

Committee Manager: Erica Keegan (Ext. 37547)

20 June 2017

## **HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP**

A meeting of the Housing & Customer Services Working Group will be held in Committee Room 1 (the Pink Room) at the Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton on **Thursday, 6 July 2017 at 6.00 pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors Hughes (Chairman), Mrs Porter (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Ayres, Bicknell, Blampied, Edwards, Mrs Harrison-Horn, Purchase, Mrs Rapnik and Miss Rhodes.

### **A G E N D A**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial/pecuniary interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda.

You should declare your interest by stating:

- a) the item you have the interest in
- b) whether it is a personal interest and the nature of the interest
- c) whether it is also a prejudicial/pecuniary interest

You then need to re-declare your interest and the nature of the interest at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent

3. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Customer Services Working Group held on 23 March 2017 (attached).

4. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. START TIMES

To agree the start times of meetings for the remainder of 2017/18.

6. UPDATE ON HOUSING FIRE SAFETY

The Head of Housing will provide the working group with a verbal update.

7. \*FLEXIBLE HOMELESS SUPPORT GRANT

This report sets out the ways that the new Flexible Homeless Support Grant will be used to prevent homelessness and to sustain tenancies.

8. \*BED AND BREAKFAST PAYMENTS

This report seeks the approval to increase the Bed & Breakfast budget for 2017/18 to better reflect demand.

9. \*WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

To set and review the work programme for 2017/18 (attached).

(Note: \*Indicates report is attached for Members of the Working Group and Cabinet only and the Press (excluding exempt items). Copies of reports can be viewed on the Council's web site at [www.arun.gov.uk](http://www.arun.gov.uk) or can be obtained on request from the Committee Manager.)

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

## HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

23 March 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Mrs Pendleton (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Mrs Ayres, Blampied, Mrs Harrison-Horn, and Mrs Rapnik [from Minute 35(part)].

### 32. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillors Clayden, Mrs Daniells and Mrs Porter. Apologies had also been received from Councillor Bence, as Cabinet Member for Housing.

### 33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer has advised Members of interim arrangements to follow when making declarations of interest. They have been advised that for the reasons explained below, they should make their declarations on the same basis as the former Code of Conduct using the descriptions of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

#### Reasons

- The Council has adopted the government’s example for a new local code of conduct, but new policies and procedures relating to the new local code are yet to be considered and adopted.
- Members have not yet been trained on the provisions of the new local code of conduct.
- The definition of Pecuniary Interests is narrower than the definition of Prejudicial Interests, so by declaring a matter as a Prejudicial Interest, that will cover the requirement to declare a Pecuniary Interest in the same matter.

Where a Member declares a “Prejudicial Interest” this will, in the interest of clarity for the public, be recorded in the Minutes as a Prejudicial and Pecuniary Interest.

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

### 34. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Customer Service Working Group held on 26 January 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

### 35. FLEXIBLE HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT

The Chairman agreed an item on Flexible Homelessness Support that was not on the agenda but required consideration as a matter of urgency as the Council had recently received a notification from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Head of Housing provided the Working Group with a report, tabled at the meeting that briefed Members on the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant that the Council was to receive in place of the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee.

It was noted that a formula had been applied by the DCLG based on details relating to the Council’s homelessness position in the first 3 quarters of 2017/18. The Council had made 558 homelessness decisions of which a duty was owed to 158 applicants, and advice was given to more than 430 applicants, and this was reflected in the allocated funding as,

2017/18	£304,441.38
2018/19	£350,289.38

Members were informed that these figures were the second highest level of grant funding made to Councils in West Sussex. The Head of Housing explained that this was a significant grant and the DCLG had emphasized that the new grant would be able to provide flexibility to authorities in providing intervention services, moving away from exclusive funding for procurement and funding temporary accommodation. The Head of Housing explained that the funding would be used to innovatively find ways of reducing homelessness.

The Working Group discussed this update and asked questions which were responded to at the meeting.

The Chairman congratulated the Housing Team on being recipients of the second highest grant made to Councils in West Sussex and welcomed the opportunity the money would bring to enhance the already proactive approach the Council was taking on homelessness prevention. The Chairman pointed out that funds would need to be allocated wisely and requested that a plan with costings be brought to the working group at the appropriate time.

The Head of Housing confirmed that a further report would be brought back to the Working Group shortly which would identify the projects and initiatives that the Council could consider, along with details to measure their effectiveness in preventing homelessness.

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

### 36. AMENDMENTS TO ALLOCATION SCHEME

The Working Group received a report from the Housing Services Manager that proposed further amendments to the Council’s Housing Allocation Scheme.

