



Report of the Director of Social Services

External Funding Panel – 6 February 2019

Welsh Government Housing Support Grant

Purpose:	To approve the funding the for the Welsh Government Housing Support Grant
Policy Framework:	Social Services and Wellbeing Act Wales (2014) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal, Child & Family Services, Poverty & Prevention, Housing
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Approve the changes to the grant funding of three existing Grants 2) Accept the offer letter of one new combined Housing Support Grant
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Finance Officer:	Chris Davies
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Access to Services Officer:	Catherine Window

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In recent year many local authorities have suggested that the way Welsh Government's grant funding structures for certain programmes can sometimes restrict the way they would like to deliver services for vulnerable people to meet the needs at a local level.
- 1.2 Local authorities have asked the Welsh Government for greater flexibility to be able to maximise the potential of the funding available to plan for and deliver improved services to meet the needs of people in their areas more effectively.

- 1.3 Over the course of 2018-19 Welsh Government have been testing a new way of working (flexible funding) in collaboration with seven 'pathfinder' local authorities and one Public Services Board.
- 1.4 An interim evaluation of flexible funding demonstrated the potential for improved outcomes arising from better planning and delivery of more integrated services and would allow for the planning, commissioning and delivery of services which reflect the complexity of people's lives and the inter-relationships between their support needs.

2. The Programmes

- 2.1 The 10 existing Grant Programmes identified as part of the new way of working and flexible funding are Flying Start, Families First, Legacy Fund, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, St David's Day Fund, Communities for Work Plus, Childcare and Play, Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention, Rent Smart Wales Enforcement
- 2.2 In Swansea, combined funding for these 10 programmes equate to approximately £25 Million on an annual basis.
- 2.3 After careful consideration of the evaluation and listening to stakeholders, Ministers decided the 10 individual programmes set out above would form two new grants streams; one housing-related grant and one non-housing related grant.
- 2.4 This two grant approach is intended to deliver on the key principles of the 10 programmes, whilst providing greater freedom and flexibility to local authorities to use their local knowledge and information to design and manage services to meet the needs of people in their areas
- 2.5 Welsh Government have set clear expectations that the two grants should work in a seamless fashion, providing integrated services where appropriate. The work to produce and develop these new arrangements will be guided by this principle and by the objective of streamlining processes wherever possible.

3. The New Approach

- 3.1 From April 2019 the two grants in operation will be a **Children and Communities Grant (CCG)** and a **Housing Support Grant (HSG)**.
- 3.2 This report outlines the changes to the existing grant programmes as they are combined into one **Housing Support Grant (HSG)**
- 3.3 The **Housing Support Grant (HSG)** seeks to address the housing and housing related support needs of the most vulnerable individuals in society through the range of early intervention, prevention and support mechanisms. It will seek to mitigate or remove disadvantage to vulnerable people to enable them to have the same life chances as

others, and therefore contribute to a more equal Wales. As such, Housing Support Grant will be about accessing and maintaining a home.

- 3.4 The three programmes in the **Housing Support Grant (HSG)** are:
- Supporting People*
 - Homelessness Prevention
 - Rent Smart Wales Enforcement

** In line with the budget deal, in 2018-19 and 2019-20, it is the Welsh Government's expectation that Local Authorities should allocate funding to the Supporting People (SP) programmes at least at the level of the SP allocation unless they can demonstrate that they are delivering the same, or improved, services for less money as a result of efficiencies.*

3.5 The money allocated for the Housing Support Grant must only be spent on delivering against the key principles and requirements of the programmes within these grants.

3.6 It is important to note the delivery against the key principles of the programmes within the new HSG is not changed by this new approach. Delivery of programmes such as Supporting People will continue, their objectives, core requirements, activities and branding do not disappear.

3.7 The guidance provided for the HSG will be issued shortly and explains what is expected in the delivery of each programme.

3.8 However, within each new grant, local authorities have 100% flexibility to allocate and manage grant funding across the programmes as set out above.

3.9 These arrangements will remain in place for the remainder of this Assembly term and will apply to all local authorities in Wales.

3.10 We have been working across the Directorate to ensure we have robust systems in place for the delivery of these programmes to meet the needs of our population in a joined up and strategic way, within the terms and conditions of the new grant arrangements.

3.11 Flexibility within this grant has supported joint planning and commissioning to make more effective use of the funding in pursuit of the constituent programmes' aims and objectives.

3.12 The Welsh Government is working collaboratively with local authorities and stakeholders to ensure that this change is led and managed well.

3.13 This new approach will bring about a stepped change in the way in which local authorities and Welsh Government work with each other. It also brings about internal changes within each organisations governance and operation arrangements.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

4.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

4.2 An EIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome is that a full EIA report was not required as these arrangements are around back office functions and there is no direct change to services provided to the public as a result.

4.4 However, throughout the transition year a full EIA report will need to be completed if services to client groups change as a result of needs, planning and commissioning decisions.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 An indicative grant offer letter has been received from Welsh Government for the Housing Support Grant (HSG) for a maximum of £14,038,243 for 2019-20.

5.2 The table below outlines the indicative composition of the HSG for 2019-20 compared to the allocation in 2018-19.

Programme Area	Allocation 18/19	Allocation 19/20
Supporting People	£ 13,908,658	£ 13,817,121
Homelessness Prevention	£ 209,000	£ 211,599
Rent Smart Wales Enforcement	£ 26,636	£ 9,523
TOTAL	£ 14,144,294	£ 14,038,243

6. Legal Implications

6.1 All terms and conditions attached to WG Housing Support Grant (HSG) are complied with and that the Council's Financial Procedure Rules Regarding Grant Applications and Acceptances are followed, if successful.

Background Papers: None

Appendix: Appendix A - EIA Screening