

Report to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: CHB-004-2014/15
Date of meeting: 21 August 2014

Portfolio: Housing

Subject: Outcome of HCA Affordable Housing Grant Application

Responsible Officer: P Pledger (01992 564248)
Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)

Democratic Services: Jackie Leither (01992 564756)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That it be noted, the Council's bid to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for £250,000 Affordable Housing Grant to subsidise the development of 40 new affordable homes as part of Phase 2 of the Council's House-building Programme, made up of £12,500 per property, has been approved by the HCA.**
- (2) That it also be noted that the grant is conditional on the Council being able to achieve Investment Partner Status with the HCA and the Council being able to deliver the new affordable homes within the timescale of the Bid Programme 2015-18.**

Executive Summary:

Following the launch of its 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme Bid Prospectus by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the Council House-building Cabinet Committee agreed at its last meeting in April 2014 that East Thames submit a bid on behalf of the Council for a total of £250,000 to subsidise the development costs of 40 new affordable homes, making up Phase 2 of the Council House-building Programme. It has recently been announced that this bid was successful, subject to the Council being able to achieve Investment Partner Status with the HCA and the Council being able to deliver the new affordable homes within the timescale of the Bid Programme 2015-18.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

This report is for noting only. No decision is required.

Other Options for Action:

This report is for noting only.

Report:

- (1) The Cabinet Committee, at its meeting in April 2014 agreed that East Thames be authorised, in consultation with the Director of Communities to submit a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for Affordable Housing Grant as part of the Affordable Homes Programme 2015-18, initially for £250,000 to fund 40 homes in Phase 2 of the Council's**

house-building programme on behalf of the Council.

(2) The Cabinet Committee also agreed that subject to a successful grant application, East Thames were to prepare an application on behalf of the Council for HCA Investment Partner Status so that the funding can be drawn at the appropriate time.

(3) As a result, East Thames submitted the grant application on behalf of the Council before the deadline of 30 April 2014 in line with the Cabinet Committee's decision

(4) On 22 July 2014, the HCA announced that the Council's bid for £250,000 funding for 40 units based on £12,500 per home, has been approved. An additional 17 non grant funded homes were also accepted into the programme by the HCA. This grant is however, subject to the following:

- That the Council becomes an Investment Partner with the HCA; and
- That the schemes need to complete by 31 March 2018 to be eligible for the grant. The grant will be withdrawn if this date is not adhered to.

(5) The details on how to achieve Investment Partner Status have yet to be released by the HCA. Once this is known, East Thames will prepare and submit the application for Investment Partner Status on behalf of the Council.

(6) It should be noted that any homes that are subsidised through the HCA Affordable Homes Programme cannot receive any further public subsidy by way of 1-4-1 RTB receipts.

Resource Implications:

£250,000 HCA Affordable Housing Grant, made up of £12,500 per home for 40 homes in Phase 2 of the house-building programme.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Each of these 40 homes that are subsidised through the HCA Grant cannot receive any further public subsidy by way of 1-4-1 RTB receipts.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

n/a

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

Council House-building Cabinet Committee report giving approval to submit an application for HCA Affordable Housing Grant.

Risk Management:

The grant is dependent on the Council becoming an Investment Partner of the HCA - Low risk.

The new affordable homes need to complete by 31 March 2018 to be eligible for the grant, otherwise and grant may be withdrawn if this date is not adhered to – Low risk

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Within the Housing Service Strategy, it has been identified that the target groups that are affected by the Council's house building programme are people in need of:

- affordable housing,
- homelessness assistance,
- supported housing for special needs groups,
- owners and occupiers of poor condition housing
- council and housing association tenants.

From that, it was identified that generally, there is an under provision of suitable accommodation for nearly all target groups. This has been reaffirmed in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Decision making is affected by funding and other factors, such as the availability of building land suitable for particular groups e.g. the elderly or young families.

There is no evidence of unlawful discrimination in relation to the provision of affordable housing.