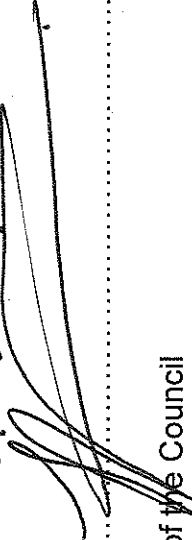


NOTICE OF DELEGATION OF DECISION TO CABINET MEMBER BY STRONG LEADER

Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

I, J-P Campion, as Strong Leader, delegate the decisions regarding Community and Local Government Homelessness Prevention and Mortgage Rescue funding to the Cabinet Member/Officer detailed below:

Cabinet Member/Officer: Julian Phillips

Dated: 13/3/12
Signed: 
Leader of the Council

NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER

Pursuant Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

In accordance with the authority delegated to me by the Leader, I have made the following decision:

Subject	Decision	Reason for decision	Date for Decision to be taken
Expenditure of the Communities and Local Government 2012-13 Homelessness Funding and Mortgage Rescue Funding	To delegate authority to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to award the Communities and Local Government 2012-13 Homelessness Funding and Mortgage Rescue Funding	Wyre Forest District has been awarded the funding specifically for the purpose of providing homeless prevention services in the district. The funding has helped to deliver savings in the Temporary Accommodation budget.	16.03.2012

I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.

Dated: 16/3/12
 Signed: SAC PHILLIPS
 Councillor: JULIAN PHILLIPS
 Cabinet Member

To: Leader of the Council, Councillor John-Paul Campion

From: Sally Horne
Principal Strategic Housing Officer, Housing Services
Ext: 2561

5th March 2012

Allocation of the CLG 2012-13 Homeless Prevention Funding and Mortgage Rescue Funding

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek agreement for the proposed expenditure of the CLG 2012-13 Homelessness grant and the one off mortgage rescue funding.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that you agree delegated authority be given to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping to agree the expenditure of the 2012-13 CLG Homelessness Prevention Funding and the one off Mortgage Rescue Funding.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 extended that categories of homeless applicants who have a priority need for accommodation. Additional monies have been made available to Local Authorities since 2002/03 for work with homeless applicants including prevention work.
- 3.2 The Council has been given £109,270 for 2012/13 from the CLG. This is the same amount as the 2011/12 settlement and it is the final year of the confirmed settlement. CLG advisors have indicated that the 2013/14 settlement will be an increased amount. In addition to the £109,270, WFDC has also been awarded one off funding of £41,496 mortgage rescue monies to assist homeowners who are facing financial difficulties.
- 3.3 Last year the CLG Homeless Prevention funding was used for the following services:
- The provision of debt and welfare advice for people accessing the Robinson mental health centre at Kidderminster Hospital
 - The continuation of the temporary accommodation and mediation service run by Wyre Forest Nightstop.

- The NewStarts furniture project for the provision of furniture to homeless households moving into settled accommodation following a homeless application
- Wyre Forest Community Housing for the provision of support to homeless households in temporary accommodation.
- Funding the Homeless Prevention Loan, which has been used to prevent homelessness through securing properties in the private rented sector for homeless households and for the payment of mortgage and rent arrears.
- Funding towards the County Homeless Strategy Coordinator post. The post has helped to rewrite the County Homelessness Strategy and assisted in coordinating countywide prevention projects.
- The provision of tenancy starter kits for young people moving on from Park Street to their own tenancies.
- Contribution towards the mYPlace young persons rent bond scheme run by St Basils
- Funding for the rough sleepers count which took place on 1st November 2011
- Funding for the Homeless Prevention Officer. The post holder has been responsible for mortgage rescue, overseeing the homeless prevention loan, the CLG homeless prevention contracts and the development of the rent bond scheme.

3.4 In total, 288 households have been assisted.

3.5 Despite this work, homeless acceptances are increasing. In 2010 WFDC accepted 80 households as homeless and this increased to 126 in 2011. This is in line with the national picture and is due to the economic situation and policy changes such as the Local Housing Allowance and Welfare Benefit changes. Unfortunately, it is expected that the number of households presenting as homeless will continue to increase.

3.5 Despite the increase in acceptances the expenditure on temporary accommodation has decreased further. It is estimated that the total spend on interim accommodation will be £40,000, saving the Council £134,000 in 2011/12. Prevention work has also saved the council an estimated gross saving of £720,000 in homeless investigation costs. This is due to the prevention work undertaken with these households. Continued use of the Homeless Prevention Funding and the Mortgage Rescue funding will assist, providing appropriate solutions for households facing homelessness and mitigating the expense of homelessness investigations and the provision of interim temporary accommodation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 CLG has committed £109,270 for 2012/13 for the purpose of delivering homeless prevention services in Wyre Forest and £41,496 for the provision of mortgage rescue. Failure to use it for the intended purpose

could lead to an increase in temporary accommodation and homelessness investigation costs.

