

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**  
**24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2008**

**Communities for Local Government (CLG) Homelessness Funding 2008/09**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME</b>	Improved Health and Wellbeing
<b>CORPORATE PLAN THEME:</b>	Enabling Community Wellbeing
<b>KEY PRIORITY:</b>	Housing and Independent Living
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Mrs. A.T. Hingley
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Head of Planning Health and Environment
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Tim Rice, Housing Services Manager - Ext 2560 <a href="mailto:Tim.Rice@wyreforestdc.gov.uk">Tim.Rice@wyreforestdc.gov.uk</a>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Appendix 1 – Homelessness Funding Allocation 2008/09 s.93 Local Government Act 2000

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To propose arrangements for the Council to utilise the CLG's Priority Need Order Funding for 2008/09.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:**

- 2.1 **The proposed spend of the Communities for Local Government's Priority Need Order Funding for 2008/09 (as set out in Appendix 1) to be approved.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 extended the categories of homeless applicants who have a priority need for accommodation. Additional monies have been made available to Local Authorities throughout from 2002/3 for work with homeless applicants including prevention work.

3.2 Since 2002 funding has been made available to a number of local agencies for homelessness related work, and some of the successes are noted below –

- The Nightstop Scheme, to provide short term accommodation for young people in the homes of trained volunteers and to provide family mediation. Since March 2005, over one hundred nights of emergency accommodation have been provided via host families. Nightstop also developed a mediation service which is identified as an effective homeless prevention tool. With further funding for 2008/09 Nightstop aims to extend it's service to seven days per week.
- Funding has been made available to Women's Aid to enable outreach work to provide advice and support to women who are or who have experienced domestic abuse. This provides a vital role in the prevention of homelessness and in sustaining tenancies.
- A number of visiting floating support workers have been funded to support both vulnerable people who need assistance in managing the day to day issues of a new tenancy, and also those at risk of losing their tenancy and becoming homeless.
- Citizens Advice Bureau have run various homelessness advice sessions. County Court Advice work has been particularly successful in avoiding homelessness where people have not sought previous advice about their situation. Attendance on possession hearing days enables support to be given through the Court process, and a number of evictions have been avoided. Extension of debt advice to people with mental health problems, based at the Edward Parry Centre in Kidderminster. CAB have made over 100 appointments through these two schemes for clients facing possible homelessness during 2008.

3.3 The Council has been successful in obtaining £67,000 of ring fenced funding per annum from the CLG for the next 3 years (until 2010/11). This is based upon its success in increasing the level of homelessness prevention, meeting Government requirements on the reduced use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for families and successfully halving the Government's use of temporary accommodation within the first year.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The schemes outlines (in Appendix 1) are a continuation or further development of projects that have proven their worth in homelessness prevention and supporting homeless applicants o maintain their accommodation and avoid future homelessness situations.
- 4.2 The 'Spend to Save' Initiatives which are now employed by most Local Authorities are helpful in preventing homelessness but also saving the Local Authority from the high cost of temporary or Bed and Breakfast accommodation. These initiatives can include the provision of rent deposits for people to access the private rented sector.

- 4.3 A number of projects, namely Wyre Forest Community Housing and Stonham Housing Association Floating Support schemes and the Women's Aid scheme are partly funded by Supporting People. These services have been rigorously inspected and reviewed by Supporting People and are seen as valuable and high quality services. Officers have considered these inspections as part of the assessment of these schemes and have also required the same value for money criteria as Supported People have used, to obtain a consistent approach.
- 4.4 Funding is provided to a range of local agencies on a quarterly basis, which reports are received on progress and successes. The Council is also continuing to fund the Wyre Forest Nightstop and Mediation service from its homelessness budget and will provide £4000 in 2008/09.
- 4.5 Because of the nature of some of the schemes, particularly those based on referrals of clients, funding is not always utilised as planned. As in previous years it is proposed that where there is a significant variation in take up that the Head of Planning, Health and Environment will in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Health and Environment to vary funding between projects as necessary.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The main issue for the Council would be if the CLG was to stop providing this funding to Local Authorities as it would need to consider funding these initiatives from its own resources. However, CLG have agreed to ring fence £67,000 per annum for the Council until 2010/11, so this is not an immediate issue.

**6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no legal or policy implications arising from this report.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

**8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The Council and its agent, Wyre forest Community Housing have been working hard to reduce the level of homelessness applications and acceptances through a focus on prevention and housing advice work. This has resulted in a reduction of homelessness acceptances of over 60% between 2002 and 2007, with the PNO schemes making a significant contribution to this.
- 8.2 The proposals in Appendix 1 are targeted to meet Government homelessness objectives, the Council's Homelessness Strategy and the three main reasons for homelessness which include people being asked to leave accommodation, the end of a tenancy in the private sector and domestic violence.

**9. CONSULTEES**

9.1 Corporate Management Team

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Housing Strategy 2004-2007  
Homeless Strategy and Action Plan  
County Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan

25.3.08

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**HOMELESSNESS FUNDING ALLOCATION 2008/09**

**S.93 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000**

	£
1. Continuing funding for CAB Court based Homelessness Advice Desk and work at Edward Parry centre	14,250
2. Continuing funding for a Domestic Violence Outreach worker for tenancy sustainment, with Wyre Forest Womens Aid	16,369
3. Continuation of a Sanctuary Scheme for victims of domestic violence.	3,456
4. Homelessness Prevention / Spend to Save	12,592.07
5. WFCH Floating Support scheme for homeless households in both the public and private sectors	11,706.24
6. Stonham Housing Association Floating Support scheme for homeless households in both the public and private sectors	14,115.92
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	72,489.23
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PNO Funding for 2008/09	67,000
PNO balance carried forward	5,489.23
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	72,489.23
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(From Homelessness Support Budget)

Continuing funding to support Nightstop and Mediation service £4,000 for vulnerable young people. A preventative and emergency accommodation scheme in partnership with statutory agencies and Centrepont.