

CABINET

FINANCING FOR HOME SUPPORT TEAM 2nd September 2008

Report of Corporate Director (Community Services)

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To inform members about progress towards securing Supporting People programme monies for the Home Support Team and to seek approval for start date for funding of Vulnerable Households Project.				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision		Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	August 2008			
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLORS John Gilbert and David Kerr

Agree to accept the funding of £49,500 from Supporting People for the Vulnerable Households Project and agree for the money to be backdated to April 2008.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed in July 2008 to allow the Home Support Team to draw down from the Homelessness Reserve up to £75,000 in 2008/9, pending the Supporting People decision on funding.
- 1.2 The objective of the Team is to prevent homelessness and promote long-term sustainable lifestyles by addressing life issues and supporting clients into training and education
- 1.3 The specific projects that SP funding is sought for are
 - Targeted Intervention Project – Targeting problematic HMO's – pro-actively seeking to work with and engage hard to reach clients who have failed in tenancies with good landlords and therefore are now in HMO's; they have a track record of unsuccessful engagement with specialist services. This offers an alternative solution to deal with anti-social behaviour and problematic tenants. By gaining the confidence and trust of the client this intensive support involves working with people to secure their commitment to change to sustain tenancies and prevent eviction and problems being moved on to another area.

- Vulnerable Households Project – Working intensively with a small number of the most vulnerable or “high demand” households across the District. Sanctions and incentives are used to encourage change and support is provided over a period of months (for as long as is needed) to enable those involved to sustain this change. A key worker acts as a key point of contact and co-ordinates the services which need to engage with the household. Sustainable change is the key aim of the project.

2.0 Supporting People Funding Decision.

2.1 At a Supporting People Commissioning Board meeting in June, it was agreed to commission a vulnerable households project in Lancaster as well as similar projects elsewhere in Lancashire. At the time of the report to Cabinet in July, the Head of Supporting People was progressing a report within the County Council that would agree waiving standing orders to allow funding of the vulnerable households project in Lancaster and other districts without going out to tender. The outcome of this has now been decided. Standing orders have been waived and Supporting People can commission the City Council's Home Support Team to run a Vulnerable Households Project. The funding will only be available for one year, as the scheme will be viewed as a pilot. But all schemes will be evaluated at that point and a decision taken by Supporting People about whether or not to fund for a further two years. The amount available is £49,500. Supporting People are prepared to make a backdated payment (to April 2008) or to start paying from the beginning of September 2008 depending on the view of the City Council.

2.2 The County Council has not agreed to waive standing orders in relation to the Targeted Intervention Project. The North Locality Development Group, a sub-group of the Supporting People Commissioning Board, has been asked to make recommendations to the Commissioning Board in September about whether this should remain a priority for Supporting People. If it remains a priority, it will then need to go out to tender.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 The development of these projects has been subject to detailed consultation with partners and stakeholders. The Home Support Team is actively supported through the social impact group, a multi agency group of statutory and voluntary partners working to address social issues within the west end of Morecambe, where a high proportion of those affected live. The details of this report have not however been specifically subject to consultation with this group.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (Including Risk Assessment)

4.1 **Option 1:** Agree to accept the funding of £49,500 from Supporting People and agree for the money to be backdated to April 2008.

4.1.1 This would allow the project to continue until April 2009. If a County wide decision is then made not to continue these projects, it would end at that point. If a decision is made that the pilots have been successful, Supporting People may procure them for a further two years: it is unlikely that this would go out to tender, but this would depend on a decision at that point on whether or not such a requirement can be waived.

4.1.2 Backdating the payment would return £20,625 to the Homelessness Reserve

4.2 Option 2: Agree to accept the funding of £49,500 from Supporting People and agree for the money to be paid from September 2008.

4.2.1 This would mean a receipt of £28,875 in 2008/9 and £20,625 in 2009/10 which would allow the project to continue until the beginning of September 2009, even if the evaluation of the pilot means that Supporting People decide not to continue to procure such projects after April 2009.

4.2.2 If Supporting People decide to continue funding, the City Council may lose the opportunity to recoup the finance made available for this purpose through the Homelessness Reserve.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 Option 1: Agree to accept the funding of £49,500 from Supporting People and agree for the money to be backdated to April 2008.

5.1.1 This option allows the City Council to recoup the finance made available for the Vulnerable Households Project pending the Supporting People decision.

5.1.2 If evaluation by Supporting People shows that the pilot has not been successful, it raises the question of whether it should continue with funding from any source.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Supporting People have agreed initial funding for the Vulnerable Households project and a decision is still awaited on the Targeted Intervention Project. Homelessness Reserve monies will still be required to keep this service in operation until a decision is made.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Home Support Team helps to meet the Council's statutory obligations towards homeless people and homelessness prevention. The Team supports the delivery and implementation of the Council's Housing strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Winning Back Morecambe's West End Masterplan as well as LAA outcomes

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The project makes a substantial contribution towards community safety as well as helping people secure and maintain homes. The project is targeted at those who are both vulnerable and socially excluded. It contributes towards ensuring social cohesion and sustainable communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The adoption of Option 1 would mean that the full allocation of £49,500 would be received in 2008/9, this would allow 5/12 of the allocation (£20,625) to be returned to the Homelessness Reserve. The remaining allocation of £28,875 will contribute towards funding of the Home

Support Team for the period September 2008 to March 2009.

Also, if the scheme is successful, further funding may become available from Supporting People, for a further 2 years commencing April 2009 and under Option 1 the Council would be entitled to bid for this funding from this date.

The adoption of Option 2 would mean that £28,875 would come from SP in 2008/9 and £20,625 in 2009/10. No funds would be returned to the Homelessness Reserve and should further funding become available then future bids would have to be made from September 2009. This could potentially mean a lost opportunity to recover the finance made available through the Homelessness Reserve.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and have no further comments

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Confirmation from Supporting People of funding 11 8 2008
Supporting People file

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