

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Housing Select Committee

23 March 2017

TITLE:	Homelessness Update
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Thrane – Executive Councillor for Finance and Corporate Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mary Walker- Head of Customer Services
WARDS INVOLVED:	All

1. Reason for the Report

The report seeks to update the Committee on the expenditure of the Homelessness Prevention Budget 2017/18 and proposed Second Homes Council Tax allocation for 2017/18.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee note the Homelessness Budget distribution for 2017/18 subject to the approval of the Second Homes Council Tax bid.
- 2.2 That Committee note information on the Homelessness Reduction Bill as well as plans to review the Homelessness Strategy and funded schemes as the regulations emerge.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council receives a non ring-fenced Homelessness Grant from the CLG. CLG's stated intention is that the grants are used to support homeless prevention initiatives. However, the Council can decide how the money is spent.
- 3.2 The Council also receives funding from the Second Homes Council Tax initiative which is an agreement with Derbyshire County Council to use 75% of council tax income raised from second homes to support vulnerable people.
- 3.3 The Council has funded the projects outlined in tables 2 and 3 for a number of years. The proposed 2017/18 expenditure is a continuation of these existing projects. Derbyshire County Council have not yet formally approved our proposal for 2017/18 Second Homes Council Tax funding, however, we have been given informal approval pending a DCC cabinet report.

3.4 The Council's Homelessness Strategy will be revised once the Homelessness prevention Bill's regulations are clear, this will include a fundamental review of the schemes funded and their respective impacts, outcomes and affordability.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 This report relates to the corporate aim of helping to create a safer and healthier environment for our residents to live and work

5. **Options and Analysis**

5.1 Option 1 - Proceed with the proposed use of the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Second Homes Council Tax to provide priority services for vulnerable households threatened with homelessness and in housing need in High Peak.

5.2 Option 2 - Members can decide not to progress with the proposals outlined in this report meaning that essential services to vulnerable members of the community will be unable to continue.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
None

6.2 Workforce
None

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment
This report has been prepared in accordance with the Councils Diversity and Equality Policies

6.4 Financial Considerations
Summary of funding outlined in this report:
£115,000 Second Homes Council Tax allocation 2017/18
£50,330 Base Budget
£112,400 Carry forward from CLG Homelessness Prevention Grant and Second Homes Council Tax

6.5 Legal
None

6.6 Sustainability
None

6.7 Internal and External Consultation
None

6.8 Risk Assessment
None

7. Background and Detail

- 7.1 The homelessness budget is made up from funding carried forward from previous grant allocations, additional Government funding, Second Homes Council Tax, and a contribution from the Council's General Fund.
- 7.2 The budget is spent on services commissioned from other agencies and is aimed at preventing or reducing the occurrence of homelessness and supporting vulnerable households. The projects funded through the Second Homes funding must demonstrate links to Derbyshire County Council's Health and Adult Care priorities. These priorities focus on vulnerable adults and include domestic violence, learning and physical disability, mental health, older people and those with substance misuse issues.
- 7.3 In order to be funded from the Homelessness Prevention Budget, each project must meet one or more of the priorities of the Council's Homelessness Strategy;
- Preventing homelessness and sustaining tenancies
 - Mitigating any potential impacts of the welfare reforms and Localism Act
 - Increasing the availability of affordable homes
- 7.4 Derbyshire County Council's expenditure for the Second Homes Council Tax 2016/17 is shown below in Table 1. Although the report for the 2017/18 has not yet been released by Derbyshire County Council, it is anticipated that the allocations will remain the same next year.

Table 1: County Council expected second homes investment programme

District and Borough Councils	Allocation 2016/17
Amber Valley	£80,000
Derbyshire Dales	£309,000
High Peak	£115,000
South Derbyshire	£62,000
Total	£566,000

- 7.5 It is proposed that the projects below continue to be funded by the Second Homes Council Tax allocation outlined in Table 2 and those to be funded from Homelessness Prevention Budget in Table 3. Project summaries and outcomes are shown from 7.5.1.

Table 2: Proposed Second Homes Council Tax Allocation 2017/18

Project name	Service Description	(£)
Meeting the accommodation needs of people with disabilities including Disabled Facility Grants	Grants to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard in new build affordable homes or adaptations through additional Disabled Facility Grants	£50,000
Support for Families in Crisis Project	Good News Family Care provides access to suitable accommodation for vulnerable women and families who are homeless and have domestic abuse or drug and alcohol support needs	£20,000
Domestic Abuse Project	This project enables Crossroads Derbyshire to provide a specialist service to younger women (13-25) to address issues of domestic abuse in their relationships	£20,000
Debt Advice Project	A specialist money and debt advice project delivered to households that may be at risk of homelessness due to debt, rent or mortgage arrears.	£15,000
Vulnerable adults affected by the welfare reforms	Practical support in the form of financial assistance for vulnerable households affected by the welfare reforms with the associated costs of for instance downsizing to avoid future arrears, assistance with removal costs or rent arrears.	£5,000
Abor Project	Supported accommodation for high risk offenders. This project was previously funded through Derbyshire County Council but funding was reduced	£3,000
Move On Officer	A Derbyshire wide project to help vulnerable people leaving supported accommodation to move-on into independent living.	£2,000
Total		£115,000

