

Report Title:	Acceptance of Homelessness related grants and spend proposal		
Report to:	Council	Date:	4 th March 2026
Report of:	Housing Options Team Leader	Cabinet Portfolio	Communities, Housing, Health and Wellbeing
Cabinet Lead Member	Cllr McInnes	Wards Affected	All
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required: Yes	Attached: Yes	
Contact Officer:	Elizabeth Usher	Telephone:	01706 252555
Email:	elizabethusher@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform on the decision for the Council to accept and deploy a number of grant funding allocations including the funding arrangements and resources required to deliver homelessness services in Rossendale over the next three years.
- 1.2 Rossendale Borough Council receives funding from MHCLG to deliver homelessness prevention services in accordance with the Housing Act 1996. From 2026/27 this allocation will be known as the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant.
- 1.3 Rossendale has also received a winter top-up of the former Homeless Prevention Grant for 2025/26 to support and deliver prevention services.
- 1.4 Alongside these grants, funding has also been received to develop a Supported Housing Strategy from 26/27. This will assess current provision, demand and any unmet need for supported accommodation in the borough.
- 1.5 The Renters Rights Act 2025 together with the publication of the new Government strategy "A National Plan to End Homelessness", is expected to increase the number of households seeking homeless advice and support. This report outlines how grant funding will be used to respond to increased demand and to strengthen prevention activity at the earliest opportunity.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To delegate authority to the Head of Legal, Director of Resources and Director of Economic Development, in consultation with the Lead Members for Communities, Housing and Health and Resources, to enter into agreements to accept and spend the following grant funding:

- **2025/26 - Homeless Prevention Grant (Winter Top Up) £55,046**
- **2026/27, 2027/28, 2028/29 - Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant (three-year award awarded annually)**
 - £453,937 (26/27)
 - £499,355 (27/28)
 - £581,058 (28/29)
- **2025/26 - Supported Housing Strategy Grant £49,621**

2.2 To note and accept the proposed delivery plans set out in section 3.5

3.0 BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

3.1 The homelessness service continues to experience increased demand, with rising caseloads of more complex needs presenting earlier. Legislative reform arising from the Renters Rights Act 2025 and the Government's *National Plan to End Homelessness* will further increase expectations on the service and require additional preparation.

3.2 To respond effectively, the service must continue to shift from crisis intervention towards a prevention-focused delivery, including early identification of risk, proactive engagement and targeted support for vulnerable households. This approach is essential to managing workload pressures and meeting statutory duties within available resources.

3.3 **Acceptance and Spend of – 2025/26 HOMELESS PREVENTION GRANT (HPG) Winter Top Up**
Received 2 January 2026 - **£55,046**

3.4 MHCLG has instructed that the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) Winter Top Up must be used to maintain and enhance homelessness prevention activity and reduce the number of households experiencing homelessness.

3.5 Although significant housing law changes will commence in May 2026 following implementation of the Renters Rights Act 2025, MHCLG requires local authorities to use the 2025/26 HPG Top Up in advance of these changes to ensure households at imminent risk receive timely support to remain in their homes where possible.

3.6 The funding must be directed solely towards prevention, relief and associated staffing costs and must not be used for costs directly related to temporary accommodation.

3.7 **Acceptance and Spend of – MHCLG HOMELESSNESS, ROUGH SLEEPING AND DOMESTIC ABUSE GRANT (Three-year allocation 2026/27–2028/29, awarded annually) £1,534,350**

3.8 In December 2025, the Government published *A National Plan to End Homelessness*, setting out a new approach focused on prevention rather than crisis management. This was published alongside MHCLG's announcement of a three-year allocation of the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant.

- 3.9 The new funding framework provides greater flexibility and certainty, enabling councils to plan more effectively in the context of rising homelessness pressures and increased demand on services.
- 3.10 Funding for temporary accommodation has been removed from this grant and incorporated into the Revenue Support Grant, creating a clear separation and ringfenced funding streams focused on homelessness prevention, rough sleeping and domestic abuse support.
- 3.11 The grant must not be used for costs directly related to temporary accommodation, including (but not limited to):
- Net temporary accommodation costs
 - Temporary accommodation subsidy loss
 - Temporary accommodation maintenance costs
- 3.12 The grant supports delivery of duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and preparation for reforms arising from the Renters Rights Act 2025 (due May 2026) and *A National Plan to End Homelessness*. These reforms place increased expectations on local authorities and require services to prioritise prevention at the earliest opportunity rather than responding at crisis point.
- 3.13 Rossendale Borough Council has a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, including vulnerable groups.
- 3.14 MHCLG expects local authorities to use the grant to:-
- Deliver statutory duties under the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
 - Develop and maintain statutory homelessness strategies in line with grant conditions
 - Prepare for and implement the Renters Rights Act 2025
 - Deliver *A National Plan to End Homelessness* and its five pillars: Universal Prevention: Targeted Prevention: Preventing Crisis: Improving Emergency Response: Recovery Preventing Repeat Homelessness
 - Reduce reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation and eliminate B&B use for families beyond the six-week statutory limit
 - Re-focussing service delivery towards early intervention and homelessness prevention
 - Continue delivery of the agreed B&B elimination plan with the MHCLG HAST Adviser
 - Provide early, targeted support to vulnerable households
 - Fulfil statutory duties to provide safe accommodation and support for those fleeing domestic abuse
 - Support people furthest from services and contribute to halving rough sleeping.

3.15 **Acceptance and Spend of –**

3.16 **MHCLG SUPPORTED HOUSING STRATEGY GRANT** (Estimated receipt Q4 25/26 or Q1 26/27) - **£49,621**

3.17 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 places a statutory duty on local authorities to develop and deliver a Local Supported Housing Strategy. This requires assessment of current provision and future need, including unmet need, over a five-year period.

3.18 **To Approve Proposed Plans for the Spend of Allocated Grants**

The Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant provides greater funding certainty over the three-year period 2026/27 to 2028/29; however, this is set against a backdrop of sustained and increasing demand on the Council's homelessness service. Rising presentations of complex of cases and wider housing market pressures continue to place significant strain on resources.

- 3.19 Under the Homeless Reduction Action, the Housing Options Team are required to establish whether a case is homeless or threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days (no fault eviction) as this is the required notice period for a section 21 notice. Under the new Renters Rights Act, the section 21 eviction notice is to be abolished, replacing it with redefined section 8 notice, and potentially doubling the period of notice required to 112 days.
- 3.20 Local authorities are required to utilise the extended period of notice to focus expenditure on prevention activity at the earliest opportunity, and offer advice and assistance to an increase on those approaching the service at a much earlier stage. Early intervention is critical to reducing the need for costly crisis responses and temporary accommodation placements, which carry significant financial risk to the Council if demand continues to rise. For this reason, the Housing Options Team has established a Homeless Prevention Officer. The role will focus on taking advantage of the increased notice period to assist as soon as possible in an attempt to avoid reaching a housing crisis and ultimately avoiding homelessness.
- 3.21 Effective use of the grants will be essential to manage cost pressures, mitigate future temporary accommodation expenditure, and ensure the service remains financially sustainable.
- 3.22 Housing Options previously outsourced and Calico Homes to provide an Outreach Support Officer, together with a Rough Sleeper Navigator funded to 31st March 2026. The new allocation of the 3 year grant funding 26/27 has allowed the Housing Options Team to review the needs of the Housing Options service and has therefore established a new inhouse role of a Housing Options Response Officer and it has not renewed the posts provided by Calico homes.
- 3.23 The Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant supports services to prevent and relieve homelessness, and it is proposed to continue to utilise the grants to fund including but not limited to:
- Rough sleeping response
 - Interim and temporary accommodation support
 - Provision of Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and Sanctuary Schemes
 - Provision of Domestic Abuse support within Rossendale
 - Early intervention and homelessness prevention activity
 - Mediation service
 - Housing advice, including housing law and statutory homelessness duties
 - Financial assistance
 - Strategy development
 - Staffing
 - Increased workforce capacity:
 - Housing Options Response Officer
 - Homeless Prevention Officer
 - Homelessness Case management System
 - Choice Based Lettings System
 - Mediation
 - Person centred support
 - CIH Training
- 3.24 The overarching aim of the grant is to maintain and strengthen homelessness prevention activity, reducing the number of households experiencing homelessness and improving outcomes for those most at risk.

