

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 4 MARCH 2014

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING, HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES

GUIDANCE ON GRANT FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN
THE DISTRICT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- **To seek Executive’s agreement to allocate capital funding for affordable housing in the district via the criteria and process outlined in this paper.**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE: That:

| | |
|------------|---|
| (A) | the criteria for allocating capital funding for affordable housing, as now detailed, be approved; and |
| (B) | delegated powers be given to the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support, to make decisions on any future funding contributions to aid sustainable affordable housing development in the District. |

1. Background

- 1.1 Affordable Housing is a key priority for the Council. The Housing Strategy 2012-2015 outlines the key issues and the need to continue to develop new affordable housing to meet the needs of East Herts residents.
- 1.2 The Council does not own any affordable housing in the District as the stock was transferred to Riversmead and South Anglia in 2002.

- 1.3 The Council works closely with its stock transfer partners to ensure that new developments meet the needs of the applicants on the Housing Needs Register.
- 1.4 East Herts District Council has capital funding available to support the development of affordable housing in the District to meet the needs of East Herts residents.

2. Funding Criteria

- 2.1 The Council has agreed some funding criteria to prioritise projects.
 1. Funding must be used to either:
 - (a) Facilitate the provision of new build affordable housing; or
 - (b) Acquire stock for conversion to affordable housing.
 2. The proposed scheme must be a development which will take place entirely within the East Herts District Council authority area.
 3. Schemes should meet identified needs from the East Herts Housing Needs Register in terms of mix and tenure for the specific location identified.
 4. Schemes should comply with Homes and Communities Agency standards of the time.
 5. All schemes should be built to Lifetime Homes Standard.
 6. Schemes should be discussed at an early stage with the East Herts Housing Team and Development Management Officers.
 7. The scheme should be subject to a full public consultation process to allow local input into the design.
 8. Schemes can not be funded which are part of a Section 106 requirement.

9. Funding can only be given to a Registered Provider as defined by Section 80, of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

- (a) be identified as a 'Registered Provider' on the official national register of providers, registration to which is the responsibility of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), and
- (b) be identified on that register as a 'not for profit' Registered Provider

3. Funding Levels available (January 2014)

3.1 East Herts District Council is in receipt of Section 106 monies which are required to be spent on the provision of affordable housing in the District. Section 106 monies are paid from market developments where affordable housing was not provided due to exceptional circumstances and therefore monies were contributed to the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the District.

3.2 Below is a table with the S106 monies which East Herts District Council are in receipt of for affordable housing (January 2014).

| Scheme | Planning Reference | Amount |
|---|--|----------|
| White Hall College | 3/08/1160/FP | £60,000 |
| Stansted Rd/Legions Way, B/S(Waggon and Horses) | 3/10/0396/FP (Restricted to Sheltered Scheme) | £574,000 |
| Baldock Street, Ware (Charvills) | 3/07/2005/FP | £490,028 |
| Whitehall Leys | 3/12/1094/FP | £190,000 |
| Total | General Needs | £740,028 |
| Total | Older Persons | £574,000 |

4. Bid Submission

- 4.1 Bid applications must be received by 5pm on the last working day of each month and a timeline for assessment will then be provided based on the availability of the Panel to convene.
- 4.2 The Assessment Panel will consist of:
- the Director of Neighbourhood Services
 - the Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support
 - the Manager of the Housing Service
 - the Housing Development and Strategy Manager
- 4.3 Bidders are strongly encouraged to discuss draft bids with the Housing Development and Strategy Manager well in advance of the closing date. The Housing Development and Strategy Manager will, to the best of his/her ability and without prejudice to the outcome of the Panel, assist the Bidder in terms of:
- (a) advising whether the appropriate material appears to be complete for a valid application;
- (b) advising whether, in his/her opinion, any aspect of the Bid could be amended to enable improvements to the bid to be made

5. Result and Payment

- 5.1 Bidders will be informed by letter the outcome of the Panel meeting. If the outcome is successful a letter of funding intent will be given with the scheme details and terms laid out.
- 5.2 Payment of approved grants will be paid to Registered Providers upon practical completion of the scheme.

6. How to apply

- 6.1 Bidders will need to contact the Housing Development and Strategy Manager at East Herts District Council.

7. Review Mechanism

- 7.1 The Council will undertake periodic reviews of the criteria and process to ensure it reflects the policy and priorities of the Council for affordable housing.

8. Implications/Consultations

8.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within Essential Reference Paper A

Background Papers

None.

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