, the scheme caters specifically with addressing those who may be disadvantaged by those needs catered for by the act. The Children's Act and legislation places upon a local authority duties and responsibilities to young people within their area. This policy seeks to address (in part – other areas also have contributions) those issues and is part of a wider duty to young people. All contracts over £75,000 must be sealed by Legal and comply with the Councils Contracts and Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and with EU procurement legislation where relevant. In relation to provision of services the financial threshold is approximately £156,000.

*Lawyer Consulted: **Simon Court***

Date: 03.02.11

5.3 Equalities Implications:

Equalities Impact Assessments have been completed and are periodically reviewed for the Homelessness Strategies and the Integrated Support Pathway. The council's two-year Single Equality Scheme (Jan 2010 - Dec 2011) describes how the local authority will meet moral, social and legal obligations to put equality at the heart of everything the council does in the city, including the Homelessness Strategies. As well as the six statutory equalities 'strands' of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion / belief and sexual orientation there are other groups which need particular support if the local authority is to deliver equality and achieve a truly inclusive city. These 'Social Inclusion Key Groups' are:

- homeless people
- unemployed people
- people employed on a part-time, temporary or casual basis
- lone parents
- people with caring responsibilities
- people with mental health needs
- people with substance misuse issues
- people with HIV
- refugees and asylum seekers
- ex-offenders and people with unrelated convictions
- people experiencing domestic violence

Of the eleven key inclusion groups nine of the categories affect people who are at a greater risk of becoming homeless including those with mental health and substance misuse, unemployed and those fleeing domestic violence. Providing services for these groups will enable access to housing, support, advice and ultimately the prevention of homelessness.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

The delivery of the Council's Homelessness Strategy through internal and external partnerships is aligned with the Housing Strategy and Sustainable Communities Strategy. Internal teams funded by the grant, operate within corporate sustainability policies and good practice guidelines and external contracts are procured within Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Where appropriate, tendering and evaluation processes include sustainability in their performance criteria. The Council is committed to promoting sustainability through the use of its products and services.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

The commissioning intentions of support services as part of the Homelessness strategies are in accordance with the local objectives to prevent crime and disorder. Provision of homelessness services in the city promotes independent living, social inclusion and integration, all of which prevent or reduce crime and disorder.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

There are no significant risks attached to the proposals which are not identified in the main body of the report.

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

The Homelessness strategies contribute towards delivering Corporate priorities and towards achieving a number of outcomes in the local Sustainable Communities Strategy and national indicators as part of the Local Area Agreement.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The alternative to the proposals set out in the report is to only direct resources at the statutory homelessness functions of the local authority; for example the processing of homeless applications. Considering the evidence in this report, taking this option would likely see an increase in the use of temporary accommodation; an increase in health related issues for vulnerable people in the city, an increase in antisocial behaviour and crime and a reduction in the numbers of people in employment, education and training activities.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Homelessness Prevention Grant is given to the Council by the Secretary of State of the DCLG to further the work that the Authority carries out towards activities connected with homelessness under the provisions of Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 8.2 This report advises the Cabinet Member for Housing of the recommended grant allocation for 2011 to 2015 and seeks approval for the allocation, to develop the work under the Council's Homelessness Strategy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

- A. DCLG Services Performance Report 2010/11 with recommendations
- B. DCLG Grant Allocation 2011/12 (financial information – exempt from publication)

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

No