Members were reminded that the Housing Allocation Scheme 2012 was amended in 2014 and 2016 following developments in case law, Ombudsman judgements and good practice. Further amendments were now recommended to take into account recent case law as well as some changes that would help prioritise applicants.

Recommended amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme included:

- Section 6.2.3 – updated to clarify that those who could not work, train or volunteer will not be disadvantaged.
- Section 5.4.2 – updated to state that applicants would not be excluded for behaviours associated with a ‘spent’ conviction.
- Sections 4.2 and 6.1 – updated to incorporate additional detail about: seeking confirmation from a healthcare professional, officers carrying out home visits, the assessment of the impact of current accommodation on the applicant’s condition as well as giving a more specific differentiation between Housing Bands A1, B1 and C1.
- Sections 4.5 and 7.3 – update to include provision for couples who require separate bedrooms for medical or disability reasons with confirmation from a medical professional.
- Section 6.1.1 – updated to remove provision for ex-Sheltered Scheme Managers under priority Band C5 as all have reached retirement or been rehoused.
- Section 6.5.4 – updated to include clarification in the explanation of the legal right for an applicant, to whom the Council owes a homelessness duty, to request a review if they disagree about the property that has been offered to them.

Following discussion and questions that were responded to at the meeting the Housing & Customer Services Working Group agreed the report’s recommendation.

The Housing & Customer Services Working Group

#### RECOMMEND TO CABINET

That the further amendments to the Housing Allocation Scheme and its Equality Impact Assessment be agreed, with the implementation date of 1 July 2017.

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

37. HOUSING PLANNING ACT 2016

The Head of Housing presented the Working Group with an Information Paper on the Housing and Planning Act 2016 that provided an overview of the Act which impacted on the Housing Service.

Members were informed that the Housing and Planning Act 2016 implemented a range of Housing related measures which included, the sale of higher value council homes, starter homes, pay to stay and a range of other measures that would promote home ownership and levels of home building.

It was noted that the issues affecting or could affect Council Housing included:

- Extension of Right to Buy
- Sale of Higher Value Vacant Council Houses
- Mandatory use of fixed term tenancies
- High income social tenants mandatory rents (pay to stay)

The Head of Housing stated that, in the event of further regulations being produced in relation to matters affecting Council Housing a further update would be presented to the working group.

The Working Group then noted the report.

38. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The outline work programme for the municipal year 2017/18 was noted. The Council’s corporate changes were discussed and it was agreed that the 2017/18 work programme would be planned when the Working Group’s new Lead Officers began their roles.

In discussing future changes, the Chairman praised the Housing & Customer Services Working Group as a highly effective group, positively influencing the Council’s decision making. It was hoped that this Working Group would be able to continue its good work in the future.

(The meeting concluded at 6.40pm)

AGENDA ITEM NO.7ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILHOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP – 6 July 2017

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Recommendation Paper

Subject : Flexible Homeless Support Grant

Report by : Judy Knapp

Report date: 2 June 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the ways that the new Flexible Homeless Support Grant will be used to prevent homelessness and to sustain tenancies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group is requested to recommend to Cabinet the proposed initiatives and expenditure of the Flexible Homeless Support Grant.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) is providing two years' of new grant funding to local housing authorities to address the issues of households in temporary accommodation and to prevent homelessness.
- 1.2 The Grant replaces the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee (TAMF), which had been paid as part of Housing Benefit subsidy to cover the costs of certain types of temporary accommodation.
- 1.3 Arun rarely received the TAMF subsidy because the temporary accommodation which we use was exempt from that funding. Therefore the new Grant funding is new money coming in to Arun.

1.4 The allocation of the new Flexible Homeless Support Grant has been provided according to each local authority's homelessness demand and the number of homelessness decisions that they make.

1.5 The allocation of the grant to Arun is:

2017/18	£304,441.38
2018/19	£350,289.38

1.6 Local Authorities may determine how best to use their Grant to meet local homelessness demand.

1.7 There is currently no indication that the Grant will be continued beyond 2018/19.

## 2.0 PROPOSED USE OF THE GRANT IN ARUN

2.1 It is proposed that the Grant will be used to help prepare for the new duties which will be required as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which is anticipated to come into force from April 2018.

2.2 The Act places new duties on local Housing Authorities to assist and advise all clients who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days; to provide a Personalised Housing Plan for each client; where possible to prevent the client's homelessness by negotiating for them to remain in their current accommodation; and if clients become homeless, to help them to secure accommodation which will be available to them for at least 6 months.

