

**Meeting date:** 19 September 2018  
**Report to:** Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Housing  
**Subject/report title:** Homelessness Funding  
**Report from:** Assistant Director Stronger Communities  
**Report author/lead contact officer:** George Daley  
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**Wards affected:**

- All Wards |  Bickenhill |  Blythe |  Castle Bromwich |  Chelmsley Wood |  
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath |  Elmdon |  Kingshurst/Fordbridge |  Knowle |  
 Lyndon |  Meriden |  Olton |  Shirley East |  Shirley South |  
 Shirley West |  Silhill |  Smith's Wood |  St Alphege

**Public/private report:** Public

**Exempt by virtue of paragraph:** Select an Exemption paragraph from the Quick Parts drop-down list

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**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To approve the use of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.

**2. Decision(s) recommended**

2.1 To note the use of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant to date.

2.2 To approve the use of the Grant for staff appointments by Solihull Community Housing.

**3. What is the issue?**

3.1 Arrangements for the use of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) were approved in March 2018. Sums of up to £100,000 are authorised by the Assistant Director, Stronger Communities with larger sums requiring your approval.

3.2 For any proposal a business case is made to the Cabinet Member, Stronger Communities who will determine each in consultation with Council lead officer on homelessness and a Finance representative.

3.3 No proposal will be supported unless it can be shown to contribute to the local capacity for homelessness prevention and relief.

- 3.4 As expected, service pressures have increased significantly since the Homeless Reduction Act was implemented in April. Solihull Community Housing (SCH) is advising and assisting more customers and generally each case requires intervention over a longer period due to the extension of the time requirements by the Act. In addition, the advice and assistance is often in more depth and the reporting requirements to Government, through the new H-Click scheme, is far more onerous.
- 3.5 Pressures are also being experienced by the Solihull Youth Hub, with St Basils reporting similar trends and by SIAS which delivers the outreach service and also advice and assistance to single people at risk of rough sleeping.
- 3.6 In common with other local authorities there has been a need to respond to these pressures mainly by increasing staff capacity through the use of FHSG.
- 3.7 The need for this in Solihull was apparent soon after implementation and early approvals were given for the recruitment of 2 temporary posts by SCH at a cost of £56,480.
- 3.8 To date £417k of the £1.314m available over the 2 year period 2018-2020 has been utilised as set out in Appendix A.
- 3.9 After four months of the new service requirements SCH has now made a more informed assessment of the staff resources which will be required to meet the requirements of the Act.
- 3.10 There is a need for further recruitment over the remainder of this year and for next year. They are proposing a further 4 posts over the next 2 years. The identified cost incorporates the proposed extension for a further 12 months of the 2 earlier appointments. Again these posts are temporary contracts for 2 years.
- 3.11 The total cost of the proposals is £447,984. If approved this would leave £432,232 available over the two year period to be utilised as required. Further proposals for use of the funding may be made by the Assistant Director, Stronger Communities, SCH, St Basils or SIAS.

#### **4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?**

- 4.1 The options for deciding the way in which FHSG is to be used were considered in the March 2018 report.
- 4.2 In particular, the report noted that: *'it is anticipated that further needs and opportunities to strengthen service delivery and for new approaches will be revealed after the Act comes into force. There will be a need to respond quickly to these'*.

#### **5. Reasons for recommending preferred option**

- 5.1 In this particular case SCH has demonstrated that there is a need for additional staff capacity to support front line service delivery and service development.
- 5.2 Information on the proposed appointments has been provided by SCH and this is set out at Appendix B.

## **6. Implications and Considerations**

### 6.1 Delivery of key themes in the Council Plan:

How will the options / proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of the key themes in the Council Plan?

- Build Stronger Communities – develop and promote an integrated approach to prevention and earlier intervention

### 6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

6.2.1 The service provides advice and assistance to adults who are threatened with homelessness and therefore vulnerable.

### 6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.3.1 None required

### 6.4 Financial implications:

6.4.1 The proposed expenditure is covered by the Council's allocation of FHSG over 2018/19 and 2019/20.

6.4.2 The additional cost for the requested posts is £447,984 over the 2 year period. These posts are fixed term. The costs can be funded from the FHSG grant allocation for this period. The allocation for 2019/2020 has been notified. However, allocations beyond that period are unknown.

### 6.5 Legal implications:

6.5.1 None

### 6.6 Risk implications:

6.6.1 If the service lacks staff capacity there is a risk of the Council failing to meet its statutory duties to homeless people and adverse risks to the customers and their dependents.

### 6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:

6.7.1 No specific implications

## **7. List of appendices referred to**

7.1 Appendix A – Projected expenditure of FHSG to 2019/2020.

7.2 Appendix B – Information on proposed recruitment

**8. Background papers used to compile this report**

8.1 Report to Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing, 20 March 2018: 'Homelessness Service – Scope and Funding'.

**9. List of other relevant documents**

9.1 None