Housing Options Response Officer (per annum)	£40,000
Homeless Prevention Officer_(per annum)	£40,000
Existing staff (per annum)	£150,000
B-with-Us Choice based Letting system and case management system (Per annum)	£23,000
Homelessness Case Management System (Per annum)	£9,600
Domestic Abuse Support Provision_(Per annum)	£35,000
Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme (Per Annum)	£12,000
Housing Solutions – Legal documentation (per annum)	£2,000
Young People Support Provision (per annum)	£12,000
Housing - Financial Assistance (including but not limited to:- rent in advance/bond)	£45,000
Financial Assistance (including but not limited to :- storage/transport/arrears/furniture)	£45,000
Targeted support – vulnerable groups	£45,000

4.0 RISK

4.1 Failure to prioritise early homelessness prevention presents a significant risk to both service delivery and the Council's financial position. Without effective early intervention, demand for temporary accommodation is likely to increase, leading to higher costs, increased use of unsuitable accommodation, and greater pressure on staff capacity.

4.2 The grant enables the Council to mitigate these risks by:

- Strengthening early prevention and intervention activity
- Reducing reliance on crisis responses and temporary accommodation
- Supporting service redesign to better manage increasing demand
- Ensuring compliance with existing and forthcoming legislative requirements

4.3 A sustained focus on prevention at the earliest opportunity is therefore essential to reducing risk, managing demand, and delivering a resilient and sustainable homelessness service.

5.0 SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

5.1 Housing Options Team Grant Funding Allocation

5.2 The Council has previously received annual funding to deliver its statutory housing duties including Homeless Prevention Grant, Domestic Abuse Grant and the Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant. From 26/27 MHCLG has confirmed it is to consolidate these grants into one multi-year grant totalling approximately £1.404m over three years. This new grant is to be known as the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant. Funding to support temporary accommodation has been removed from this grant and incorporated into the Council's Revenue Support Grant.

Year	Homeless Prevention Grant	Domestic Abuse Grant	RSI Outreach Support	RSI Rough Sleeper Navigator	Temp Accom Costs deducted from HPG (not including costs deducted from revenue) Actual / Estimated to date Jan 26	New Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant from April 26	Total grants	Grant Top Up amount Actual / Estimated (awaiting)	Total grant with Actual or Estimated (awaiting) top up
2023/24	£147,484	£32,870	£35,000	£25,000	-£91,221	£0	£149,133	£0	£149,133
2024/25	£154,916	£33,942	£35,000	£25,000	-£96,230	£0	£152,628	£63,700	£216,328
2025/26	£387,639	£33,942	£35,000	£25,000	-£100,000	£0	£381,581	£55,046	£436,627
2026/27	X	x	x	x	x	£453,937	£453,937	£59,000	£512,937
2027/28	X	x	x	x	x	£499,355	£499,355	£59,000	£558,355
2028/29	X	x	x	x	x	£581,058	£581,058	£59,000	£640,058

6.0 MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

6.1 Due to the value of the grants involved Full Council is required to accept the funding under the terms of the constitution. All necessary funding agreements will be entered into.

7.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed for the proposals set out in this report. The assessment identifies a positive impact on protected groups and vulnerable residents, particularly households at risk of homelessness, rough sleepers, victims of domestic abuse, young people, and those experiencing health and financial inequalities.

7.2 The proposals strengthen early intervention and prevention activity, improving access to advice, support, and safe accommodation. They are expected to increase the sustainability of accommodation and communities, reduce reliance on crisis responses, and decrease the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation.

7.3 No adverse equality, environmental, or socio-economic impacts have been identified. The findings of the assessment have informed the proposed allocation of grant funding and reinforce the need to prioritise prevention-focused, person-centred service delivery in line with statutory duties and the Council's *Healthy & Proud Communities* priority.

8.0 POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The proposals in this report align with the Council's policy and strategic framework, particularly the Valley Plan priorities of Healthy & Proud Communities and Effective & Efficient Council. Acceptance and use of the grant funding supports delivery of the Council's statutory duties under homelessness legislation and preparation for reforms arising from the Renters Rights Act 2025 and the Government's *National Plan to End Homelessness*. The proposals also enable development of a Local Supported Housing Strategy in line with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 and strengthen the Council's focus on early intervention and homelessness prevention.

9.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The proposals do not present any immediate implications for Local Government Reorganisation. Any service delivery arrangements or commitments arising from the use of grant funding will be kept under review to ensure flexibility, continuity of service and value for money in the event of future reorganisation.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant: supporting guidance - GOV.UK](#)

10.2 [Explanatory note on Funding Simplification: consolidated grants and draft conditions](#)

10.3 [Consolidated grants information table.xlsx](#)

10.4 Homeless Prevention Grant Winter Top Up 2025/26
[HPG - Homelessness Prevention Grant 2025 to 2026 allocations.ods](#)

Integrated Impact Assessment

The council carry out Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) to analyse the effects of our decisions, policies or practices. Throughout this document, policy refers to any policy, strategy, project, procedure, function, decision or delivery or service. The IIA should be undertaken/started at the beginning of the policy development process before any decisions are made. Policies are developed and reviewed using a consultative approach involving relevant internal and external stakeholders. Officers must consider what action needs to be taken to help overcome or minimise any disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic will experience in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and socio-economic disadvantage.

