

Decision Number: 05 (2014/15)

Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

Subject: To agree a S106 affordable housing planning gains spending proposal to fund essential works to James Lance Cottages, New Ash Green. The cottages are owned by Lances Almshouse Charity.

Details of Decision taken

To allocate £3,085.00 to Lances Almshouse Charity from the District Council's S106 affordable housing planning gains (HP2 - Initiatives to make better use of the existing stock) to fund essential damp proofing works at James Lance Cottages.

Reason for Decision

The organisation has a small budget for minor repairs/emergencies which is funded by a maintenance fee paid by the tenants. A small budget also exists, but in the last 2-3 years a fair amount of this has gone on essential repairs and modernising the properties such as installing central heating, double glazing and repairs to walls, gutters etc.

It has recently come to light that there is a major problem of damp in one of the cottages. The tenant moved out at the end of April, providing a window of opportunity to carry out the damp proofing works whilst the property is vacant.

Unlike housing associations, the organisation does not qualify for Government's affordable housing grant and this limits its financial capacity. Being such a small charity with just 2 units it has extremely limited opportunities to generate any revenue. Almshouses provide low cost housing to local people in housing need and play an important part in the supply of affordable housing for vulnerable people. Therefore, it is in the District Council's interest to help maintain and preserve this much needed accommodation well into the future.

The damp proofing works to be carried out will make best use of the existing stock (a key housing strategy objective) and will help to ensure that the property can continue to provide much needed affordable housing in the District.

All Documents considered:

Core Strategy
Housing Strategy Action Plan

Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Member when making the Decision:

None.

Financial implications

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Funding will be from S106 planning gains (affordable housing payments) and will decrease the total available for future projects. However, there is currently sufficient unallocated funding to support future projects.
These funds are allocated in line with spending criteria as approved in core strategy by Full Council back in 2012.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal implications.

Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)

Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	Maintaining existing housing stock for older people.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes	It will protect and enhance housing for older people and support independent living, thereby helping older people to remain living in the communities in more general needs housing. This therefore helps to promote equality of opportunity around access to housing for older people.
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		N/A

Local Member (s), other Portfolio Holders and/or Directors/Heads of Service Consulted

Cllr Carol Clark
Cllr Michelle Lowe

Details of any conflicts of interest

a) declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taker

N/A

b) and any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict

N/A

(For Democratic Services use)

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Decision taken by:	Cllr Michelle Lowe, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing, Welfare and Community Safety. Cllr Robert Piper, Portfolio Holder for Local Planning and Environment.
Signed by Portfolio Holder	[Redacted]
Date of Decision	04/07/14
Record made by:	George Lewis
Date of record:	4 July 2014

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