



CABINET

19TH JANUARY 2017

AGENDA ITEM (10)

COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING FUND

Accountable Member	Councillor Mrs. SL Jepson Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Accountable Officer	Philippa Lowe Head of Planning and Strategic Housing 01285 623000 philippa.lowe@cotswold.gov.uk
Purpose of Report	To seek approval to spend the funding allocated to the Council under the Government's Community-Led Housing Fund in accordance with the draft proposal. To seek approval to review the proposal as the project progresses and to bid for additional funding in future.
Recommendation(s)	(a) That Cabinet approves the draft Community Housing Fund Programme for submission to Government, subject to any amendments made by the Cabinet; (b) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to amend the project plan and budget to reflect amendments to legislation, Government policy or respond to local or national opportunities; (c) that a report be submitted to a future Cabinet Meeting so that individual projects in the programme, and their proposed funding, can be considered; (d) that the funding be allocated to a new earmarked reserve for Community Housing.
Reason(s) for Recommendation(s)	Local Authorities have a legal duty to periodically review housing need within its administrative area under the Housing Act 1985. The National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance also requires local planning authorities to "have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. They should: prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries."
Key Decision	No
Recommendation to Council	No

Financial Implications	The Council has been allocated £882,272 of Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) funding via the Community-Led Housing Fund. £441,136 was received in January 2017. A further allocation of £441,136 is available to the Council in March, subject to the Council demonstrating to the DCLG that the money is to be spent (or has been spent) in accordance with the objectives of the programme.
Legal and Human Rights Implications	Ensure the delivery of the project complies with regulations and the Council's policies. Delivery of this project will improve the understanding of local housing issues and support and enable local people to engage with the Council regarding housing delivery within their communities.
Environmental and Sustainability Implications	Supporting local communities and groups to address housing issues will build capacity and improve the sustainability of our communities in the long term.
Human Resource Implications	The project will be managed by the Strategic Housing Team working with colleagues, e.g. from within Development Management, Forward Planning, and Communities. A project officer will be appointed and funded utilising the DCLG funding, who will report to the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing.
Key Risks	Failure to demonstrate that the money will be used to deliver the objectives of the fund will mean the second tranche may not be received and jeopardise the Council's chance of securing future funding.
Equalities Analysis	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. No adverse effects on any group were identified. This will be reviewed as the project develops.
Related Decisions	Council, September 2016 - adoption of Housing Plan, which contained the task to "Provide information, training and support to local communities, charities and other groups to develop homes for local people to increase capacity and expertise."
Background Documents	None
Appendices	Appendix 'A' - Final CLH Guidance for Local Authorities Appendix 'B' - Draft Project Budget for the Community Housing Fund
Performance Management Follow Up	(i) Implement Cabinet decision(s). (ii) If approved, the project will be managed by the project officer, who will provide regular progress reports to the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing, the Strategic Director and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities through the Housing Plan monitoring process.

Options for Joint Working

Other Gloucestershire and neighbouring districts (including West Oxfordshire) have also been awarded funding, and discussions have already taken place about the opportunities for joint working. The Strategic Housing Team is also in contact with local authorities further afield to draw on their experience.

Background Information

1. In the 2016 Budget, the Chancellor announced that £60 million would be used to help solve local housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities. This will include community-led housing developments in rural and coastal communities, for instance working with Community Land Trusts. The scheme is funded through the receipts from the higher rates of Stamp Duty Land Tax on additional homes (i.e. Second Homes) that came into being on 1st April 2016. The Chancellor also announced that £20 million of the total will be for the South West.

2. Cotswold District Council was notified in December of an allocation of £882,272 by the DCLG to support community-led housing within the District for the 2016/17 financial year. The funding has been allocated to local authorities proportionate to the number of holiday homes in the local area and taking account of the affordability of housing to local people. The first tranche of £441,000 was received in January 2017, a further payment of £441,000 will be available to the Council in March 2017 subject to providing satisfactory evidence that the money will be spent in accordance with the objectives outlined in the Budget. Further allocations of funding from 2017/18 onwards will partly depend on how the first allocation was spent.

3. The purpose of the fund is to enable local community groups to deliver affordable housing units of mixed tenure on sites which are likely to be of little interest to mainstream housebuilders. The fund will also help build collaboration, skills and supply chains at a local level to promote the sustainability of this approach to housebuilding. The fund will enable capital investment, technical support and revenue to be provided to make more schemes viable and significantly increase community groups' current delivery pipelines. Guidance regarding the use of the fund has been provided by the DCLG (see **Appendix A**).

4. Community-led housing can bring significant benefits to the Council. These include:

- developing mutual support for elderly and vulnerable residents;
- the delivery of truly affordable housing in perpetuity;
- promoting community cohesion and resilience.

5. A draft project plan proposal, for submission to the DCLG, with an indicative budget is attached at **Appendix B**. Some of the work is already being delivered, including:

- working with local communities;
- enabling housing role supporting delivery of local housing schemes;
- capacity building, including the Cotswold District Community Toolkit for community-led planning.

6. Meetings are being arranged to discuss the project plan with the specialist advisers identified by the DCLG to assist in making best use of the Community Housing Fund and to strengthen the Council's position to secure the second tranche of funding. Any proposed amendments will be incorporated into a revised draft project plan.

(END)