

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Cabinet  
16<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Report of** Director – Regeneration and Development

**Subject** Use of additional Homelessness Grant

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15

### Purpose

To note the receipt of an additional one off Government Homelessness grant of £120,000 to support sub-regional projects aimed at preventing homelessness in 2011/12.

### Recommendations

To agree the allocation of this additional grant funding to:-

- (a) Extend the sub-regional Empty Homes Project Officer post for 12 months from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010: and
- (b) to finance the cost of the Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator post.

### Financial Consequences

This additional grant is available for one year and will finance a 12 month extension of the Empty Homes Project Officer post at a cost of £63,000 and will offset the £57,000 budgeted cost of the Rough Sleeper Coordinator post.

Sufficient funding remains in the ring-fenced sub-regional empty homes grant budget to cover redundancy costs for the empty homes post at the end of 2011/12.

### Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Safe and healthy neighbourhoods – working in partnership with residents to create neighbourhoods where people feel secure, where the streets are clean and well maintained, where there is good quality housing and local amenities and where there are active local communities”

**Executive Member:** Cllr Arthur – Housing.

### Contact Officers

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## **Background Documents**

None

# Report

## Background

1. The council has a statutory responsibility to provide assistance for the homeless. In the next financial year the Council has allocated £940,370 to meet this responsibility. The government has provided £182,900 in grant aid toward this cost.
2. Since the budget was prepared the government has announced further grant funding to support homelessness work in the greater Norwich sub region. This additional £120,000 was unexpected and therefore not included in the approved budget. However, since the homelessness grant and its use was included in the budget framework agreed by council, under the Constitution the use of this additional allocation can be agreed by Cabinet and the purpose of this report is to seek approval for the use of this additional funding

## Proposed Allocation

3. The council seeks to encourage the occupation of empty homes and has engaged an officer to address this matter on a sub regional basis. This post has been supported by grant aid which ends in March 2011. In view of the importance of this function it is proposed to use £63,000 of this additional grant aid to continue for a further 12 months, the sub-regional empty homes officer post.
4. The post has a direct impact on homelessness by increasing the supply of housing and, in particular, making empty homes directly available for allocation to people at risk of homelessness through our private sector leasing scheme. In addition to bringing homes back into use the council will also secure financial benefit from the new homes bonus that provides a government grant reward equivalent to 80% of the council tax for that property over a six year period
5. In addition to the work on empty homes, the council also leads on behalf of the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership, work that seeks to address rough sleeping. This task is undertaken by the rough sleeper co-ordinator. Although this post is currently being funded from the overall homelessness budget, it has been agreed with our sub regional partners that this position can be financed from the additional homelessness grant at a cost of £57,000.
6. Any unallocated grant aid will be held in the general fund reserves.