

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	20 JUNE 2017	6
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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee are requested to:

1. 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.
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.

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 \$106 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.

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.
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. Appendix 1 gives more detail on the types of schemes community led housing encompasses. In brief:

Cohousing - Communities are created and run by their residents to provide mutual support. Each household has a self-contained, private home but residents come together to manage their community and share activities

Community Land Trust's (CLTs) - A CLT's core purpose is to provide permanently protected homes that are genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, enabling people to stay in their communities, and to develop other assets that may be important to their community, like community enterprises, food growing or workspaces, and even to generate community re-investment income.

<i>Cooperative and mutual housing</i> - This has community membership comprising the residents and sometimes other local community members. They democratically control the housing organisation which can result in benefits for members such as a better service and new skills.
<i>Self & Custom Build</i> - provides a way for people to self-provide higher quality better value, more functional, more affordable homes due to the differential between build cost and market prices.
<i>Self-Help Housing</i> - This involves groups of local people bringing back into use empty properties. Groups often involve people who can't afford to buy or rent their own home, and who are unlikely to get a tenancy from a local authority or a housing association.

6. 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.
7. Councils have been encouraged to submit proposals outlining 'strong plans' for delivery covering:
 - a. Thorough communication of the spectrum of CLH types and support available
 - b. Engage with and support existing local CLH expertise to work with the LA and communities to provide information, project development and delivery, or create new support where required.
 - c. Map existing CLH projects or groups and possible early wins
 - d. Deliver early support for new groups and projects; technical project development and delivery; and capital gap funding.
8. The funding is to support the biggest challenges local authorities face in promoting community-led housing approaches and funding should be directed towards where the money is needed to:
 - a. Raise awareness and understanding of community led housing
 - b. Funding project development support within local authorities
 - c. Securing land opportunities
 - d. Pre-development funding
 - e. Safe capital grant
9. 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.
10. On the 20th February the affiliated advisor in the NW to the Community Land Trust (CLT) Network, Andy Lloyd ran a workshop for Lancaster, Wyre, Ribble Valley and Fylde local authorities on the purpose of the fund, project development and management for communities. The CLT Network have been put forward by the BSHF. BSHF are advisors to DCLG on assisting local authorities to develop community led housing schemes in line with the Community Housing Fund objectives.
11. Fylde BC have been working with Andy Lloyd, Community Led Housing Advisor, to develop a proposal that meets the criteria outlined in 6, 7 and 8.

TAKING FORWARD COMMUNITY LED HOUSING IN FYLDE

12. 10th March 2017 local authorities completed a DCLG survey on their intended plans to use the funding to promote community led housing within their areas. Fylde BC response included mapping existing groups, employing a shared member of staff with another authority and engaging with the CLH specialist to work up the scheme.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. Table 1 details the preliminary options for the Community Housing Fund across Fylde and Lancaster and Appendix 3 has the job description for the Community Housing Fund Development Officer post. The job description will need to go through the Job Evaluation process at Fylde BC.

TABLE I: PRELIMINARY OPTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND (FYLDE AND LANCASTER)

Project Description	Milestones	Outcomes
Thorough communication of the spectrum of CLH types and support available	Website/publicity/community events	Establishing new opportunities for future use of the CHF
Producing awareness raising material	Website/publicity/community events	Establishing new opportunities for future use of the CHF
Engage with and support existing local CLH expertise to work with the LA and communities to provide information, project development and delivery, or create new support where required.	Initiating community engagement	Establish whether a community proposal is deliverable
Map existing CLH projects or groups and possible early wins	Communities identified	Development of a robust plan to take schemes forward
Deliver early support for new groups and projects; technical project development and delivery; and capital gap funding	Initiating community engagement with appropriate support	Establish whether a community proposal is deliverable
Co-housing project extension	Development of a robust plan to take the scheme forward	Implementation of the plan
Development of disused brownfield sites within both local authorities	Initiating community engagement	Establish whether a community proposal is deliverable
Engagement with Neighbourhood Plan Groups	Initiating community engagement	Establish whether a proposal is deliverable
LOTS scheme	Initiating business and community engagement	Establish whether a community proposal is deliverable
Networking	Existing and new community groups and relevant stakeholders	Establishing new opportunities for future use of the CHF

DEVELOPING PROPOSALS WITHIN FYLDE – 4 SUGGESTED ELEMENTS

(Developed in partnership with Andy Lloyd CLH Advisor)

16. Map immediate opportunities for CLH schemes and actions required to deliver them:

- Secure support of the Cumbria CLH specialist to help the Council Leadership and Officers understand the opportunities and to provide technical support for short term community wins.
- Re-use of empty flats in St Annes: St Annes has a large number of high quality flats above shops which could provide homes for local people. Local business' are keen to work with the Council to bring these back into use. To date Housing Associations have not wanted to take this on. The CLH Fund would enable the Council to work with the community and local business' and carry out viability and safety studies. If there is community support a trust could be set up to lease and manage the homes.
- Facilitate the Methodist Chapel project: The Council is already supporting this proposal to sell outbuildings to a Housing Association for use as affordable housing in order to develop the Church as a community centre.
- Generate wider discussion with Methodist Church Network about other sites, communities and projects.