Name of policy:	Acceptance and Use of Homelessness-Related Grant Funding and Delivery of Homelessness Prevention Services
Lead officer name	Elizabeth Usher
Job title	Housing Options Team Leader
Service area	Housing Options
Telephone contact	01706 252555
Email contact	elizabethusher@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Date Assessment commenced	11/2/26
Date assessment completed	11/2/26

The main aims/objectives of this policy are:

- To accept and utilise homelessness-related grant funding to deliver statutory homelessness duties
- To strengthen early intervention and homelessness prevention activity
- To reduce reliance on crisis responses and unsuitable temporary accommodation
- To provide targeted support to vulnerable households, including those experiencing domestic abuse and rough sleeping
- To prepare for legislative reforms arising from the Renters Rights Act 2025 and the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness strategy
- To develop a Local Supported Housing Strategy in line with statutory requirements

Indicate the status of the policy or decision

New/proposed Modified/adapted Existing

Indicate protected characteristics have been assessed

Age Disability Gender reassignment
 Religion/belief Sexual orientation Sex
 Pregnancy/maternity Race Marriage or civil partnership

Indicate socio-economic disadvantage has been assessed

1. Identify any positive or negative impacts on protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage

Protected characteristic	Positive/Negative	How does it impact?
Age	Positive	Improved early intervention and targeted support for vulnerable groups including young people and older residents at risk of homelessness.
Disability	Positive	Enhanced access to housing advice and prevention services for people with physical and mental health needs, who are disproportionately represented in homelessness services.
Gender reassignment	Positive	Inclusive, needs-led access to homelessness and domestic abuse support services.
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	No specific impacts identified.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Reduced risk of homelessness and use of unsuitable temporary accommodation for families
Race	Positive	Improved access to advice and prevention services helps reduce barriers faced by minority ethnic households.
Religion or belief	Neutral	No specific impacts identified.
Sex	Positive	Provision of domestic abuse safe accommodation and support disproportionately benefits women.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	No specific impacts identified.
Socio-economic	Positive	Targeted prevention, financial assistance and support for low-income households reduces inequality and financial hardship and promotes sustainable communities.

2. Explain and provide examples of any evidence/data used (add additional rows if needed)

Evidence	How does this have an impact on the protected characteristic?
Local homelessness service data	Demonstrates increased demand and higher prevalence of vulnerability among protected groups.
National homelessness research and MHCLG guidance	Shows disproportionate impact of homelessness on disabled people, women, young people and those experiencing domestic abuse.
Legislative framework (Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Renters Rights Act 2025)	Informs prevention-focused approach and statutory duties to support vulnerable groups.

3. Outcome of IIA

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take?	Please indicate
Outcome 1- The IIA has not identified any potential for negative impact on the protected characteristics. Progress to EIA approval – section 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 2- The IIA has identified a possibility for negative impact on the protected characteristics. An IIA Action Plan must be completed to mitigate the negative impact – section 4 before approval section 5	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. IIA action plan

No negative impact identified Negative impact identified (complete table below)

Based on the above impact assessment, findings/evidence and outcomes identified, please complete the Action Plan below. The action plan should address:

- Any gaps in findings/evidence research including any consultation or engagement regarding the policy and its actual/potential impacts
- How you will address any gaps
- What practical changes/action that will help reduce any negative impacts identified
- What practical changes/action that will help enhance any positive contributions to equality

Negative impact identified	Action required	Lead officer	To be completed

Monitoring and reviewing the effect of the policy

Please state how you will monitor the impact and effect of this policy

The impact of the policy will be monitored through homelessness performance data, service demand trends, equality monitoring information and regular service reviews. Outcomes will be reviewed as part of ongoing service planning and reporting to ensure continued compliance with statutory duties and positive equality outcomes.

5. IIA approval (to be completed by the relevant Head of Service/Director)

- Outcome of IIA agreed/approved by Management Team: Date

- Published on council website: Date.....

Signed: (Head of Service/Director) Date