

## Report to Cabinet

20 July 2023

By the Cabinet Member for Housing, Communities and Wellbeing

### DECISION REQUIRED



**Horsham  
District  
Council**

Not Exempt

## Housing grants – Approval of budget

### Executive Summary

Cabinet is recommended to ask Council to increase the housing budget so that the housing team can receive two grants that have been allocated by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The two grants, Homeless Prevention Grant top up and Home Office Asylum Dispersal Grant have restrictions and receipt of them was not known when the annual budget for 2023-2024 was set. Notification of the grants was received in June 2023. The two grants are in the sum of £271,911 and £72,000 respectively.

The housing team is currently investigating options for using the grants both independently and in partnership with colleagues in other District and Borough Councils and West Sussex County Council.

### Recommendations

That the Cabinet is recommended to ask Council to:

- i) Approve the receipt and expenditure of two grants in the sum of (i) £271,911 for Homeless Prevention Grant top up, and (ii) £72,000 for Home Office Asylum Dispersal Grant
- ii) Approve an increase in the housing team's 2023/24 revenue income and expenditure budgets of £343,911 to cater for the receipt of the two subject grants

### Reasons for Recommendations

- i) Increasing the revenue income and expenditure budgets in the Housing Service will allow the Council to receive and spend the grants offered by DLUHC
- ii) Full Council must approve an increase to the housing team's budget
- iii) To provide appropriate housing options for the cohorts specified in the grant conditions

## **Background Papers**

None

**Wards affected:** All

**Contact:** Rob Jarvis - Head of Housing and Community Services

## **Background Information**

### **1 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 In June 2023, DLUHC allocated the Council £72,000 of grant income for the Asylum Dispersal Scheme. The Council must demonstrate that they have fulfilled the eligibility conditions in supporting asylum seeker dispersal.
- 1.2 In June 2023, DLUHC allocated the Council an additional £271,911 of grant income in Homelessness Prevention Grant – 2023/2024 Homes for Ukraine Funding Top Up to support guests into sustainable accommodation. The purpose of this grant is to assist the local authority in supporting Ukrainian guests as they move into their second year and to reduce the risk of homelessness.

### **2 Relevant Council policy**

- 2.1 The funds received support the Council in meeting the priorities set out in the Council's corporate plan to ensure Horsham District is a great place to live with a strong, safe and healthy community. Specifically, these funds will support the Council in ensuring that local asylum seekers or locally supported Ukrainian refugees will not experience homelessness as a result of having no viable alternative housing option available.

### **3 Details**

- 3.1 The final detail around the use of both grants are being finalised. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to receive these funds and increase the financial budget of the housing team by a corresponding amount. This will allow the housing team to work with those who need housing support. The provision of this support will be administered in accordance with the grant criteria.
- 3.2 The housing department will seek to work in partnership with other authorities locally for efficiencies and increased impact. However, if all the funds are not used they will be returned to DHLUC in accordance with the grant criteria.

### **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 The proposal in this report needs to be discussed and approved by Cabinet who can then recommend to Full Council approval of the recommendations contained in this report.

### **5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations**

- 5.1 The Housing, Communities and Wellbeing Policy Development Advisory Group met on 6 July 2023. They were supportive of accepting the grant income. Given the short notice timeframes, Overview and Scrutiny will also be briefed by the Director of Resources at the meeting on 17 July 2023 and their views will be updated verbally at the Cabinet meeting.

- 5.2 The Monitoring Officer and the Director of Resources were consulted to ensure legal and financial probity.

## **6 Other courses of action considered but rejected**

- 6.1 The Council has considered not accepting these funds from DHLUC. This option has been dismissed as there is the possibility of increased demand on the homeless service if we are unable to implement appropriate preventative options (which could be funded by these grants) at an earlier stage.

## **7 Resource consequences**

- 7.1 Any additional options for the specified client groups identified within the grant parameters will be met within the existing team structure. Where this is not possible the grant will provide for the additional resource needed.
- 7.2 The additional revenue budget income of £343,911 received through these grants will be used to meet expenditure in this area with unspent funds being returned to DHLUC. There is no net effect on the revenue budget.

## **8 Legal considerations and implications**

- 8.1 Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 enables central government to make a grant for any purpose, capital or revenue, to any local authority. A grant made pursuant to this section will be (i) for such amount, and, (ii) paid on such conditions as may be determined by the relevant minister.
- 8.2 Section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 provides that a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do. The Council has the power, therefore to accept and receive grant funding.
- 8.3 The Council should (i) comply with the terms of and conditions attached to the grant, and, (ii) complete any legal documentation which is required to give effect to the receipt and use of the said grant.
- 8.4 The grant funding will be managed in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules (inter alia paragraph 4e.33 External Funding) contained in the Council's constitution.

## **9 Risk assessment**

- 9.1 The grant the Council will receive will support homeless prevention options for those specific cohorts detailed within the two grant remits. Not receiving the grants could pose an additional financial risk to the Council through additional homeless service demand and accommodation costs.

## **10 Procurement implications**

- 10.1 There are no procurement implications identified.

## **11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

11.1 The grants have specific criteria in respect of which cohorts must be supported.

## **12 Environmental implications**

12.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report, although the development of all activities and initiatives will be mindful of HDC's target to be carbon neutral by 2030.

## **13 Other considerations**

13.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications. The use of all databases and other sources of information will ensure that GDPR and data protection legislation is fully complied with.