Plan to help residents at risk of homelessness to stay in homes

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Gloucester City Councillors will vote at today’s cabinet meeting on a scheme to help prevent homelessness.



The Tenancy Rescue and Homelessness Prevention initiative will see funds set aside to prevent people at risk of being made homeless from losing their homes.

The money, from central government funding, could be used in a variety of circumstances from helping people to pay rent arrears, to topping up their rental payments or to paying for repairs.

The aim is not only to help prevent homelessness, which can have a devastating effect on families, it is also intended that it will save money by stopping people having to go into costly temporary accommodation.

Alternatively the money could be used to commission services like counselling or mediation to help tenants and landlords come to an agreement.

In the majority of cases the tenants would be asked for a contribution to the grant. The scheme is currently already in operation but it is used on an ad hoc basis and it is proposed to extend it and use it to actively help more families.

The average cost of homelessness per household is estimated to be around £37,000 taking into account the costs on Local Authorities as other statutory like the NHS and Social Care.

If given the green light the plan follows other schemes that have been put in place by the city council and its partners to reduce homelessness.

They include raising Council Tax on homes that have stood empty for more than two years to bring them back into use to reduce and make more homes available to rent or buy.

And a landlord Incentive Scheme introduced to match landlords with prospective tenants as well as providing support and financial incentives.

Councillor Jennie Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, said:  “Preventing homelessness is a key priority for this Council and this initiative will provide another tool for our officers to help families at risk of finding themselves without a roof over their head.

“Not only will it mean that that we can intervene earlier so they don’t have to experience the upheaval of losing their homes but we can also reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation which is costly and far from a long term solution.”

Anyone who is concerned about someone who is homeless can refer them to the Street Homeless Outreach team which is delivered by P3 by visiting [www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk/), calling 0300 500 0914 or via Streetlink.