4.2 It is proposed that the funding be used for the following purposes:

- Homeless Prevention Officer Post – the post holder has provided mortgage rescue advice, coordinated homeless prevention services and developed the private sector rent bond scheme. It is anticipated that the main focus of the post holders work will be working with people presenting for mortgage rescue as well as assisting of the implementation of the County Homeless Strategy action plan. This includes looking at joint commissioning of services with the Health Service and other key partners.
- Private Sector Liaison Officer (part time) – Local Authorities have been given the power to discharge their homeless duty into the private rented sector and guidance from CLG indicates that Local Authorities are expected to utilise this power. Therefore, a range of private sector schemes have been developed and are on offer to homeless households. The officer will act as a liaison point for homeless households who want to access the various schemes, particularly the WFDC led scheme. The officer will also be responsible for attracting landlords to the WFDC bond scheme, inspecting properties and providing support to landlords and tenants who access the scheme. The officer will also provide tenancy sustainment training to tenants accessing the scheme.
- Tenancy Sustainment Training – it was identified as part of the County Homelessness Review that Wyre Forest has the highest level of homelessness in the county due to notices to quit from the rented sector. Therefore to address this, a tenancy sustainment training scheme has been developed to deliver to households accessing the temporary homeless units, WFDC rent bond scheme, the mYPlace rent bond scheme and the WHABAC social lettings agency. Training will be delivered to households in their accommodation and will be tailored to the individual requirements.
- Rent Bond Scheme – The rent bond scheme will replace the Homeless Prevention Loan and is aimed at homeless households aged 25 +. The Homeless Prevention Loan currently gives cash loans to tenants for rent deposits. The proposed scheme replaces that with a cashless bond which is offered to landlords as a rent deposit and would cover payment for rent arrears and damage to the property. The money set aside is for those payments, providing small financial incentives for landlords to join the scheme (such as providing funding towards them seeking accreditation) and advertising.
- mYPlace young persons rent bond scheme – this scheme has been operating in Wyre Forest for the last year and has successfully placed 13 non priority homeless young people (18-25) into shared accommodation in the district. This scheme will continue to be of high importance as the changes to the local housing allowance for

under 35's has meant is more difficult for young people to find suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.

- WHABAC Social Lettings Agency, Smartlets – the agency has been running successfully in Worcester for the last year and has been awarded Crisis funding to expand into the rest of the County. The project is a lettings agency aimed at attracting landlords who are willing to let to non priority homeless over the age of 25 with complex needs. Smartlets provide a managing agent role and the aim is to develop the agency so that the project is self sustaining from the income achieved from management fees.
- Money Advice – It is proposed that money be given to Wyre Forest CAB to support people who are presenting as homeless who have financial issues and need debt advice and assistance with negotiation with lenders.
- Worcestershire Homeless Intervention Team (WHIT) – the WHIT team have worked within the district for the last 2 years providing support to people rough sleeping. This service was originally funded from non-recurrent Supporting People funding and local authorities are now being asked to provide funding to ensure the continuation of the service. The service has supported up to 7 rough sleepers at any one time within Wyre Forest and they are an essential part of accessing an often chaotic client group.
- Night Assessment Centre – the Night Assessment Centre, based in Worcester, has provided emergency supported accommodation for rough sleepers in Wyre Forest over the last two winters. Funding has now been obtained for the development of a centre that will be open for 365 nights of the year and WFDC is being asked to contribute revenue funding towards support staff for the centre.
- STAMP – St Basils has developed a schools education programme to be delivered in secondary schools across the district. The aim is to help young people think about the realities of homelessness. The project will be developed by support workers and peer mentors (young people who have been homeless).
- Wyre Forest Nightstop and Mediation: This is a continuation of funding for the provision of mediation and emergency accommodation for young people facing homelessness.
- Stonham – This is continuation funding for the young persons drop in service at Stonham's Park Lane project.
- West Mercia Womens Aid – the funding would help the continuation of the specialist resettlement worker who assists families moving from the refuge into the community.
- NewStarts – This is continued funding for the provision of furniture to households moving into settled accommodation following a homeless application.
- Spend to Save – This budget will be used to pay off rent arrears, give people funding for transport to return home/access accommodation placements out of the district and also fund one off mortgage payments to help prevent mortgage possession proceedings.

5. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Each organisation will be required to enter into a Service Level Agreement with Wyre Forest District Council which will set out the performance expectations and outcomes.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 There are potential risks to the temporary accommodation budget if the funding is not allocated to homelessness prevention.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 All services will be expected to undertake an equality impact assessment as part of their service level agreement with the Council.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 To date, the expenditure of the CLG Homelessness Funding has assisted the authority in reducing the number of homeless acceptances and the number of households in temporary accommodation. The suggested expenditure will continue to provide services that will prevent homelessness and assist in meeting the actions within the Worcestershire County Homeless Action Plan.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 Julie Davis, Principal Accountancy Assistant
9.2 Jane Alexander, Principal Solicitor

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Proposed CLG expenditure Table 2012-13

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Worcestershire County Homelessness Strategy 2012-16
11.2 Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan 2012-13

Sally Horne
Principal Strategic Housing Officer

5th March 2012

Appendix One

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOMELESSNESS FUNDING ALLOCATION 2012/13

S.93 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

£

1. Homeless Prevention Officer	35,000
2. WFDC Rent Bond Scheme	30,000
3. Spend to Save	20,000
4. Private Sector Liaison Officer (p/t)	17,500
5. St Basils Rent Bond Scheme	15,000
6. Tenancy Sustainment Training	15,000
7. CAB Money Advice	14,664
5. West Mercia Women's Aid	10,000
6. Stonham	8,000
7. New Starts Furniture Project	6,793
8. STAMP	5,500
9. Smart Lets	5,000
10. Night Assessment Centre	5,000
11. Worcestershire Homeless Intervention Team	5,000
12. Funding for the County Homeless Coordinator	4,500
13. Wyre Forest Nightstop and Mediation Service	4,000
TOTAL	£200,957
	PNO Funding for 2012/13
	£109,270
	Carry Forward 2012/13
	£61,379

Mortgage Rescue Funding 2012/13

£41,496

TOTAL £212,145