2.3 These duties are far more extensive than the current legislative homelessness duties and will require a change of emphasis within the Housing team from investigating each homelessness case to determine the Council's duty, towards Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment.

2.4 As a result, many of the proposed initiatives for the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant are focused on that change of emphasis and the Prevention work that will be required as part of the new legislation.

2.5 The briefing note at Appendix A sets out the ways in which the Grant will be used during 2017/18 and anticipates some of the proposed expenditure for 2018/19.

## 3.0 MEASURING SUCCESS OF THE USE OF THE GRANT

3.1 The Housing team has a Corporate Plan Indicator to measure the percentage of homelessness approaches where homelessness is prevented. The target is to achieve prevention in 80% of cases.



- 3.2 Over the last 4 years, the percentage of cases where homelessness was prevented has reduced, as the volume of cases has increased and other factors, such as the cost of private rented accommodation and changes to welfare benefits, have influenced homelessness demand nationally as well as locally.
- 3.3 The percentage of approaches where homelessness was prevented has reduced year on year, as follows:
- 2013/14 - 89.4%  
2014/15 - 75.6%  
2015/16 - 68.2%  
2016/17 - 67.9%
- 3.4 We will measure the effectiveness of the Flexible Homeless Support Grant during 2017/18 in preventing homelessness by this Corporate Plan Indicator.

#### 4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Working Group is asked to recommend to Cabinet the proposed initiatives and expenditure of the Flexible Homeless Support Grant.

**Background Papers:** Housing & Customer Services Working Group Recommendation Paper: Flexible Homelessness Support, 23 March 2017

**Contact:** Judy Knapp, Housing Services Manager Ext 37740

## **Appendix A**

### **Flexible Homelessness Support Grant briefing note:**

#### **Proposals for initiatives 2017/18 and 2018/19**

Arun has been awarded Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of:

£304,441.38 for 2017/18

£350,289.38 for 2018/19

It is proposed that the Grant is used in four main ways:

1. Staffing resources to focus on Prevention, tenancy sustainment and sourcing alternative accommodation, through a keyworker model
2. Financial remedies to prevent or relieve individual cases of homelessness
3. Contribution to partnership initiatives in homelessness prevention or in achieving accommodation solutions
4. Purchase of specialist software to record Prevention data specifically for the purpose of reporting on the new Performance Indicators returns to the DCLG (P1E)

In the following initiatives, the opportunities for match-funding or mainstreaming from existing budgets is detailed, as well as setting out how initiatives may be sustained from April 2019 onwards.

We envisage that we may need substantial sums to prevent or relieve individual cases of homelessness, as set out in Section 2 below. These are indicative amounts, which may be subject to review as we develop increasingly efficient early interventions to sustain existing accommodation solutions and develop partnership solutions.

It is proposed that any remaining Grant is retained as a contingency for these initiatives to allow us to be flexible about its use as we develop increased expertise in prevention work and particularly as partnership solutions (in section 3, below) are pursued.

## 1. Staffing

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Flexible Support Grant contribution</b>	<b>Match-funding / mainstreaming</b>	<b>Sustainment after April 2019</b>
1.	1 x Homeless Intervention Keyworker (existing ADC member of staff seconded until March 2019)	2017/18: £23,500 for 8 months (salary + on costs)  2018/19: £35,300 pa (salary + on costs)	2017/18: 4 months April to 31 July already funded from existing budgets  In addition 1 x Housing Options Officer will undertake a Prevention Project for 6 months to trial a new focus on Prevention and tenancy sustainment, funded from existing salary budgets	The role could subsequently be funded from Homeless Prevention Grant, some of which is currently used to pay for B&B. Otherwise it will need to be mainstreamed from General Fund budgets.
2.	1 x Private sector landlord liaison officer (new post until March 2019)	2017/18: £17,650 for 6 months from October 2017 (salary + on costs)  2018/19: £35,300 pa (salary + on costs)		Could subsequently be funded from Homeless Prevention Grant, some of which is currently used to pay for B&B, or will need to be mainstreamed from General Fund budgets.
	1 x Southdown Support Worker Currently co-located with Housing teams, working on homelessness prevention cases as directed by Jayne Knight	No salary costs required from Flexible Support Grant.	Southdown contract commissioned & funded fully by WSCC until March 2018	WSCC will consult with D&Bs during 2017/18 about how this contract will be re-commissioned after April 2018. It will not require funding from ADC.
	1 x Street Community Outreach Keyworker (current ADC post holder)	No salary costs required from Flexible Support Grant.	Joint-funded by Safer Arun Partnership & the DCLG Rough Sleeper Fund.	

