



CABINET

Tuesday, 03 May 2022

Subject	Community Housing Fund Spend Policy
Report by	Councillor Richard Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing
Supporting Officer	Stephanie Baxter Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager Stephanie.baxter@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01502 523462

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

The Community Housing Fund (CHF) Spend Policy provides a clear framework of the level of funding available, who can bid for it and how it is to be used. The CHF Spend Policy has been designed to ensure that a fair process for allocating funding, which will try and support as many Community Led Housing Schemes as possible.

Options:

There are two main options to consider. Firstly, we could continue 'as is', but this means there would be no policy in place and would prevent money being allocated in a fair and proportionate way to multiple CLH's and instead could be allocated purely on a first come first served basis. Alternatively, the second option would be to adopt this CHF Spend Policy, which provides a transparent and clear framework for the disposal of the grant to eligible applicants for ESC, Community Led Housing Groups and government.

A fair and transparent policy would ensure robust decisions are made and an equal consideration is given to all applications.

Recommendation/s:

1.1 That the Community Housing Spend Policy, as set out in Appendix A, is adopted.

1.2 That delegated responsibility is given to the Head of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to award the Community Housing Fund (CHF) spend policy.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

Applications for funding will be agreed by the Housing and Enabling Manager, Head of Housing, Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing, and the Housing Cabinet Holder.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

The Community Housing Fund Spend Policy is closely linked with the Housing Enabling Strategy and the Housing Strategy. Both of these Strategies identify the benefits of supporting Community Led Housing.

Environmental:

There have been examples throughout the UK where CLH groups have delivered high energy efficient, low carbon schemes. These are exemplars based on sustainable principles. Through our work with CLH's, we will be encouraging the use of sustainable construction methods and energy efficient homes.

Equalities and Diversity:

The Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Access to the CHF grant is open to all groups and support can be given by Officers to groups who do not have experience of funding applications.

Financial:

There are no additional costs to the Council. The CHF is a ring-fenced grant from government that the Council can distribute to deliver additional affordable housing.

Human Resources:

There are no impacts.

ICT:

Applications will be via writeable PDF's and then emailed to appropriate officer.

Legal:

All grant agreements will form a legal agreement, which will be set out with the guidance of our in house legal team.

Risk:

All decisions will be made in line with the policy and set out in a legal agreement. All funding decisions will be made once the Council has assurance that the CLH Group can afford to deliver their plans. This will reduce the risk of funding being awarded but a scheme not being deliverable.

External Consultees: N/A

Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected?			
<p>Priority 7.</p> <p>This priority delivers targeted, place-based initiatives to support life chances and reduce deprivation. This Community Housing Fund supports communities to enable or commission additional affordable housing in their areas that meet specific needs.</p> <p>Priority 8.</p> <p>Secure, high quality, affordable housing provides a stable base on which residents can flourish and remain healthy. The medium of housing acts as a catalyst to bring the wider community together, enabling them to learn from each other as well as new skills. It also changes derelict land into a positive place, reducing anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Priority 9.</p> <p>Communities are brought together to support or lead on a housing project and can be a mechanism for inclusion and growth in life skills.</p>			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1	Background facts
1.1	The Council received £2,209,957 from the Community Housing Fund in 2016 to help communities mitigate against the pressures caused by second and holiday accommodation.
1.2	To date, £752,375 has been spent to deliver 9 homes in Southwold and Bawdsey through supporting SouthGen and Peninsula Villages CLH groups.

1.3	To support the objectives of the Housing Enabling Strategy, (increasing the number of additional homes delivered via CLH models), a CHF spending policy is required. This will act as a tool to promote the model and engage with local communities and Parish Councils. Such a policy highlights the funding available, the support the Council is able to offer and how interested parties can apply for funding.
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2 Current position

2.1	Two CHF groups, PVCLT and SouthGen have received funding to deliver additional affordable housing. However, there is no current policy on how the funding should be used, which may cause confusion for local communities and Members alike.
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3 How to address current situation

3.1	A clear spending policy outlines the financial and practical support the Council can provide.
3.2	It also sets out the Councils requirements of CLH groups to be professional in outlook, governance and financial management.

4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	Transparency on how ESC utilises CHF grant within the frameworks of the Strategic Plan and Housing and Enabling Strategies
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Appendices

Appendices:

Appendix A	CHF Spending Policy
Appendix B	CHF letter from MHCLG, Dec 2016

Background reference papers:

None
