

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE

Report No. 14

Date of Meeting	07/06/2007
Title of Report	Request for Affordable Housing Grant (AHG) to Provide Temporary Affordable Housing – Avonside, Chippenham
Portfolio	Housing
Link to Corporate Priorities	Housing
Key Decision	No
Executive Workplan Ref	B340
Public Report	Yes

Summary of Report

This report seeks Members' authorisation for an allocation of £15,000 AHG to enable Westlea Housing Association adapt Avonside homeless hostel to meet the needs of single persons and in particular 16 and 17 year old homeless persons on a temporary basis (for a period of approximately 2 years) while purpose built accommodation is being built.

Officer Recommendations

1. **Members authorise the commitment of Affordable Housing Grant of £15,000 to enable the adaptation of the Avonside homeless hostel, Chippenham by Westlea Housing Association.**
2. **Members delegate authority to the Legal Services Team Leader to agree a nominations agreement with Westlea Housing Association.**
3. **Members delegate authority to the Housing Services Team Leader and Head of Financial Services to agree future commitments of Affordable Housing Grant not exceeding £50,000.**

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
Yes	Yes	Yes	None	Yes

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The report seeks Member's approval for allocation of £15,000 of Affordable Housing Grant to adapt Avonside homeless hostel to meet the needs of single persons and in particular 16 and 17 year old homeless persons on a temporary basis (for a period of approximately 2 years) while purpose built accommodation is being built.

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 To approve the allocation of the requested AHG to assist Westlea Housing Association in adapting Avonside homeless hostel.
- 2.2 Refusing the request for AHG could result in temporary accommodation for single persons not being provided until the opening of the purpose built provision in approximately 2 years.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 Westlea Housing Association is one of the Council's five affordable housing development partners.
- 3.2 Avonside hostel, Chippenham is currently used as temporary accommodation for homeless households and is being decanted as new temporary family accommodation is finished.
- 3.3 Currently there are four 16/17 year olds in bed and breakfast accommodation which is not suitable and must be housed more adequately to ensure the Council meets its LPSA target.
- 3.4 The cost of adapting the hostel is estimated at £15,000 and is necessary to create a safe and secure separate section for use by up to six, vulnerable 16 and 17-year-old persons. Single homeless persons will also use the rest of the scheme.
- 3.5 The grant will be used to install security doors, CCTV, and door entry systems. This equates to £7,500 per year (over the two-year period) which represents good value for money when you consider the savings to be made on bed and breakfast costs and the potential loss of LPSA resources.
- 3.6 The need for temporary accommodation for homeless 16 and 17-year-olds is small but steady. This is a difficult to accommodate client group who the Council has a duty to house appropriately.
- 3.7 Westlea Housing Association has agreed to enter into a nomination agreement to enable the Council to nominate to all of the properties for the life of the scheme.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The approved budget for 2007/08 for new affordable housing provision is £1.5m plus £152,978 brought forward from prior years making a total available of £1,652,978.
- 4.2 Schemes totalling £705,229, identified for payment during 2007/10, are shown on Appendix 1 of which Members have previously approved £459,482. Unapproved schemes total £245,747 including £15,000 for Avonside, the subject of this report.

Members have previously agreed that Officers could enter into negotiations with RSLs for schemes which could be awarded grant funding in future years as these necessitate long lead times.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Local Authorities have powers under s22 (3) of the Housing Act 1996 to make grants to Registered Social Landlords.

6. Community and Environmental Implications

- 6.1 The provision of temporary accommodation for 16/17 year olds in Chippenham with nomination rights for the Council is a valuable contribution towards meeting the specific needs of young homeless people in North Wiltshire.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 The provision of affordable housing helps to enable all residents in the district to have the opportunity to meet their housing needs locally.

8. Risk Analysis

- 8.1 This is considered to be a low risk. Westlea Housing Association is a previous preferred development partner of North Wiltshire District Council and is requesting funding at a reasonable level for a specific scheme. The scheme at Avonside does not require planning permission and is owned by Westlea, therefore the scheme is deliverable.
- 8.2 It is not considered that this scheme has significant strategic, policy or operational implications and therefore a risk assessment has not been completed.

Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1: Anticipated cash-flow 2005-09
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Wide Housing Needs Survey 2005 • Application for Capital Funding Pro-Forma • Housing Needs Register Report Summary – First Choice at 01/03/2007

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 		