

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2003
REPORT ON: USE OF HOMELESSNESS FUNDING ALLOCATIONS
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING
REPORT NO: 170-2003

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To seek Housing Committee approval to spend specific grant allocations for 2002/03 and 2003/04, to meet the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Housing Committee approve the following expenditure for 2002/03 and 2003/04 to maximise the use of allocations for homelessness purposes:
- i. That £17,700 be committed prior to 31 March 2003 to provide temporary furnished accommodation for disabled clients.
 - ii. That £200,000 is committed to the acquisition and development of available premises, prior to 31 March 2003, to provide additional temporary accommodation.
 - iii. That £12,000 is committed, prior to 31 March 2003 to provide 3 additional single person homeless network flats.
 - iv. That £25,300 is committed, prior to 31 March 2003 to spot purchase accommodation for homeless persons, in advance of Housing Benefits payments.
 - v. That necessary staff costs be claimed prior to 31 March 2003 to cover salaries and costs for the Homelessness Strategy Team 2002/03.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. All costs will be met from specific grant awarded by the Scottish Executive. There are no implications for the Housing Revenue Account or Community Charge.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The proposed reflects a number of key Dundee 21 Themes, including access to good food, water, shelter and fuel at a reasonable cost, health is protected, access to the skills, knowledge and information needed to enable everyone to play a full part in society.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Implementation of the new homelessness duties 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 Department has received £360,000 funding from Scottish Executive for 2002/03, for implementation of Homelessness Strategy and to tackle homelessness. After necessary revenue deductions, £255,000 is available prior to 31 March 2003. There is scope for the Department to claim and carry forward resources to 2003/04, if we can demonstrate that funding is committed in 2002/03.
- 6.2. Scottish Executive have advised that only 75% of the allocations can be guaranteed if funding is not committed in 2002/03. In addition to losing 25% of funds, confirmation of the amount carried forward is not available until October 2003, contributing to the difficulties of project planning and development.
- 6.3. This report sets out how to meet increased demand for temporary accommodation as a result of the Council's extended duties, and utilise available resources.
- 6.4. Notification of allocations for 2003/04 have been received. Specific grant funds will be available if the authority can evidence progress in meeting the demands of the new legislation. If Committee approve these developments, further Committee reports will provide updated information and seek necessary funding approvals for 2003/04.
- 6.5. Discussions are underway with Dundee Industrial Association, Gowrie Housing Association to develop a housing support centre offering 18 units of temporary accommodation, in available premises.
- 6.6. Guidance from Planning and Transportation (P&T) and Economic Development Department on location and use of the premises is favourable. P&T have stated that as the area is not zoned for residential accommodation, in the recently approved Local Plan, a joint venture, which combines training and temporary accommodation, would be acceptable.
- 6.7. Based on this, we anticipate Gowrie Housing Association obtaining approvals to acquire the premises prior to 31 March 2003, and to bring forward an accelerated development programme, aiming for completion in autumn 2004. It is anticipated that Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland grant would make up 57% of costs, and the remaining 43% being sourced from private finance.
- 6.8. Project costs are estimated at £1.2m, depending on the availability and level of Communities Scotland and Scottish Executive/DCC funding. Gowrie Housing Association will negotiate a bank or building society mortgage for approximately 43%.
- 6.9. It is proposed that homelessness grant is paid to Gowrie Housing Association for the purpose of purchasing the premises. Gowrie Housing Association have submitted details of this project in their recent Strategic Development Funding Programme, and Communities Scotland are aware of the priority for funds in 2004/05, for this purpose.
- 6.10. It is anticipated that relevant training provision for the premises can be developed by Gowrie Housing Association in partnership with another agency. Availability of European Social Funding will be explored to contribute to the revenue funding for the project.

- 6.11. Funding has been identified for 3 further network flats and to provide temporary, furnished, disabled accommodation. This will help the Department meet its extended homelessness duties.
- 6.12. Funding has been designated for the spot purchase of accommodation on a contract basis by Homeless Services Unit, to meet current demand for accommodation for homeless, priority and non priority applicants, until a housing support centre, or other premises are available.
- 6.13. The remaining funding covers salaries and operating costs for the Homelessness Strategy Team during 2002/03.

7. **CONSULTATION**

- 7.1. Comments have been sought from relevant Departments and these have been incorporated into this report.

8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1. The availability of funding is an opportunity for the Department to continue the development of additional homeless accommodation and carry out essential work, which will result in improvements to homeless service delivery, and assist the authority to meet new statutory duties.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1. Report on Use of Funding to Assist Implementation of Homelessness Sections – Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, approved by Housing Committee 17 December 2001 and Personnel Committee 14 January 2002.
- 9.2. Report on Homeless and Youth Housing Strategies 1998-2001, Update and Integration into Homelessness Strategy 2003-06 approved by Housing Committee 18 February 2002.

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FEBRUARY, 2003