



**COTSWOLD**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Cabinet 17th July 2023
Subject	Planned Expenditure of the Homelessness Prevention Grant – Homes for Ukraine top up 2023-2024
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council <a href="mailto:joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk">joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing, Assistant Director, Resident Services Email: <a href="mailto:jon.dearing@cotswold.gov.uk">jon.dearing@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Caroline Clissold Business Manager - Housing Email: <a href="mailto:caroline.clissold@cotswold.gov.uk">caroline.clissold@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the planned expenditure of the Homelessness Prevention Grant – Homes for Ukraine top up 2023/2024
Annexes	Annex A – Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Local Communities Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Homes for Ukraine top up Grant Letter, 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 Exempt Annex B – Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)
Recommendation(s)	<i>It is recommended that Cabinet:</i>  <i>1) Approve the expenditure detailed within section 3 of this report</i>  <i>2) Approve the delegation of any amendments to these allocations to the Business Manager - Housing in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer subject to compliance with the ring fenced grant conditions</i>  <i>3) Approve the delegation of decisions on any other uplifts or grants that may be given over the financial years 2023-24 to address increased demands on the Housing Service to the Business Manager - Housing in</i>



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	<i>consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer subject to compliance with the ring fenced grant conditions</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver the highest standard of service</li><li>• Support health and wellbeing</li></ul>
Key Decision	No
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Member with Responsibility for Housing Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive / S151 Officer Monitoring Officer Deputy Chief Executive Head of Legal Services

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has provided an annual grant allocation to assist with the Prevention of Homelessness for several years in varying different formats and amounts. This was recently changed to a two year award for 2023 onwards.
- 1.2** DLUHC awarded Cotswold District Council through the Homelessness Prevention Grant £144,956 for 2023-24 rising to £153,004 in 2024-25
- 1.3** On the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 DLUHC announced that a £150 million UK Homelessness Prevention Grant top up has been awarded to assist local authorities with the additional pressures faced by Homelessness services relating to the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) scheme.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1** Cotswold District Council received a letter from DLUHC on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 advising that the Council had been awarded an additional £155,966 from the Homelessness Prevention top up grant
- 2.2** This grant is ring fenced for homelessness targeting those most in need and to ensure local authorities are resourced to take action to prevent homelessness and to continue to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.3** The purpose of this specific top up is to assist the Council with maximising the support available to the Ukrainian cohort living with Hosts in the district under the Homes for Ukraine scheme to find sustainable accommodation.
- 2.4** The grant can also be used to support wider homelessness pressures and other refugee groups however all funds must be spent by the end of March 2024.
- 2.5** Full details of the Grant conditions are set out in the letter from DLUHC – Annex A

## **3. PROPOSAL**

- 3.1** Cotswold DC's Housing Team have seen significant homelessness pressure increases over the course of the pandemic and recent cost of living crisis.
- 3.2** However the additional work generated by the Homes for Ukraine (HFU) scheme alongside other Refugee schemes such as the Afghan Resettlement Scheme has seen workloads increase even further, specifically in the management side of the staff structure and the strategic representation at the various new local and countywide meetings that have been created to discuss these issues.

- 3.3** Staffing and management structure is therefore a priority area that needs to be addressed using this grant.
- 3.4** Given the short term nature of the fund and that there is only 9 months left before this must be spent, recruiting additional staffing through usual channels is unlikely to be successful. Usual recruitment times are also lengthy, averaging three months before new staff can be successfully recruited. It is therefore likely that we will need to use agency staff as we are unlikely to attract a high quality applicant for a 6 month contract.
- 3.5** There is sufficient knowledge and experience within the current Housing Team to regrade an existing post to take on the new management responsibilities however this post will then need to be backfilled.
- 3.6** It is therefore proposed that a new post is created for the duration of the Grant period - Resettlement and Complex Needs Manager - and shared across the Public Authorities. West Oxfordshire has the highest level of need / workload in this area so this will be shared 50/25/25 i.e. Cotswold DC's share will be 25%.
- 3.7** Although the new role will need to be evaluated it is likely that this will be a Level 3 Specialist or Manager level
- 3.8** Additional resourcing will also be needed to provide direct support to the Ukrainian and other Refugee groups to assist with finding alternative sustainable accommodation.
- 3.9** The remainder of the grant will be used to provide a flexible prevention approach to avoid the need for emergency accommodation, however where homelessness cannot be prevented, the grant will be used to support the costs of providing emergency accommodation:

Item	Full costs	CDC cost
Resettlement and Complex Needs Manager (subject to Job Evaluation)	Circa £45,000 (to be shared % 50/25/25)	£11,250
Additional HfU family / Prevention support staff		£35,000

Flexible Prevention Grant to include, but not limited to:  Rent in Advance Deposits Tenancy Set Up / Furniture / White goods Emergency Accommodation costs		£109,716
<b>Total</b>		<b>£155,966</b>

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 None considered as the allocation is ring fenced to specific outcomes.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are multiple complex funding streams supporting the work of the housing team particularly with regard to homeless prevention and Refugee schemes. Some of these funding streams are subject to bids and some are allocations. Often these come through at short notice and require officers to investigate options and put together work packages in short time frames
- 5.2 The proposals set out in section 3 are aimed at addressing the expectations set out by DLUHC and available accommodation in the Cotswold District. There are limited options and significant costs associated with the provision of emergency accommodation within the district, as well as a shortage of longer term accommodation.
- 5.3 The proposal is therefore aimed to ensure that resourcing and finances are available to assist with reducing the use and time spent in expensive short term, emergency accommodation benefiting both the Council and the client.
- 5.4 The impact on the revenue budget will be cost neutral.
- 5.5 Any staffing related costs are subject to evaluation so are approximate and will require appropriate contract variations to the Publica Contract.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Spending allocations need to follow the ring fenced grant schemes.
- 6.2 Save from the above there are no other legal implications arising directly from this report

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 There is a reputational risk to the Council if it does not use this grant funding effectively for the specific purposes set out in the DLUHC letter to Chief Executives on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023
- 7.2 DLUHC require a full financial breakdown of how the Homelessness Prevention Grant has been spent at the end of each financial year. If it has not been spent in full, or has not complied with the conditions of the Grant, the Council could be required to return all or some of it.
- 7.3 There is also a risk that rising demands on the service from ongoing financial and housing challenges facing residents of the Cotswold District Council area during the ongoing pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis could impact on the Council's ability to deliver a full statutory Housing service if resources are not adequate to meet demand

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.1 Please see attached Equalities Impact Assessment – Annex B

## **9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 None

(END)