

(For Democratic Services use)

Decision Number: 18 (2019/20)

Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

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

Subject: *Penshurst Almshouses*

Details of Decision taken

To provide £25,000 non-repayable funding to Penshurst Almshouses to carry out essential improvement works with the aim of protecting and preserving much-needed affordable housing for older people whilst also improving on-site facilities for current and future residents.

Reason for Decision

Built back in 1833 and managed by the Penshurst Almshouses charity, the scheme provides much-needed affordable housing for older people with a local connection to the Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe. This provides a safe and secure living environment for residents and access to garden areas to encourage older residents to interact - thereby helping to avoid social exclusion and loneliness, which has been identified as a serious issue nationally.

Redevelopment and replacement of the residents' laundry room is required in order that a facility can continue to be effectively used. With the drying of laundry in flats creating significant moisture, and particularly in solid-walled properties, dampness can consequently occur. This can then have a direct effect on the health of older people and cause several immediate respiratory issues as well as, over the longer-term, reducing lung function and causing other chronic health conditions.

The District Council has recognised almshouses as an important type of affordable housing provision for older people in rural areas and, as such, has committed to supporting local almshouses charities in its latest Housing Strategy (Priority 2.20, p28). Backed by recent evidence, the Housing Strategy also acknowledges that the vast majority of older people would like to remain living independently and, again, the provision of grant would support that objective (Priority 3, p35).

Assisting to upgrade on-site facilities would support a number of housing and wider health outcomes, as set out in the District Council's Housing Strategy and Community Plan. This project would also support wider work across the public

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<p><i>sector aimed at reducing the need for hospital admissions and other acute health interventions.</i></p>
<p>All Documents considered:</p> <p><i>Housing Strategy (2017)</i> https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/1028/housing_strategy_2017</p> <p><i>Community Plan Priorities (2019-2022)</i> https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/site_search/results/?q=Community+Plan+Priorities+%282019-2022%29.++&jadu-search-type=1</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Member when making the Decision:</p> <p><i>None</i></p>
<p>Financial implications</p> <p><i>Funding would come via Section 106 Affordable Housing contributions and correspond with following Core Strategy spending criteria: 1) Initiatives to make better use of the existing stock; 2) Managing future needs for affordable housing; and 3) Supporting the development of rural exception sites to meet rural housing needs (Section 6.16, p19: Supplementary Planning Document - Affordable Housing (2011)). There would be no impact on District Council budgets, therefore.</i></p>
<p>Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement</p> <p><i>There are no legal issues to consider. The provision of funding would help to protect and preserve much-needed affordable housing for older people and reduce pressure on the Sevenoaks District Housing Register (SDHR) and other services in the future.</i></p>
<p>Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)</p> <p><i>The provision of funding would help to protect and preserve accommodation designated for older people in housing need and, as such, there would be a positive impact on end-users.</i></p>

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

*Cllr Robert Piper
Housing & Health Portfolio Holder*

*Cllr Julia Thornton
Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder*

Details of any conflicts of interest

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

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

Decision taken by:

*Cllr Robert Piper
Housing & Health Portfolio Holder*

*Cllr Julia Thornton
Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder*

Signed by Portfolio Holder

*Cllr Robert Piper
Housing & Health Portfolio Holder*

*Cllr Julia Thornton
Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder*

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Decision Number:

Date of Decision	6/12/19.
Record made by:	
Date of record:	

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