17. Communication:

- Collate standardised resources explaining what CLH is and the support available to deliver it – so that communities are aware of the creative aspects of CLH, and that the available support means that they can shape what is done without having to shoulder the burden of the day to day development process.
- Disseminate information through a variety of mechanisms to generate dialogue with community groups and representative organisations including the Borough Council Leadership, Councillors' and Officers, Town and Parish Councils, the general public, developers, housing associations and builders.

18. Securing longer term delivery:

- Creation of CLH Officer post shared between Fylde and Lancaster Borough Councils.
- Job description:
- Liaise with CLH experts and network organisations
- to strengthen approach to delivery of CLH knowledge and projects.
- Co-ordinate access to CLH information and resources
- Communicate and enthuse target audiences – Borough Council Leadership, Councillors' and Officers, Town and Parish Councils, the general public, developers, housing associations and builders.
- Work with community groups to identify projects and ensure they have access to CLH specialist consultant project development and delivery and Housing Association support.
- Ensure that the Councils CLH delivery plan is realistic, imaginative, and appropriate in bridging real revenue and capital funding gaps, to deliver schemes that are in the true spirit of CLH, and which secures subsequent years funding.

19. Ensuring that CLH becomes part of planned residential delivery:

The main planned supply of housing land presents the biggest opportunity for all types of CLH projects. This can be facilitated by:

- Council supported negotiation with developer's to accommodate high quality self-commissioned homes, housing co-ops and CLTs to deliver permanent locally affordable homes.
- Council helping communities to use cross subsidy sales to buy land and fund the affordable homes: CLH groups can develop in their own right providing mixed developments with many innovative aspects – maximising affordable housing, providing community facilities, and even generating community income.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	<p>The reports requests that the Committee recommend to Council the approval of a fully-funded revenue budget increase for the total sum of £440,381 to be funded by the Community Housing Fund grant in the same sum.</p> <p>Subject to such approval, the report requests approval to the use of part of the funding for the engagement of a shared Community Housing Fund Development Officer (with Lancaster City Council) initially for a 12-month period; and that funding in the sum of £100,000 be used to provide support for the Church Road Methodist Church Project.</p>
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
Kirstine Riding	Kirstine.riding@fylde.gov.uk & Tel 01253 658569	05/06/17

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Minutes of Council	17/10/2017	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

Attached documents

Appendix 1 - Community Led Housing encompasses

Appendix 2 – Job Description Community Housing Fund Development Officer (Fylde and Wyre)

APPENDIX 1

COMMUNITY LED HOUSING ENCOMPASSES

1. Cohousing

Communities are created and run by their residents to provide mutual support. Each household has a self-contained, private home but residents come together to manage their community and share activities. Cohousing is a way of combating the alienation and isolation many experience today, recreating the neighbourly support of the past. Cohousing is an approach which can be applied to market, affordable and mixed developments. See the Co-housing Network <http://cohousing.org.uk>

2. Community Land Trust's (CLTs)

A CLT's core purpose is to provide homes that are genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, and permanently protected, not just for now but for every future occupier, enabling people to stay in their communities, and to develop other assets that may be important to their community, like community enterprises, food growing or workspaces, and even to generate community re-investment income. See the National CLT Network <http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk>

3. Cooperative and mutual housing

This has community membership comprising the residents and sometimes other local community members. They democratically control the housing organisation which can result in benefits for members such as a better service and new skills. See the Confederation of Co-operative Housing <http://www.cch.coop>

4. Self & Custom Build

Self and custom build provides a way for people to self-provide higher quality better value, more functional, more affordable homes due to the differential between build cost and market prices. It can be hands on commissioned via a builder or architect, can be affordable or market housing, and individual or group build. All local authorities have a duty to maintain a register of individuals and groups interested in building their own homes, and to provide enough permissioned plots to meet that demand. See the National Custom & Self Build Association <http://www.nacsba.org.uk>.

