

Decision Pathway – Report



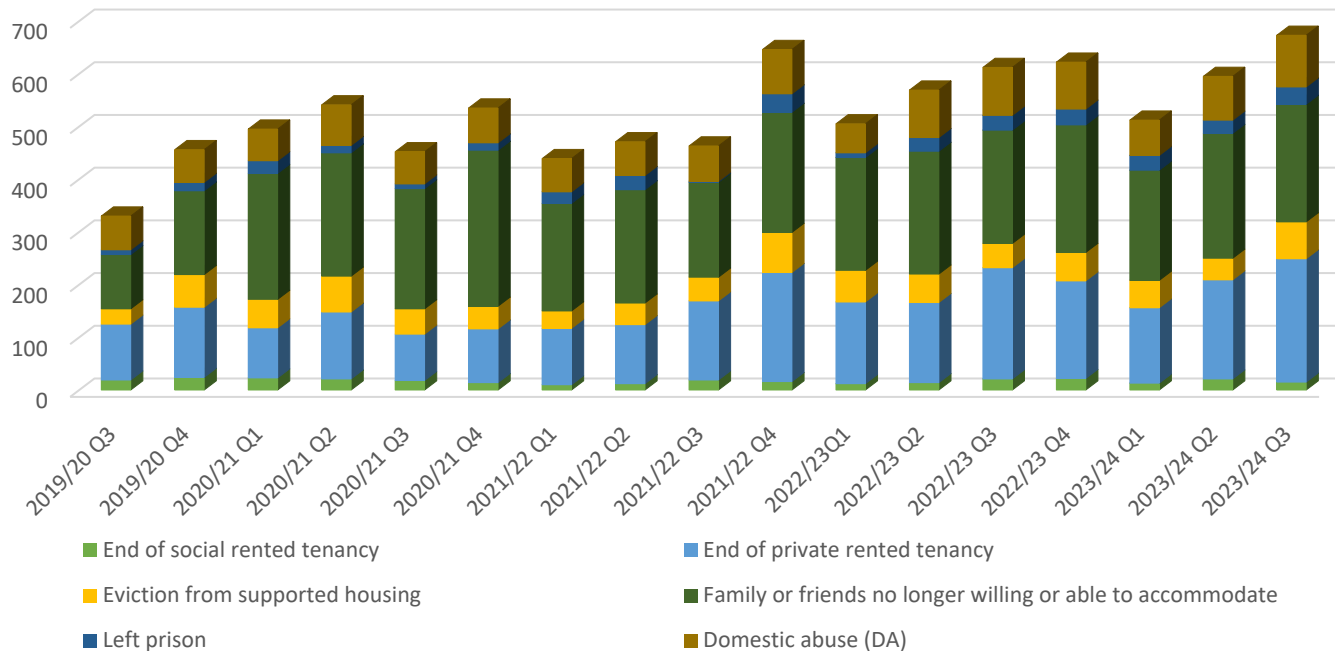
PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 02 April 2024

TITLE	Homelessness Prevention Grant Top up 24/25		
Ward(s)	City Wide		
Author: Paul Sylvester	Job title: Head of Housing Options		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness	Executive Director lead: John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member			
Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report			
To seek approval to accept and spend Bristol’s Homelessness Prevention Grant Allocation Top up for 2024/25 of £987,720.			
Evidence Base:			
<p>1. Background</p> <p>1.1. Homelessness pressures in Bristol</p> <p>Bristol has experienced rising rates of homelessness. Since the pandemic we have seen a 25% increase in households (average of 510 households a month) approaching Bristol City Council because of homelessness related issues. The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) is now over 1,500.</p> <p>During the pandemic and “Everyone in” the number of single people accommodated increased significantly. Family homelessness has increased since the end of lockdowns and protections like the eviction ban. The cost-of-living crisis and continuing challenges around affordability of both home ownership and private renting are contributing to high level of homelessness presentations.</p> <p>Information below shows the main reasons for homelessness in Bristol.</p>			
1.2. Main reasons for homelessness			

Family no longer willing or able to accommodate, and end of Private Rented Tenancies continue to be the main reasons for homelessness. Not all reasons for homelessness are included here.



Reasons for homelessness/ Quarter	End of social rented tenancy	End of private rented tenancy	Eviction from supported housing	Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	Left prison	Domestic abuse
2019/20 Q3	19	106	29	103	9	64
2019/20 Q4	24	133	62	159	16	62
2020/21 Q1	23	95	54	238	24	60
2020/21 Q2	21	127	68	234	14	77
2020/21 Q3	18	88	48	228	9	61
2020/21 Q4	14	102	43	296	14	66
2021/22 Q1	10	107	33	204	22	63
2021/22 Q2	12	112	41	215	34	64
2021/22 Q3	19	155	45	180	*	67
2021/22 Q4	16	207	76	228	35	84
2022/23 Q1	12	155	60	212	9	55
2022/23 Q2	14	152	54	233	26	90
2022/23 Q3	21	211	46	215	28	91
2022/23 Q4	22	185	54	242	30	89
2023/24 Q1	13	143	52	209	28	67
2023/24 Q2	21	188	41	237	25	83
2023/24 Q3	15	234	70	223	33	98

*Below 5 but not zero

Through the Council's Temporary Accommodation programme, we are focussed on reducing the costs of TA to the

authority, however with increasing demand there remains a significant pressure on Council finances.

