

## BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Report of:** Gordon Bambridge, Executive Member for Growth

**To:** Full Council – Thursday 21 September 2017

**Author:** Rob Walker, Executive Director of Place

**Subject:** Flexible Homelessness Support Grant

**Purpose:** To seek agreement for the release of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant

### **Recommendation(s):**

That Council accepts and releases funds to the value of £167,123.39 provided under the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.

That the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member of Growth is granted delegated authority to commit and agree to the spend in accordance with the conditions of the Flexible Homelessness Grant.

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government announced that arrangements for the administration of the Flexible Homelessness Grant in March 2017.
- 1.2 The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is designed to transform the way councils fund homelessness services to give them greater flexibility to prioritise the prevention of homelessness. It is described as a radical replacement of the tightly controlled funding currently given to source and manage temporary accommodation for homeless individuals and their families.
- 1.3 The former Chancellor, George Osborne MP, announced at Autumn Statement 2015 that the Department for Work and Pensions' temporary accommodation management fee would be replaced by a Department for Communities and Local Government grant from April 2017.
- 1.4 Under the existing 'Temporary Accommodation Management Fee', funding can only be used for expensive intervention when a household is already homeless, rather than on preventing this happening in the first place.
- 1.5 Due to the tight constraints of the previous funding Breckland has not previously considered bidding for funds. This is therefore an effective new grant for the Council.
- 1.6 The new grant however will empower councils with the freedom to support the full range of homelessness services. This could include employing a homelessness prevention or tenancy support officer to work closely with people who are at risk of losing their homes.
- 1.7 Breckland Council has been awarded £167,123.39 for years 17/18 and £189,241.33 for years 18/19

## 2.0 **OPTIONS**

2.1 Do nothing

2.2 Agree to the release of funds relating to the Flexible Homelessness Grant.

2.3 Where the conditions of the grant are satisfied, agreement that the Executive Director of Place in accordance with the Executive Member for Growth is given delegated authority to spend the grant.

## 3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

3.1 The first recommendation is necessary for the grant to be utilised and committed.

3.2 As an operational grant to assist in the prevention of homelessness, the second recommendation will mean that the grant can be accessed in both a planned and reactive manner with the intention of supporting the Council to prevent homelessness.

3.3 This grant will support spend from the Breckland Council provided Homelessness Prevention Fund and will look to achieve a saving from this area of spend.

## 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 This grant will support the Housing Team in preventing homelessness within Breckland.

The flexible nature of this grant means that it can be used in both a planned and reactive manner. An assessment of need has been undertaken within the Housing Service to determine what additional services could be secured to support the prevention of homelessness using this fund.

Norfolk County Council has recently announced a number of reductions in funding which will affect how Housing related Support is provided across Norfolk. This grant will support the Breckland Housing Team to commission a tailored, innovative and outcome focused service intended to support the team in preventing homelessness and rough sleepers across the District.

If the recommendations are approved, this will include the commissioning of two specialist support workers to provide a tailored and intensive support service to households at risk of homelessness. It is proposed that these posts will be on fixed term contracts for the duration of the grant and will provide support services exclusively for the Breckland Housing Service.

If approved it is further proposed that these posts will be commissioned via Access Community Trust who are the current support provider at John Room House, the Council's homeless hostel.

## 5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Transformation Programme; Other.

Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

**5.1 Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

5.1.1 Nothing to note

**5.2 Constitution & Legal**

5.2.1 Due to the value of the grant being in excess of £100k the release of the funds needs to be approved by full Council.

**5.3 Contracts**

5.3.1 Nothing to note

**5.4 Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 Providing the right services in the right time and in the right way

5.4.2 Enabling stronger, more independent communities.

**5.5 Crime and Disorder**

5.5.1 Nothing to note.

**5.5 Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

5.6.1 Nothing to note

**5.6 Financial**

5.7.1 The Council has received funds for years 17/18 and this approval is required to access these funds.

**5.8 Health & Wellbeing**

5.8.1 Nothing to note

**5.9 Reputation**

5.9.1 This grant, if utilised correctly should will result in enhanced services and therefore support a positive increase in reputation.

**5.10 Risk Management**

5.10.1 Nothing to note

**5.11 Safeguarding**

5.11.1 Nothing to note

**5.12 Staffing**

5.12.1 Nothing to note

**5.13 Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.13.1 It is intended that homelessness prevention initiatives can commence immediately on approval of the release of this grant.

**5.14 Transformation Programme**

5.14.1 Nothing to note

**5.15 Other**

5.15.1 Nothing to Note

**6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

- 6.1 All wards
- 6.2 ...
- 7.0 **ACRONYMS**
- 7.1 Not applicable
- 7.2 ...

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Background papers:- [See The Committee Report Guide for guidance on how to complete this section](#)

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**Lead Contact Officer**

Name and Post: Ross Bangs  
Telephone Number: 01362 656268  
Email: [ross.bangs@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:ross.bangs@breckland.gov.uk)

**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Mandatory Service**