

Housing Scrutiny Committee

17 October 2018

COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING



To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Report by:

Julian Adams, Suzanne Hemingway

Tel: 01223 457461. Email: suzanne.hemingway@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The award of grant by the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Community Housing Fund to local authorities to promote community-led housing, has led to a new initiative being proposed by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council. It is designed to help community groups deliver housing schemes on land identified by the community; help make sure designs are right for the local area and meet the needs of people in need of affordable housing.
- 1.2 The scheme would allow interested groups each to bid for up to £4,500 to scope a project in their area as well as explore and develop capacity to take approved schemes forward. The project is being run in conjunction with Community Land Trust (CLT) East who have helped deliver community-led housing in East Cambridgeshire. The grants

available could be used to pursue any model of community-led development for the provision of affordable housing, including Community Land Trusts, Cohousing and groups who want to self-build.

- 1.3 Before applying for funding, groups also have free help and advice from a CLT East technical adviser, who will complete a report of findings and recommendations for the group. These recommendations will be reported to a board of Council officers from Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire who will oversee the administration of the grant award process once agreed.
- 1.4 1.4 This report seeks delegated authority for awarding grants to such groups.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 To give delegated authority to a Strategic Director to award grants of up to £4,500 each to community groups, to assist them to develop proposals for community-led affordable housing through such models as Co-housing, Community Land Trusts or self-build schemes.

3. Background

- 3.1. The £60m Community Housing Fund was announced by DCLG on December 23rd 2016 to help Local Authorities in areas where, in their view, the impact of second homes is particularly acute, and where housing is unaffordable for local people, to support community-led development.
- 3.2. As with Local Authorities across the country, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council were both unexpectedly awarded funding. The Councils received their first tranche of funding in December 2016. The councils bid for a second tranche in April 2017. There are no conditions imposed by DCLG attached to the award of funding, although both councils expect there to be some sort of monitoring of expenditure and outcomes. The total amount received by each Council is as follows:

- South Cambridgeshire District Council awarded £50,329
- Cambridge City Council awarded £52,342

The Councils have decided to pool their funding together in order to create a more effective and coherent plan for community-led development in the area.

- Total pooled funding of £102,671.

- 3.3 CLT East has been appointed to undertake the detailed work with community groups and to work with staff and councillors within the two Local Authorities to help develop their approach to community-led housing.
- 3.4. CLT East are undertaking a scoping exercise to identify likely existing groups that might benefit from the advice and grants. This will be complemented via publicity in Council publications and web-sites to attract other groups, including those who may not, at present, be formally constituted. Work with the City Council's Community Development team will identify further community networks and communication methods to widen the publicity.
- 3.5 Prior to any grant being offered, the applicants will meet CLT officers to take initial advice and assess the best way in which the group can progress, either with or without the grant.
- 3.6 Grants are aimed at helping groups to building knowledge and capacity to take affordable housing schemes forward, including support in: formulating ideas; setting up business plans; researching sites; engaging with partners; setting up legal frameworks; entering into landowner or developer negotiations and overcoming barriers to bringing particular sites forward.
- 3.7 £42,000 of the DCLG grant has been set aside to fund grants to community groups.

3.7 The project and grant applications will be overseen by a Joint Project Board, members of which will be made up of officers from Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and CLT East. The Board will develop a process for awarding grants, including clear grant eligibility criteria, and will monitor expenditure and outcomes.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Groups with an interest in developing their own affordable housing for the community can apply for up to £4,500 in grant funding to cover all their start-up costs. The total amount available for grant is £42,000. The scheme will be funded through grant awarded to the council through the DCLG's Community Housing Fund.

(b) Staffing Implications

There are no direct staffing implications from this report. Co-ordination of work will be undertaken with existing resources.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

No. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the overall scheme with colleagues from South Cambridgeshire District Council.

(d) Environmental Implications

There are no direct environmental implications from this report.

(e) Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications from this report.

(f) Community Safety Implications

There are no direct community safety implications from this report.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

Work to identify and contact new and existing groups, is being undertaken. Publicity including an article for Cambridge Matters, spring edition, is being developed at present and an initial press release was published in September outlining the award.

6. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Julian Adams, Growth Projects Officer, tel: 01223 457617, email: julian.adams@cambridge.gov.uk.