1.3. Homelessness Prevention Grant top up 24/25

The Autumn Statement 2023 announced an additional £120 million to help councils address homelessness pressures in 2024-2025. On 28 February 2024 the government announced that England's share of that funding is £109 million and that Bristol City Council will be allocated £987,720.

The grant is ringfenced for 2024/25 and must be spent in line with the Homelessness Prevention Grant principles:

- To comply fully with the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
- To ensure financial viability of services by contributing to the costs of statutory duties, including implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act and supporting with the costs of temporary accommodation.
- To reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention and reduce the use of unsuitable B&Bs for families.

2. Proposals for Homelessness Prevention Grant – Top up 24/25

The additional interventions paid for by this top up will align with existing interventions paid for by our main Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation, services funded by the Council and through other grant funding like the rough sleeping initiative (RSI).

The main Homelessness Prevention Grant is used to do the following:

- Pay for additional resources to work with an increasing number of households that are homeless and to carry out the enhanced duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, with the aim of preventing homelessness and reducing TA.
- Pay for initiatives that increase access to affordable housing.
- Pay for higher quality and cost-effective supported housing as an alternative to expensive TA.
- Directly cover some costs of TA (Housing Benefit subsidy loss).

It is proposed that the Top Up grant will be used to complement existing interventions to achieve the aims set out above with a focus on investing in services to prevent homelessness.

Housing Options have commissioned a review of its preventing homelessness activities. The outcomes of the review, due in the next couple of months, will help to direct this funding to maximise homelessness prevention.

Cabinet Member Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the Homelessness Prevention Grant Allocation Top up for 2024/25 of £987,720.
2. Authorise the Executive Director – Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness to take all steps required to accept and spend the Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation as outlined in the report, including procuring and awarding contracts (which may be over £500k) in line with the procurement routes and maximum budget envelopes set out in this report.
3. Authorise the Executive Director – Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness to invoke any subsequent extensions/variations specifically defined in the contract(s) being awarded, up to the maximum budget envelope outlined in this report.
4. Authorise the Executive Director – Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness to take all steps required to amend the planned expenditure for the grants within the overall budget envelope set out in the report.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

- The Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy 2022- 2027 Theme 5, Our Homes and Communities Priorities has a priority on reducing and preventing homelessness and within Housing Supply Section includes to ‘make sure empty properties in that sector are brought back in to use.’
- Bristol City Council Business Plan 2018-2023 - Housing Supply- to make best use of housing supply from existing stock - KPI 2: Increase the number of private sector dwellings returned into occupation

City Benefits: Stable housing is intrinsically tied to how well people can focus on other needs or difficulties in their lives and participate within their communities. This proposal will have a positive impact on both the households who are supported and the communities they live in.

Consultation Details: N/A

Background Documents:

- [Homelessness Prevention Grant: Homes for Ukraine scheme support](#)
- [Allocations of UK-wide allocation of £120 million funding for Ukraine and Homelessness pressures 2024 – 2025: technical note](#)
- [£109 million Homelessness Prevention Grant 2024-25 top-up local authority allocations \(England only\)](#)

Revenue Cost	£987,720	Source of Revenue Funding	Homelessness Prevention Grant
Capital Cost	£0	Source of Capital Funding	N/A
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: The Temporary Accommodation budget has seen large increases in spend in recent years and as such the additional £988k HPG is a welcome additional resource to help alleviate some of this pressure.

Whilst some additional funding was expected by the service, the quantum of this funding was unknown until recently. However, the additional sums received will be utilised to relieve some of the pressure currently being seen on the TA budget, through the provision of additional resource and carrying out enhanced duties in order to reduce the number of individuals and households presenting as homeless, thereby reducing the requirement for TA.

There is also the opportunity to utilise these funds for other homelessness prevention initiatives which provide an alternative to TA, such as working with the Great Western Credit Union to assist households into affordable accommodation, or the provision of additional supported housing, with the aim of assisting at risk families/individuals with the support needed to eventually obtain and sustain an ongoing tenancy in either the private or social housing rental sector.

The proposals detailed above, funded by the additional grant, are aimed at reducing the current level of TA (which currently costs BCC circa £12.9k per annum per unit through subsidy loss), and avoiding future additional costs.

Finance Business Partner: Martin Johnson – Interim Finance Manager Housing and Landlord Services 19 March 2024

2. Legal Advice: Where the grant allocation is used to procure and award contracts, the procurement process must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations and the Councils own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 20 March 2024

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect 28th March 2024

4. HR Advice: There are no HR implications evident		
HR Partner: Celia Williams, HR Business Partner – Growth and Regeneration 21 st March 2024		
EDM Sign-off	John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	6 March 2024
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness	25 March 2024
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	26 March 2024

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO