

REPORT TO: HOUSING, DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES AND
ENVIRONMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 25 JUNE 2007

REPORT ON: USE OF HOMELESS FUNDING 2007/08

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO.: 347-2007

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To seek Committee approval to spend special grant allocations for 2007/08 to meet the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness Etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1. Committee approve the following prioritisation of Task Force Funding for 2007/08.
- 2.2. Projects that require continuation funding as detailed in Appendix 1 are approved.
- 2.3. New Projects detailed in Appendix 1 are approved.
- 2.4. Rough Sleepers Initiative Funding continues to be utilised as detailed in Appendix 2.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. All costs will be met by specific grants:

- Task Force Funding £504,776
- Rough Sleepers Initiative £263,618
- Furnished Tenancies Grant £47,934

- 3.2. There are no implications for the Housing Revenue Account or Council Tax.

4. SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. This report contributes to the Council's anti-poverty principles through delivering specialised services to homeless people, and providing advice and information.
- 4.2. Homeless people are helped to obtain accommodation through representation, and advocacy.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. Carrying out statutory duties to persons who present as homeless fulfils the Council's commitment to assist those in need by ensuring that needs are assessed and a range of accommodation is available for local people.

6. **BACKGROUND**

- 6.1. The Council has been allocated £504,776 Task Force funding for implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and to tackle homelessness. Rough Sleepers Initiative funding of £263,618 has been awarded and this must be spent in accordance with the Local Outcome Agreement.
- 6.2. The Scottish Executive have set five top level outcomes which must be delivered through the Council's Statutory Homeless obligations.

These are:

- No-one need sleep rough.
- Existing homelessness becomes more visible.
- Sustainable resettlement is secured for people who become homeless.
- Fewer people become homeless in the first place.
- Duration of homelessness is reduced.

A progress report is required on a quarterly basis to keep Scottish Ministers informed.

- 6.3. This report sets out how to meet increased demand and ensure compliance with current legislation as a result of the Council's extended duties to homeless persons. This report also identifies a number of projects and refers to some existing commitments as identified in the Homeless Strategy and Local Outcome Agreement.

7. **TASK FORCE FUNDING**

- 7.1. The new legislation increases the Council's homeless duties to provide advice, information and temporary accommodation. In November 2003, Personnel Committee approved the recruitment of additional posts for the Homeless Services Unit, to enable the Housing Department to fulfil statutory duties.
- 7.2. In January 2003, Personnel Committee approved a report to establish a Homeless Strategy Team which would be responsible for ensuring that the Council met its obligations under Section 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 7.3. Part 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 states that every local authority must secure, free of charge, advice and information to the prevention of homelessness and services available within the City. Within their Regulation and Inspection role, Communities Scotland are recommending that all local authorities achieve the recognised Scottish National Standard and Good Practice for Housing Information Services, known as Homepoint. Homeless Services Unit are to undergo an audit of services in November 2007 with a view to achieving full Homepoint Accreditation. It is therefore recommended that we continue the training programme already underway to ensure all homeless staff are trained to Homepoint standards.

- 7.4. The lack of daily living skills results in many of our service users being unable to move on from temporary, direct access accommodation within our hostels. This results in long term hostel dwellers blocking direct access spaces.

It is recommended that we continue the Intensive Living Skills Programme provided by Positive Steps. This programme will assist thirty-six residents by providing support to enable residents to take the next step to independent living.