Table 3: Homelessness Prevention Budget 2017/18

Project name	Service Description	(£)
Access to the Private Rented Sector Project	Provides a combination of services to vulnerable households. Including rent bond and tenancy support. Pre tenancy training course for vulnerable people with chaotic lifestyles	£ 53,995
Debt Advice Project	As above table 3	£10,000
Abor Project	As above table 3	419.50
Hometrack	Subscription to web based Housing Intelligence System – provides housing market data	£2,100
Total		£66,514.5

- 7.5.1 The *Access to the Private Rented Sector project* issued 71 rent bond guarantees during 2015/16. So far this financial year April 2016- Jan 2017, 36 rent bonds have been issued, a further 5 households assisted into accommodation without a Bond, pre tenancy training has been provided to 11 and tenancy support to 55 households. The project also additionally supports the provision of property inspections to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in delivery of the rent deposit bond scheme there.
- 7.5.2 The *Crossroads Derbyshire* project for young women aged 16-24 years and their children who are escaping domestic abuse provided supported accommodation to 22 young women (and 18 children) in 2016/17 to date. A further 38 young women have been given support through one-to-one sessions and High School based group work with issues including sexual exploitation and violence and domestic abuse within the family.
- 7.5.3 *Good News Family Care* have provided accommodation based support to 40 residents (and 16 children) experiencing homelessness, domestic abuse or/ and addiction issues during period Jan – Dec 2016. 14 households were supported to better manage substance misuse issues and 29 households supported to secure settled accommodation. During the financial year to date High Peak Borough Council directly referred 21 households, 10 of whom were accommodated.
- 7.5.4 During the first three quarters of 2016/17 90 clients (27% HPBC tenants) were seen as part of the *debt advice project*. The project dealt with 966 issues, over £471,000 of debt (rescheduled through debt management plans and written off through debt relief orders and bankruptcy orders), increased income by over £13,772, and prevented homelessness for 22 households. The provision of money and debt advice is considered to be an ongoing priority due to welfare reforms and the roll out of Universal Credit.
- 7.5.5 As at end Dec 2016 a total of 38 *disabled facilities grant* (DFG) requests approved and 16 completed. A significant proportion of the additional funding provided has been allocated to a complex children's case to facilitate the early approval of works that would not have been possible this financial year. 5 urgent cases have been brought forward that otherwise would have had to be deferred until 2017/18.
- 7.5.6 Four households have been provided with assistance through the *vulnerable adults affected by welfare reforms* fund this year to date, in order to move to more suitable accommodation.
- 7.5.7 Providing supported accommodation for high risk offenders, the *Arbor project* during Q1 and Q2 of 2016/17 provided support to 10 new clients and assisted 12 clients to move in a planned way. 96% clients were assisted to develop skills to manage their tenancy, live independently and engage with appropriate health and prevention services.

Table 4: Homelessness Prevention Outcomes 2009/10 – 2016/17

	Year End 2009/ 10	Year End 2010/ 11	Year End 2011/ 12	Year End 2012/ 13	Year End 2013/ 14	Year End 2014/ 15	Year End 2015/ 16	Year to date 2016/ 17
No. in Temporary Accommodation (snapshot)	22	14	6	11	6	6	8	11
Prevented Homeless Cases	227	213	187	166	159	152	179	165
Rent Bonds Issued	182	140	132	129	129	97	71	36
Homeless Presentations	74	61	49	93	32	113	123	114
No. Homeless households to whom a duty is accepted	30	29	19	41	26	26	43	32
No. households receiving housing advice & assistance	647	609	537	529	515	420	342	209
Total households seen	721	670	587	622	573	559	465	323

- 8.0 The Homelessness Reduction Bill places a stronger emphasis on preventative work. Currently, local authorities are required to make enquiries to establish if someone seeking homelessness assistance has a priority need. Those who are found to be in priority need and unintentionally homeless are owed what is called the ‘full housing duty’ meaning they are entitled to suitable accommodation and the local authority has a duty to secure that this is made available. However, non-priority need households, which are most likely to be single people without children, or childless couples, are owed ‘advice and assistance’ only. Under the Bill, LAs would be legally obliged to provide assistance to everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness, irrespective of priority need status.
- 8.1 Recently receiving its Second Reading in the House of Lords, the Bill may be implemented by the end of 2017. The CLG will be setting out details of ‘new burdens funding’ that will be made available to local authorities as a result of the Bill. The Council’s Homelessness Strategy will be revised once the regulations are clear, this will include a fundamental review of the schemes funded and their respective impacts, outcomes and affordability Below is an outline of the main measures that the Bill will introduce, further detail shall be set out in regulations;
- A stronger advice and information duty
 - Extension to the period at which a person is to be considered threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days. A personalised ‘assessment’ of housing and support circumstances and a ‘housing

plan' setting out housing advice given and available options to secure/retain accommodation.

- Stronger prevention duties
- A new relief duty for homeless people so local authorities must take reasonable steps to secure accommodation regardless of priority need status
- A right to judicial review, at the prevention, relief and main duty stages.
- Increased data collection

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**Web Links and
Background Papers**

[Homelessness Strategy
2012-2016](#)

Location

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