

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 15 MAY 2006

REPORT ON: USE OF HOMELESSNESS FUNDING 2006/07

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO.: 327-2006

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To seek Housing Committee approval to spend special grant allocations for 2006/07 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. Housing Committee approve the following prioritisation of Task Force funding for 2006/07.
- 2.2. Projects that require continuation funding as detailed in Appendix 1 are approved.
- 2.3. New projects detailed below are approved.
- 2.4. Rough Sleepers Initiative Funding of £262,000 continues to be utilised as detailed in Appendix 1.

## 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

- Task Force Funding £498,867
- Rough Sleepers Initiative £262,000
- Furnished Tenancies Grant £53,122

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

## 4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The proposal 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 homeless 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 Council has been allocated £498,867 Task Force funding for implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and to tackle homelessness. Rough Sleepers Initiative funding of £262,000 has been awarded and this must be spent in accordance with the Local Outcome Agreement.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. The new legislation increases the Authority's homelessness duties to provide advice, information and temporary accommodation. In November 2003, Personnel Committee approved the recruitment of these additional staff for the Homeless Services Unit, to enable the Housing Department to fulfil statutory duties.
- 6.4. In January 2003, Personnel Committee approved a report to establish a Homeless Strategy Team which would be responsible for ensuring that the Local Authority met its obligations under Section 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 6.5. As agreed with partner agencies, an investigation requires to be carried out into the nature and scope on single homelessness within the City. It is recommended that we investigate the possibility of independent research.
- 6.6. Part 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 states that every local authority meets 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. It is therefore recommended that we continue the training programme already underway to ensure all homeless staff are trained to Homepoint standards.
- 6.7. Since the introduction of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004, it has been recognised that the Lily Walker Centre may be classed as unsuitable for children, as it no longer meets the criteria specified in a number of areas. It is therefore recommended that progress with the ongoing conversion continues this financial year.
- 6.8. Starter Packs is a voluntary charity which is supported by various churches and trusts. Their aim is to assist individuals and families on low incomes, by supplying basic household goods of essential items and bed linen to assist in the sustainment of tenancies. It is recommended that we assist this work by contributing to the running costs of the organisation.
- 6.9. 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.

Positive Steps can provide an Intensive Living Skills Programme which will assist clients to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to move on from hostel accommodation. It is recommended that this proposal is accepted as it will assist up to forty residents over a twelve month period.

- 6.10. New rights under homeless legislation has increased the number of households placed in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation. The Council has a duty to ensure that support, advocacy and advice is provided. The Positive Steps Accommodation Project will assist to move people on from Bed and Breakfast accommodation as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring access to services such as Welfare Benefit, Furniture Projects is available. It is recommended that this project is approved to assist and reduce the number of clients residing in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

## 7. **CONSULTATION**

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

## 8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. Report on Use of Homelessness Funding Allocations 2005/06, approved by Housing Committee, 21 March 2005, Report No.281-2005.
- 8.2. Report on Dundee's Homelessness Strategy Update 2004/05, approved by Housing Committee, 19 September 2005, Report No.555-2005.
- 8.3. Note on Extension of Fixed Term Posts (Homelessness Strategy Team), approved by Personnel and Management Services Committee, 13 February 2006.
- 8.4. Note on Extension of Fixed Term Posts (Homeless Services Unit) approved by Personnel and Management Services Committee, 13 February 2006.
- 8.5. Report on Response to "Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation for Families with Children" approved by Housing Committee, 19 April 2004, Report No.258-2004.
- 8.6. Report on tender received, Lily Walker Centre Conversion, Approved by Housing Committee, 16 January 2006, Report No.43-2006.

## APPENDIX 1

Rough Sleepers Initiative	£262,000
National Children's Homes – Youth Project	£50,000
McKay Rent Deposit Scheme	£35,530
Cyrenians Outreach and Resettlement Team	£158,630
Furnishing of Emergency Accommodation for Families	£17,840