5. Self-Help Housing

This involves groups of local people bringing back into use empty properties. Groups often involve people who can't afford to buy or rent their own home, and who are unlikely to get a tenancy from a local authority or a housing association. Projects are usually managed and involve training and increased life skills. See <http://self-help-housing.org>

Job Description

Community Housing Fund Development Officer (Fylde and Lancaster)

Post Title	Community Housing Fund Development Officer (Fylde and Lancaster)	Grade	TBC
Post No		Other Payments	Essential Care User Allowance
Directorate	Development	Hours of work	37 hours per week
Team	Housing	Contract Period	1 year fixed term contract
Responsible to	Housing Services Manager	Supervisory Responsibility for	N/A

Job Purpose

Draw up a strong business plan for Lancaster and Fylde authorities allocations of Community Housing Fund, raising awareness, mapping opportunities and identifying groups that will require ongoing support and establishing models to pull in grant funding, making appropriate bids where necessary.

Post will be primarily based in Fylde but each Local Authority will be responsible for directing the post holder accordingly and the post holder will be expected to travel across the Lancaster and Fylde district

Responsibilities and Duties

- Project Lead for the development of the Community Housing Fund within Lancaster and Fylde.
- Develop a programme of activities to raise awareness of the Community Housing Fund with communities, partner agencies, stakeholders, developers and registered providers including workshops, Information events targeted at different audiences.
- Production of a range of publicity material including leaflets, website pages and documentation to empower communities to take forward schemes eligible for accessing the Community Housing Fund and initiatives in partnership with the local authorities.
- Development of a funding guide and eligibility criteria for community groups, in consultation with local authority housing and planning staff, community groups, Developers, Registered Housing Providers and Councillors.
- Explore funding opportunities to support the Community Housing Fund to take projects forward with a focus on the longer term sustainability of the project including bid writing and completing funding applications.
- Build on identified opportunities within each Local Authority and develop a programme of

development from identified opportunities.

- Provide each authority with regular updates.
- To effectively deal with customer enquiries/complaints
- To undertake such other duties commensurate with the grading and responsibility of the post as may be necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the Service
- To undertake personal training and development in accordance with service requirements as identified through appraisal and in accordance with professional requirements
- Promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity within the service
- To support, champion and enhance the competencies and behaviours in the Housing Services and Planning Teams that are consistent with the culture at Fylde Borough Council and Lancaster City Council.
- To ensure that the Housing Services and Planning Team works effectively with partner organisations in the local community and across the region in the development of the Community Housing Fund
- To ensure that the Housing Services and Planning Team remains an integral part of the 'one council, one team' approach at Fylde working effectively with all other service areas.

Prepared By: Kirstine Riding **Date: May 2017**

Person Specification

POST TITLE: Community Housing Fund Development Officer

DIRECTORATE: Development

POST NO:

COMPETENCIES (All competencies listed are <u>essential</u> to the post)	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
CUSTOMER FOCUS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treats employees as customers• Puts the customer first and values the customer in everything they do• Is professional, polite and friendly at all times• Appreciates the customer is the only reason there is a job• Challenges whether the existing ways of doing things meet customer need	Application form / interview
WORKING TOGETHER <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotes effective working across different service areas• Accepts and provides constructive challenge• Is an effective team player• Demonstrates the ability to learn from others• Focuses on solutions rather than problems• Works with others to deliver great performance	Application form / interview
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly explains the reasons for decisions made• Open, honest and transparent in all communications• Champions success at every opportunity• Demonstrates the ability to listen and understand• Never 'bad mouths' the organisation• Contributes to feedback and engagement at work	Application form / interview

supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to deadlines and manage time effectively • Problem solving skills and overcoming barriers to development • Experience of negotiating between different community and local government interests • Communication/presentation skills • Report writing skills • Producing performance information in a regular and timely manner • IT skills • Bid writing and completion of funding applications 	Desirable	Application form / interview
	Desirable	Application form / interview
	Desirable	Application form / interview
	Desirable	Application form / interview
	Desirable	Application form / interview
	Desirable	Application form / interview

Other Requirements

- Good interviewing skills
- Good negotiation skills
- Good investigation skills
- Maintain accurate and up to date records of actions taken
- Maintain and collate statistical information relevant to the service for annual returns, performance information and service planning
- Maintain operational understanding of relevant computer systems
- The ability to demonstrate a positive and constructive attitude
- Ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines and achieve challenging objectives
- Adhere to the Whistle Blowing Policy
- Car user/full driving licence

DATED: May 2017