- 7.5. New legislation has increased the number of people living in Council temporary accommodation. The council has a duty to ensure that support, advocacy and advice is provided. The Positive Steps, Temporary Accommodation Outreach Project, will assist clients to move on to an appropriate permanent solution. This will assist to reduce and minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, which is both unsuitable for the client and expensive for the local authority.
- 7.6. In addition to assisting clients to move on, Positive Steps will work along with the Council to review the homeless queue. As the current Homeless Information System is unable to cope with the demands of new changes in legislation, a new web based Information System is required. This is an opportune time therefore, to review and rationalise the homeless queue. Many clients are assessed as potentially homeless and we require to determine if these applicants have resolved their homeless issue or still require assistance through the homeless route. Advice, guidance and information will also be given to the availability of accommodation on a City-wide basis.
- 7.7. Clients who are moving on from temporary accommodation often have little or no furnishings with which to set up a tenancy. The Transform Furniture Project Voluntary Sector Fund would enable people to obtain reuse furnishings. This is specifically for those clients who do not have adequate funds or access to a Community Care Grant. This will assist in prevention of homelessness by sustaining tenancies and assisting those who are already homeless to move into a tenancy.
- 7.8. There is a need to raise awareness of the responsibilities of professionals in various sectors both statutory and voluntary. This will highlight the responsibility of individual agencies in dealing appropriately with homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless. It is recommended that multi-agency training is carried out to ensure individuals receive the best possible service from local agencies and specialist services.
- 7.9. Prevention of homelessness is a key priority. The Homeless Youth Group are currently carrying out training in all secondary schools on "How to Sustain a Tenancy". This project (Housing Education for Youths HEY!) is jointly delivered by the Homeless Unit and its partner agencies. It is recommended that a training film for young people is produced to give them an insight into the homeless issues.
- 7.10. Life skills are an essential element to ensure tenancy sustainment and prevent repeat homelessness. Craigowl Communities has developed a range of techniques for engaging with 'difficult to reach' clients. This presents a variety of practical activities which teach life skills, personal and core skills. These individually tailored programmes of tuition, guidance and support develop skills will enable 60 participants annually to assist transition to and sustainment of a tenancy. Completion of this course should assist clients with life skills and self confidence with a view to gaining employment.
- 7.11. Craigforth Consultants were commissioned in 2006/07 to carry out research into single homelessness within the City. The findings of this research will inform how the balance of Task Force funding is spent.

8. **ROUGH SLEEPERS INITIATIVE**

- 8.1. It is a requirement of the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) funding that priority be given to tackling rough sleeping which is integrated into Homeless Strategies.
- 8.2. Cyrenians and NCH have consistently achieved set targets. The performance of these projects is monitored by the Homeless Co-ordination Group. It is therefore recommended that the projects detailed at Appendix 2 are continued.

9. **FURNISHED TENANCIES GRANT**

- 9.1. The grant allocation determines that the following criteria be met:
 - The creation of permanent tenancies is prioritised.
 - The use of furniture recycling projects is actively pursued locally.
 - Steps are taken to eliminate service charges within furnished tenancies.
- 9.2. The funding allows for 25 single person tenancies to be set up with 'essential' goods.

It is recommended that we set up fifteen within the Council Sector and ten within partner agencies properties. This will enable move-on from temporary accommodation. It will also assist these clients to sustain their tenancy therefore preventing repeat homelessness occurring.

10. **CONSULTATION**

- 10.1. All members of the Homeless Co-ordinating Group have been consulted and approved the contents of this report.
- 10.2. Comments have been sought from relevant departments and these have been incorporated into this report.

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1. Note on Extension of Fixed Term Posts (Homeless Strategy Team) approved by Personnel and Management Services Committee – March 2007.
- 11.2. Note on Extension of Fixed Term Posts (Homeless Services Unit) approved by Personnel and Management Services Committee – March 2007.
- 11.3. Scottish Executive – Offer of Grant for: Tackling and Preventing Homelessness.
- 11.4. Report on Use of Homelessness Funding Allocations 2006/07 approved by Committee May 2006, Report No.327-2006.

ELAINE ZWIRLEIN
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

TASK FORCE FUNDING – £504,776**Continuation Projects**

Housing Officer	23,362
Homeless Officer	26,418
Advice & Development Officer	30,244
Principal Officer Homeless Strategy	37,715
Senior Housing Officer	34,007
Housing Officer	26,418
Administration Costs	10,000
Homepoint Training and Full Accreditation	<u>8,500</u>
	£196,664

New Projects 2007/08

Homeless Training	10,000
Homeless Training Film	5,500
Positive Steps – Hostel Project	98,000
Positive Steps – Temp. Accommodation Project	98,000
Transform Furniture Project – Voluntary Sector Fund	21,000
Craigowl Communities – Life Skills Programme	<u>31,849</u>
	£264,349

Balance - £43,763

ROUGH SLEEPERS INITIATIVE FUNDING - £263,618

National Children's Homes – Youth Project	£50,000
McKay Rent Deposit Scheme	£37,689
Cyrenians Outreach and Resettlement Team	£168,292
Furnishing for Resettlement of Homeless Households	£7,637