

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE

Report No. 10

Date of Meeting	6 November 2008
Title of Report	Request for Affordable Housing Grant to Provide Affordable Housing in the District
Portfolio	Housing
Link to Corporate Priorities	Housing
Key Decision	YES - The decision will result in the Council requiring expenditure which amounts to over £50,000
Executive Workplan Ref	B394
Public Report	YES

Summary of Report

This report seeks the Executive's authorisation to delegate the commitment of Affordable Housing Grant to the Housing Manager in consultation with the Housing Portfolio holder to enable affordable homes to be provided in the district.

Officer Recommendations

- 1. The Executive delegate authority to the Housing Manager in consultation with the Housing Portfolio holder for the commitment of Affordable Housing Grant of £547,999 to registered social landlords to provide at least 10 additional affordable homes within the district.**
- 2. The Executive delegate authority to the Legal Services Manager to agree a nomination agreement with the respective housing associations.**

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 the Executive's authorisation to delegate the commitment of £547,999 to the Housing Manager in consultation with the Housing Portfolio holder.

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 To approve the commitment of the remaining affordable housing grant to assist Housing Associations in providing affordable homes for rent in the district.
- 2.2 Refusing the request for AHG would result in new affordable homes for rent not being provided.

3. Background Information

3.1 Re-allocation of affordable housing grant

- 3.1.1 The housing scheme at Kingsmoor, Box which Members approved the commitment of £530,000 in October 2007 failed to gain Westlea Housing Association board approval as the board felt that the redesign of the existing building would not provide satisfactory accommodation. Therefore, there is the opportunity to re-allocate the affordable housing grant to another scheme(s). All other housing schemes that have been allocated housing grant by the Council are proceeding as planned.
- 3.1.2 Officers have been working with our RSL partners, the Housing Corporation and developers to enable RSLs to purchase unsold new homes within the district. The RSLs have been successful securing new homes in Chippenham (9 units) and Calne (13 units), with grant being allocated by the Housing Corporation. The Housing Corporation is committed to funding more affordable housing during the economic downturn and is actively working with RSLs and Councils to allocate affordable housing grant for this purpose.

3.2 Proposal to seek delegated authority to allocate £547,999

- 3.2.1 If the Executive were to delegate authority for the allocation of the remaining affordable housing grant to the Housing Manager in consultation with the Housing Portfolio holder there would be the flexibility to move quickly to secure new homes or a package of existing homes when an opportunity arises.
- 3.2.2 Opportunities being considered include off the shelf purchases of new homes from developers and the purchase of existing 'second hand' homes on the market.
- 3.2.3 To ensure value for money, a maximum grant per unit will be fixed at £54,000 which would secure at least 10 new homes. The location of the homes would be dependent on where an opportunity arises.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The approved budget for 2008/09 for new affordable housing provision is £1.4m plus £621,499 brought forward from previous years, making a total of £2,021,499 available.
- 4.2 Schemes totalling £1,473,500 have been identified for payment during 2008/10, shown in Appendix 1. Members have previously approved £1,473,500 Affordable Housing Grant during 2008/09. £547,999 remains unallocated.

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 new affordable homes for rent in the district with nomination rights for the Council is a valuable contribution towards the affordability of housing in rural villages and towns and towards meeting the high levels of housing need identified in North Wiltshire.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 The provision of affordable housing helps 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/medium risk; if no opportunities arise the grant will remain unallocated. However, if an opportunity arises the homes would be purchased by one of our RSL partners with the grant being spent this financial year and nominations secured by means of a nomination agreement.
- 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 2004-10
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference