

• (For Democratic Services use) 17 (2019/20)

Decision Number:

Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

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

Subject: *Margaret Hyde Almshouses Charity*

Details of Decision taken

To provide £25,000 non-repayable funding to the Margaret Hyde Almshouses Charity to contribute to essential improvement works on a newly-vacant dwelling with the aim of protecting and preserving much-needed affordable housing for older people in one of the District's rural areas.

Reason for Decision

Built back in the 1750s and managed by the Margaret Hyde Almshouses Charity, this housing scheme (situated in the hamlet of Wellers Town on the outskirts of Chiddingstone Village) provides much-needed affordable housing for older people with a local connection to the Parish of Chiddingstone. This provides a safe and secure living environment for residents with access to a large communal garden area to encourage older residents to interact - thereby helping to avoid social exclusion and loneliness, which has been identified as a serious issue nationally.

A vacancy has arisen in the scheme and in order to ensure that future tenants are provided with safe and suitable accommodation, the property is in need of urgent modernisation.

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 funding would support that objective (Priority 3, p35).

Bringing a much-need affordable property up to standard 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 sector aimed at reducing the need for hospital admissions and other acute health interventions.

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All Documents considered:

Housing Strategy (2017)

https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/1028/housing_strategy_2017

Community Plan Priorities (2019-2022)

https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/site_search/results/?q=Community+Plan+Priorities+%282019-2022%29.++&jadu-search-type=1

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

None

Financial implications

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.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal issues to consider. The provision of grant 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.



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

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.

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<p>Local Member (s), other Portfolio Holders and/or Directors/Heads of Service Consulted</p> <p><i>Cllr Robert Piper Housing & Health Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Cllr Julia Thornton Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder</i></p>	
<p>Details of any conflicts of interest</p> <p>a) declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taker</p> <p>b) and any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict</p>	
<p>Decision taken by:</p>	<p><i>Cllr Robert Piper Housing & Health Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p><i>Cllr Julia Thornton Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder</i></p>
<p>Signed by Portfolio Holder</p>	<p> <i>Cllr Robert Piper Housing & Health Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p> <i>Cllr Julia Thornton Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder</i></p>

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Decision Number:

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

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