	plus 1 x additional Street Community Outreach Keyworker (recruitment in June 2017)			
	1 x Money Adviser  A proportion of time is spent on homelessness prevention by managing cases of Council tenants at risk of eviction for rent arrears	No salary costs required from Flexible Support Grant.	Already funded by HRA.	HRA funding will continue for this post
3.	Staff training on duties of Homelessness Reduction Act: new processes, new Rights to Review etc	£1K for training costs in 2017/18  £1K for training costs in 2018/19		On-going training from 2019/20 will be met from existing staff training budgets
4.	Additional fees for Reviews. The new legislation gives clients 7 x opportunities to request a review of the Council's decisions. We will extend our SLA with Independent Reviews Ltd to carry out this work.	No budget required for 2017/18.  £5K for 2018/19 when new legislation begins, although the number of reviews that will be requested is as yet unknown. (Cost = £170 per review)	Current homelessness reviews are already funded from existing budgets	To be mainstreamed from existing ADC General Fund budgets from April 2019, when we will have a clearer indication of the cost per annum

## 2. Financial remedies to prevent or relieve individual homelessness cases

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Flexible Support Grant contribution</b>	<b>Match-funding / mainstreaming</b>	<b>Sustainment after April 2019</b>
5.	Payments to secure Private Rented Sector accommodation. These may include: rent deposits, rent in advance & letting fees.	Indicative budget of £50K for both 2017/18 and 2018/19	Continue to use: Existing Rent Deposit Fund and Rent in Advance schemes, from existing budgets; and Discretionary Housing Payments from existing budgets	
6.	Payments to sustain existing tenancies. These may include paying off some rent arrears, paying some further rent in advance	Indicative budget of £80K for both 2017/18 and 2018/19	Discretionary Housing Payments from existing budgets. Contributions from Housing Associations partners. ADC under-occupation incentive payments are used to downsize Arun tenants in arrears to sustain tenancy, from existing budgets. Match-funding of tenants' arrears payments by WSCC to prevent homelessness, already agreed from their existing budgets.	HRA Under-occupation budgets will continue after April 2019
7.	Rent guarantor schemes, in some cases where required by PRS landlord or letting agent	£50K set aside for both 2017/18 and 2018/19 in order to meet rent guarantor commitments, but any underspend may be used for other Prevention initiatives		

### **3. Partnership initiatives in prevention or accommodation solutions**

These will be developed and negotiated throughout the year and new initiatives may emerge as we prepare for the new homelessness duties.

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Flexible Support Grant contribution</b>	<b>Match-funding / mainstreaming</b>	<b>Sustainment after April 2019</b>
8.	Supported housing for single homeless - arrangements are being negotiated with Sanctuary Housing, WCHP & Stonepillow – referring clients into their accommodation	Indicative sum of £15K set aside in 2017/18 for these partnership arrangements	Supported housing is currently commissioned and funded by WSCC	
9.	Partnership arrangements with other local authorities in provision of block-bookings of Private Rented accommodation	Indicative sum of £15K set aside in 2017/18 for these partnership arrangements	Clients will be assisted by Housing Benefit at local LHA rates. Discretionary Housing Payments may be used to supplement any underspend. These will come from existing budgets.	
10.	Single homeless triage and prevention work being carried out at Stonepillow and WCHP hubs	Indicative sum of £15K set aside in 2017/18 for these partnership arrangements	Our existing Housing staff will carry out this work, and we aim to upskill the staff at Stonepillow and WCHP to provide accurate prevention advice, funded from their own budgets	
11.	Operational costs for Rough Sleeping / Street Community accommodation solutions	Indicative budget of £15K in 2017/18	£45K DCLG Rough Sleeper Fund being paid to ADC's Community Safety team to fund Street Community Outreach Keyworker	

#### 4. Software

	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Flexible Support Grant contribution</b>	<b>Match-funding / mainstreaming</b>	<b>Sustainment after April 2019</b>
12.	NPSS & Housing Partners – case management system – to be scoped	£10K for 2017/18, includes software, staff training & advice		

AGENDA ITEM NO.8ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILHOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP – 6 July 2017

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Decision Paper

Subject : Bed & Breakfast Payments – Budget Increase for 2017/18

Report by : Brian Pople, Head of Housing

Report date: June 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks the approval to increase the Bed & Breakfast budget for 2017/18 to better reflect demand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To request Full Council to approve an increase in the Bed & Breakfast budget for 2017/18 from £360,000 to £550,000

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1

On the 10 June 2017, Cabinet received a report on Tackling Homelessness. As part of the recommendations, it was identified that the Housing and Customer Services Working Group should receive a proposal regarding an increase in budget for Bed & Breakfast for 2017/18. At the time that this report was approved, details regarding the first two months expenditure would have been available which would provide some clarity in terms of the possible outturn for 2017/18.



