

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Cabinet
14 March 2017

Subject: COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND

ALL Wards
Portfolio Holder for Planning: Councillor B Phillips

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the recent grant funding allocated through the Community Housing Fund to Yorkshire and Humberside including the allocation for Hambleton; to outline what work has been done sub regionally and locally in anticipation of arrival of the grant; and to seek approval for the pooling arrangements that have been agreed in principle by the Housing Board.
- 1.3 In anticipation of the grant potential schemes and projects have been identified at both the local and strategic level. In Summer 2016 the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Board and Rural Action Yorkshire jointly commissioned research to increase awareness and to identify potential pilot community-led housing schemes across the sub-region that might benefit from the grant funding and also to provide a toolkit to assist other rural communities across the country to get schemes off the ground. This work identified a number of pilots across the sub region, including some in Hambleton. With involvement from the Council's Rural Housing Enabler, work is already underway to progress schemes at Helperby, Thornton Watlass, Hutton Rudby, Osmotherley and Ingleby Arncliffe.
- 1.4 In September 2017, the Housing Board, aware that grant to support community led housing was likely to be allocated to many of the North Yorkshire local authorities and East Riding, agreed in principle for local authorities to pool a share of any funding for 2016/17 for community enabling work. This work would complement local grant spending on specific schemes such as land acquisition, business plan development, planning and consultants' fees, design and architectural advice, site viability or infrastructure works etc.
- 1.5 On 23rd December 2016, Gavin Barwell, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, wrote to a number of Local Authority Chief Executives confirming grant allocations for the Community Housing Fund. Yorkshire and Humberside has been allocated £6,419,494 for 2016/17, of which Hambleton's allocation is £195,277. All other local authorities in North Yorkshire and East Riding (with the exception of City of York and Selby) have also received allocations. A summary of these is attached at Annex 1. Amounts are based on a formula allocation to those local authorities in areas which have a high concentration of second homes and/or issues of housing unaffordability. Payments will be made in two tranches to increase deliverability.
- 1.6 The timing of the funding announcement brings challenges for Hambleton and our sub regional partners in terms of ensuring that sufficient money is spent or committed this financial year. The Government has indicated that regional allocations for future years will be assessed in part against performance in 2016/17.
- 1.7 Whilst the Rural Housing Enabler team may have some of the skills to progress schemes, each local authority has only one 0.5 FTE Rural Housing Enabler and bringing schemes to fruition is likely to be resource intensive. Therefore the Housing Board is mindful of the need for some additional resource to ensure that schemes/projects will be delivered.

1.8 At the Housing Board meeting held on 20th February 2017 there was 'in principle' agreement for each local authority to pool 3% of its grant allocation to a central resource to support the programme. This results in the following breakdown:

Scarborough contribution	= £ 50,000
Ryedale contribution	= £ 12,940
Hambleton contribution	= £ 5,858
Richmondshire contribution	= £ 14,812
Craven contribution	= £ 18,179
Harrogate contribution	= £ 17,575
East Riding contribution	= £ 61,286
TOTAL joint resource	= £186,470

1.9 It is anticipated that this resource will cover years 1 and 2 of the programme and the sub region has taken initial soundings that this is sufficient to create a meaningful resource, based on models in other areas of the country. Any decisions regarding future contributions will be made via the Housing Board but ultimate sovereignty will remain with the Local Authority to which the allocation has been made.

1.10 The Housing Board also proposed that, subject to the Council's agreement, the pooled funding should be held by Hambleton District. Hambleton currently acts as banker for all the Housing partnership funds and employs the team of Rural Housing Enablers and the Housing Strategy Manager.

1.11 At the local level, the Housing and Planning Policy Manager has prepared and submitted a bid response to DCLG on behalf of Hambleton which is attached as Annex 2 and which is subject to confirmation by Cabinet. Due to time constraints this was agreed by Management Team on 22 February 2017. It reflects the sentiment of the Housing Board and has also been informed by discussions with other key partners and personnel including, the LEP, North Yorkshire Chief Housing Officers Group; Rural Action Yorkshire, Registered Providers and the consultant who worked closely with DCLG on the drafting of the grant guidance. The bid is underpinned by a Local Funding Plan which itemises each area of anticipated spend.

2.0 LINK TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

2.1 Promoting community led housing will increase housing choices for our residents. It will also help to increase the number of homes overall and may also result in the provision of more homes that are affordable to local people, particularly in rural areas.

3.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:

3.1 There are no risks in approving the recommendations.

3.2 The key risk is in not approving the recommendation as shown below:-

Risk	Implication	Prob*	Imp*	Total	Preventative action
The Council would not benefit from the additional resources and economies of scale available through collaborative working and may be less effective in the way it spends its grant.	Future grant may be reduced as the Council may not deliver Value for Money	4	3	12	Agree to pool 3% of the grant allocation

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 The Council received the first tranche of the grant payment (£97,639) for 2016/17 on 16th January 2017. The grant has been ring fenced for use on community led housing, in accordance with the grant guidelines. Subject to DCLG finding our bid submission satisfactory, the Council will receive the second tranche for this financial year. Further allocations may be received for the period of the Spending Review but the amount may vary depending on the performance of the Yorkshire and Humberside region and we may need to bid for this on a competitive basis.
- 4.2 The Housing Board has agreed in principle for participating local authorities to pool some of the grant allocation and this would require Hambleton to transfer £5,858 of its allocation for 2016/17 into a pooled fund. The Housing Board has also asked if Hambleton would act as banker on behalf of the housing partnership.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 There are no legal implications.

6.0 EQUALITY/DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 6.1 Equality and Diversity Issues have been considered, however there are no issues associated with this report.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is recommended that:-

- (1) Cabinet agrees to pool £5,858 of its Community Housing grant allocation for 2016/17;
- (2) the Council acts as banker on behalf of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Partnership.

MICK JEWITT

Background papers:

Author ref: SWT

Contact: Sue Walters Thompson
Housing and Planning Policy Manager
01609 767176

Local Authority Allocations

East Riding of Yorkshire	£2,042,864	32%
Craven	£605,964	9%
Hambleton	£195,277	3%
Harrogate	£585,832	9%
Richmondshire	£493,730	8%
Ryedale	£431,322	7%
Scarborough	£1,860,672	29%