

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).
The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

- i. To approve the acceptance of a ring-fenced grant of £307,577 for 2018/19 offered by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government under the Government's Rough Sleepers Initiative;
- ii. To approve the acceptance any further funding for the same purposes for 2019/20 and subsequent years that may be announce by the Ministry in due course.

2. Date of decision

2 July 2018

3. Reasons for decision

To enable additional services to be provided by the Council and its third sector partners with the aim of reducing the number of people sleeping rough in the Borough.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The alternative of not accepting the grant was considered and rejected.

5. How decision is to be funded

The decision will provide the Council with additional ring-fenced grant funding.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

N/a

Signed Don Hodgson

Date 2 July 2018

Name of Decision Taker MAYOR PAVE HODGSON

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Democratic and Registration Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: 11th July 2018

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 12th July 2018

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....~~YES~~ or NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – The Mayor

Date - July 2018

Report by - Chief Officer for Customer Experience and Digital Services

Subject - Acceptance of Rough Sleepers Initiative Grant

1. Executive Summary

The Mayor is requested to approve the acceptance of a ring-fenced revenue grant for 2018/19 from the Government's Rough Sleepers Initiative funding and to agree to accept any future funding for the same initiatives.

2. Recommendations

The Mayor is recommended to:

- i. Approve the acceptance of a ring-fenced grant of £307,577 for 2018/19 offered by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government under the Government's Rough Sleepers Initiative;**
- ii. Approve the acceptance any further funding for the same purposes for 2019/20 and subsequent years that may be announced by the Ministry in due course.**

3. Reasons for Recommendations

To enable additional services to be provided by the Council and its third sector partners during 2018/19 and future years with the aim of reducing the number of people sleeping rough in the Borough.

4. **Key Implications**

(a) **Policy**

The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to try and prevent or relieve homelessness. However, the Council is only obliged to provide emergency or temporary accommodation to persons who are determined to be in priority need as defined by law.

Where someone is accepted as being in priority need they will be provided with temporary accommodation and assistance to find permanent accommodation. Interim accommodation is provided where further investigations are required to establish if someone has a priority need.

There is no legal requirement for the Council to provide accommodation for a person that is sleeping rough who does not have a priority need.

The law limits the rights of certain overseas national to receive housing advice and benefits including Housing Benefit and the Housing Element of Universal Credit. This is generally referred to as persons having “no recourse to public funds” although in a strict legal sense that term only applied to persons subject to immigration control, whereas the restriction on eligibility for assistance also extends to certain EU and European Economic Area citizens.

The additional funding may be used to support both people with recourse to public funds and those without recourse.

(b) **Legal Issues**

Whilst there is no statutory duty for the Council to provide emergency overnight shelter in severe weather for people sleeping rough in its area it is widely recognised to be good practice to provide shelter. The Council has an agreement with the Salvation Army that the Congress Hall at Commercial Road will be opened as an overnight shelter when the overnight temperature is predicted to fall below zero degrees for three consecutive nights.

The additional funding will facilitate the provision of an Extended Winter Provision of up to 10 beds on an emergency basis between 1 November 2018 and 31 March 2019 in addition to the existing Severe Weather Provision.

(c) Resource Implications

The grant will provide additional revenue funding of £307,577 in the 2018/19 financial year. The funding will be ring-fenced and must be spent in accordance with the initiative set out in the Council's application for funding and detailed under item 5 below.

The Government has indicated that further funding will be provided in 2019/20, but at present the funding is not confirmed. Therefore, expenditure will only be committed for the 2018/19 financial year, until such time as funding for 2019/20 is confirmed.

(d) Risk Implications

Should the acceptance of the grant not be approved there is a risk that people currently sleeping rough in the Borough will continue to do so and the numbers of people sleeping rough may increase.

The funding is only guaranteed until 31 March 2018 at present, therefore, care will be taken to avoid committing the Council to any ongoing expenditure after that date.

(e) Environmental Implications

None.

(f) Equalities Impact

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the need to;

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

A relevance test for equality has been completed in respect of the recommendations made in this report. The equality test determined that since there are no proposals to change the processes or guidelines for the award of grants that the activity has no

relevance to Bedford Borough Council's statutory equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relation. An equality analysis is not needed.

5. Details

- 5.1 Local housing authorities, including the Council, are required by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to carry out an annual estimate of the number of people sleeping rough in their area. The estimate is based on a snapshot of the number of people known to be sleeping rough on a date determined by the Council between 1 October and 30 November each year. In 2017 the estimate for the Council was conducted on 15 November 2017 and indicated that 76 people were sleeping rough in the Borough on that night.
- 5.2 Authorities have the option of carrying out a physical count of the number of people observed to be sleeping rough on the chosen date or of providing an estimate based on local intelligence. The Council's figures are compiled using the estimate process as this is generally considered to provide a more accurate result. To complete the estimate intelligence is collated from a wide range of partner organisations that work with rough sleepers to supplement the information available directly to the Council.
- 5.3 For the purpose of the count, the Government defines rough sleepers as:
- People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes"). It is important that agencies taking part understand the definition of rough sleeping and do not include people in hostels or shelters, sofa surfers, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or Travellers.
- 5.4 The information collated through the rough sleeper counts are collated and published by the Government each year. The latest published data for the count in 2017 showed that there were a high number, 76, people sleeping rough in the Borough at the time that the estimate was undertaken.
- 5.5 Following publication of the Rough Sleeper data for 2017 the Government announced that it would be making £30 million of additional funding available nationally in 2018/19 to reduce rough sleeping. The funding was targeted at authorities reporting higher numbers of rough sleepers including the Council.
- 5.6 The Ministry's Homeless Advice and Support Team (HAST) visited the Council in May 2018 to provide advice on initiatives that may qualify for a grant from the new Rough Sleeper Initiative fund. The Homeless Advice and Support Team also consulted separately with local third sector organisations.

5.7 In view of the advice received from HAST and following further consultation with the Council's third sector partners, a bid was submitted for funding of £307,577 to be used for 5 initiatives as shown in the following table;

Initiative	Funding Requested
Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator Post	£43,412
6 Additional Support Workers The workers will initially provide outreach support but will then continue to provide support once people are housed to provide continuity of support.	£100,284
32 Units of Accommodation Comprised of 20 self-contained and 3 x 4 room Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).	£24149
Extended Winter Provision To provide 10 beds on an emergency provision basis between 1 November and 31 March in addition to the existing Severe Weather Provision.	£48,690
Additional Accommodation for People with "No Recourse to Public Funds" A 4 room HMO to provide accommodation for people with no recourse to public funds for 24 weeks each with support to find employment.	£91,042
Total	£307,577

5.8 The Government has now confirmed that the full amount of funding requested has been awarded.

6. Summary of Consultations and Outcome

The following Council units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Portfolio Holder for Housing
Portfolio for Finance
Management Team
Relevant Managers
Third Sector Partner Organisations

7. Ward Councillor Views

(Not applicable for this report)

Report Contact Officer: Lee Phanco
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File Reference: Lphanco/reports/grant acceptance

Previous Relevant Minutes: None

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None