

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	COUNCIL	17 JULY 2017	17
COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

The Community Housing Fund was announced in December 2016 by DCLG and will provide nationally £60million per year of revenue grant funding to enable community led housing (CLH) schemes. In year 1 Fylde BC have been awarded £440,381. There is uncertainty as to funding levels in future years and if local authorities will receive the funding direct again.

The first year of funding can be used to build capacity within local groups such as improving technical skills, setting up support hubs to offer advice, business planning and providing staff to review local housing needs. The funding does not have to generate quick delivery of units on the ground and there is flexibility for local authorities to develop an approach that fits within the current approaches that exist within their boroughs.

This report sets out proposals for how Fylde BC can develop an approach to community led development that will establish what exists within the borough already, encourage and support communities interested in community led options for affordable housing provision, to take forward their plans with the support of the fund.

This report was considered by Environment Health and Housing on the 20th June 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council are recommended to:

1. Approve a fully-funded revenue budget increase in the sum of £440,381, funded by the Community Housing Fund grant in the same sum, as recommended by the Environment, Health and Housing Committee at the meeting of 20th June 2017; and
2. To note that Subject to 1 above, part of the funding in the sum of £100,000 will be used to provide support for the Church Road Methodist Church Project, (Committee 17th October 2016) which would in turn allow the S106 funds previously ear-marked for this project to be re-directed to support other affordable housing developments elsewhere in the Borough.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Minutes of Council 17th October 2016

It was RESOLVED to:

1. Approve a fully funded addition to the Capital Programme in the sum of £550,00 –
 “Affordable Housing Scheme at Church Road Methodist Church” – for 2017/18 to be fully funded from part of the balance of S106 developer contributions for affordable housing currently held by the Council for this purpose (from Agreement Ref: 03/0157 – Queen Mary School Development: a total capital contribution of £550,000 to deliver 10 units for affordable rent at Church Road Methodist Church, St Anne’s to Great Places Housing Association); and

2. Authorise expenditure in the sum of £550,000 to Great Places Housing Association in relation to the scheme after regard and consideration of the compliance with the financial regulations covered within the body of the report.

Minutes of Environment, Health and Housing 20th June 2017

It was RESOVLED;

1. To note the contents of the report and the proposals to take forward the Community Housing Fund in Fylde, noting that the funds in Year 1 should be used to develop an approach that fits within the current situation within the borough and a need to raise awareness of the Community Led Housing;
2. To recommend to Council approval of a fully-funded revenue budget increase for the total sum of £440,381 funded by the Community Housing Fund grant in the same sum;
3. Subject to 2 above, approve the engagement of a shared Community Housing Fund Development Officer (with Lancaster City Council) initially for a 12-month period to identify and build capacity within local groups by mapping existing interest and developing supporting information for groups to enable the local authority to draw down subsequent years funding to deliver housing on the ground for local people; and
4. Subject to 2 above, approve that part of the funding in the sum of £100,000 be used to provide support for the Church Road Methodist Church Project, (Committee 17th October 2016) which would in turn allow the S106 funds previously ear-marked for this project to be re-directed to support other affordable housing developments elsewhere in the Borough.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND

1. The Community Housing Fund was announced in December 2016 and will provide nationally £60million per year of revenue grant funding to enable community led housing (CLH) schemes. Community led is about local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving local housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream affordable housing provision. The Community would decide on the tenure that they felt was most suitable to meet the housing needs within their community, for example: market housing, starter homes, affordable rent, shared ownership or discounted market sale.
2. The first year of funding will be used to ensure communities understand what Community led Housing is, to build capacity within local groups such as improving technical skills, setting up support hubs to offer advice, business planning and providing staff to review local housing needs. Funding for subsequent years must then be used to deliver housing on the ground for local people.
3. Local authorities must work closely with community led housing groups and other stakeholders – such as the Community Land Trusts network or the Homes and Communities Agency – throughout to ensure the right tools are in place to ensure efficient delivery of new homes in subsequent years.
4. In year 1 Fylde BC have been awarded £440,381. The fund provides revenue and capital funding as an alternative to, or to augment and bridge gaps in existing funding to increase genuinely community led housing in areas with high levels of second home ownership.
5. The first year’s funding does not have to generate quick delivery of units on the ground. There is flexibility for local authorities to develop an approach that fits within the current approaches that exist within their

boroughs. Within Fylde the concept of community led housing approaches is limited and resources will be required to establish what exists on the ground and possible opportunities that are community led.

6. Subsequent year's grant allocation are likely to be managed by the Homes and Communities Agency. The guidance advises that to secure subsequent years funding Local Authorities will need to show that their delivery plans meet the spirit of the Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF) national definition agreed with DCLG – that community-led schemes will share the following common principles:
 - a. The community is integrally involved throughout the process in key decisions like what is provided, where, and for who. They don't necessarily have to initiate the conversation, or build homes themselves.
 - b. There is a presumption that the community group will take a long term formal role in the ownership, stewardship or management of the homes.
 - c. The benefits of the scheme to the local area and/or specified community group are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.
7. Fylde BC have been working with Lancaster City Council to jointly create a post to take forward Community Led Housing opportunities within each authority. Both authorities have comparable issues in terms of how the housing market operates, similar potential schemes to enable cross boundary sharing of practice and potential for additional scheme funding with S106 reserves.
8. It is also proposed part of the funding, £100,000, will be used to replace funding from S106 funds that have been approved to support Church Road Methodist Church Project, (Committee 17th October 2016) and free up S106 funds to support affordable housing development elsewhere in the Borough. The project demonstrates to communities the benefits of being integrally involved throughout the process in key decisions - what is provided, where, and for who - and the benefits of the scheme to the local area and/or specified community, as detailed in the BSHF and DCLG definition of community led schemes.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report requests approval of a fully-funded revenue budget increase in the total sum of £440,381 to be funded by the Community Housing Fund grant in the same sum. If the revenue budget increase is approved part of the funding, in the sum of £100,000, will be used to provide support for the Church Road Methodist Church Project, allowing the S106 funds previously ear-marked for this project to be re-directed to support other affordable housing projects.
Legal	None
Community Safety	Community led initiatives for affordable housing provision
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Minutes of Council	17/10/2016	www.fylde.gov.uk
Press Release - £60 million boost for communities affected by second homeownership	23/12/2017	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/60-million-boost-for-communities-affected-by-second-homeownership

