



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: Homelessness Prevention Funds Policy

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1. Introduction

The Council agreed a policy in October 2014 which focused financial assistance to those homeless residents who were deemed to be 'in priority need'.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to consider making upto 20% of the Homeless Prevention Budget available to those who whilst meeting the existing criteria are deemed 'not in priority need'.

3. Background

The existing scheme has assisted 'priority' cases with securing privately rented accommodation over a number of years. Increasing rents, tighter underwriting conditions and the impact of welfare reforms has reduced the numbers of households assisted.

	2014/15	2015/16 - To Date
Budget	£49,000.00	£48,000.00
Priority Households Assisted	13	10
Expenditure	£11,410.00	£6,087.00

Housing Options Officers have identified an unmet need to assist those households who are deemed 'not in priority need'. These are usually single people and childless couples of a working age.

This need has always existed but has become a pressing issue as in September 2015 the Kennedy House Hostel closed its doors. This hostel had been a destination for many homeless people deemed 'not in priority need', including a proportion from the Borough. The alternative and smaller provision is located in Loughborough.

The Housing Options team now need the flexibility to assist 'not in priority need' homeless Borough residents with securing private accommodation.

All other aspects of the policy will remain in force including the need for accommodation to be suitable and affordable. Virtually all assistance is provided by way of interest free loans.

4. Resources

The cost of providing this assistance will be met from the existing Homeless Prevention Budget which is provided by the Department for Local Government as grant.

If agreed, £2000 will be provided for the remainder of 2015/16 and £9000 for 2016/17.

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Implications	
Financial	Extending the scope of the payments can be contained within the existing budget.
Legal	A written policy is required to ensure that Local Authorities are able to provide financial assistance to persons in the private sector.
Risk	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. CR6 - Regulatory governance. The Council is expected to determine the needs of its residents There is also the risk that by extending the scope of the payments, it may generate additional demand.
Equalities	By extending the scope of the payments, it will ensure equality of access to all.