## 1.2

As was identified in the report to Cabinet, the increase of homelessness is continuing to grow at a District, County and National level. The reasons are many and varied and include a general increase in homeless demand, Welfare reform, private landlords not taking tenants that are on benefits, an overall lack of private rented accommodation at an affordable level and Local Housing Allowance rates that have been frozen since 2011 and are not planned to be reviewed until 2018.

## 1.3

The Council continues to provide a range of assistance to those who are homeless or are about to be made homeless including financial advice, use of rent bonds, negotiating with landlords and providing temporary accommodation which currently number 69 units. As demand for accommodation continues to outstrip supply, the Council is spending significant sums on the provision of Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

## 1.4

In 2016/17 a total of £440,000 was spent on Bed & Breakfast. Financial provision for Bed & Breakfast for 2017/18 has been set at £360,000. It is clear that the expenditure at £30,000 for April and £50,000 for May, that the budget based on these current trends, would be insufficient. With this in mind, it is proposed to increase the Bed & Breakfast budget for 2017/18 to £550,000.

## 1.5

The Housing Service will continue to try and identify steps it can take to alleviate the spend on Bed & Breakfast. Clearly the Council cannot control the number of people seeking help and has a legal duty to provide accommodation whilst individual circumstances are investigated.

## 1.6

The revised budget for Bed & Breakfast in 2017/18 does provide an overall increase, however, it should be noted that it is only based on 2 months expenditure which could increase or decrease during the course of the financial year.

**Background Papers:** None

**Contact:** Brian Pople, Head of Housing, Ext. 37718

<b>Housing &amp; Customer Services Meeting</b>							
<b>Meeting Date</b>			<b>06-Jul-17</b>	<b>07-Sep-17</b>	<b>02-Nov-17</b>	<b>04-Jan-18</b>	<b>01-Mar-18</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Origin</b>					
Work programme - set and review			*				
Flexible Homeless Support Grant	JK		*				
Update on Housing Fire Safety (Verbal Update)	BP		*				
Bed & Breakfast Payments	BP		*				
Stock Condition Report	SK			*			
Mobility Scooter Storage & Fees - Information Report	KM/ST			*			
Customer Services Annual Update Report	PW			*			
HRA Business Plan Work Programme	SK				*		
Stonepillow Update	SK					*	
Housing Fraud Update	JM					*	
<b>Agenda Prep Timetable</b>							
Send to Gemma for CMT by 2pm Thurs			01-Jun-17	03-Aug-17	28-Sep-17	30-Nov-17	25-Jan-18
CMT Tues			06-Jun-17	08-Aug-17	03-Oct-17	05-Dec-17	30-Jan-18
Draft Reports to Committees by 11am Thurs			08-Jun-17	10-Aug-17	05-Oct-17	07-Dec-17	01-Feb-18
<b>Agenda Prep Date 15:00</b>			<b>14-Jun-17</b>	<b>16-Aug-17</b>	<b>11-Oct-17</b>	<b>13-Dec-17</b>	<b>07-Feb-18</b>
<b>Room</b>			<b>Ash</b>	<b>CR2</b>	<b>CR2</b>	<b>Ash</b>	<b>CR2</b>
Final Reports to Committees by 11am Mon			20-Jun-17	22-Aug-17	17-Oct-17	19-Dec-17	13-Feb-18
Despatch Agendas by 2pm Thurs			22-Jun-17	24-Aug-17	19-Oct-17	21-Dec-17	15-Feb-18
<b>Date of Meeting 6pm</b>			<b>06-Jul-17</b>	<b>07-Sep-17</b>	<b>02-Nov-17</b>	<b>04-Jan-18</b>	<b>01-Mar-18</b>
<b>Room</b>			<b>CR1</b>	<b>CR1</b>	<b>CR1</b>	<b>CR1</b>	<b>CR1</b>
OSC Meeting Dates			25-Jul-17	26-Sep-17	21-Nov-17	23-Jan-18	20-Mar-18
Cabinet Meeting Dates			17-Jul-17	18-Sep-17	13-Nov-17	15-Jan-18	12-Mar-18
Full Council Meeting Dates			12-Jul-17	13-Sep-17	08-Nov-17	10-Jan-18	07-Mar-18