

Decision Number:

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 continue to fund the Private Sector Lettings (PSL) scheme 'offer to landlords' including landlord incentives, grants and deposits.

Details of Decision taken

To allocate £75,000 from the District Council's S106 affordable housing planning gains under HP3 - 'Managing future needs for affordable housing including homelessness prevention and benefit advisory services'. This funding request is to enable the continuation of the PSL scheme 'offer to landlords', with £25,000 to fund cash deposits and £50,000 to fund landlord incentives and grants.

Reason for Decision

With limited social housing stock in the District, the private rented sector is a vital resource in preventing and relieving homelessness. Assisting people who are facing homelessness to secure a private rental is crucial but the sector can be difficult to access, particularly for people on lower incomes or in receipt of benefits.

Customers seeking help through the PSL scheme are mostly on lower incomes and/or benefits. The initial, upfront costs needed to secure a private rental can often be in excess of £2,000 (rent in advance and deposit) and most people who approach the Council for help do not have this amount of money available as a lump sum, although the monthly rent is affordable to them.

To maximise access to the private rented sector, the Council works proactively with private landlords by offering a comprehensive incentive package through the PSL scheme. The PSL scheme offers incentives including a one-off incentive payment, minor repair/energy efficiency grants, rent in advance payments, a cash deposit/bond, full inventory service and ongoing tenancy sustainment and support. This package of incentives has worked very well in terms of encouraging landlords to work with us on a long term basis, in turn providing vulnerable households with safe, secure and affordable homes.

Since the approval of the previous PSL funding budget in April 2019, we have secured private rentals for 45 households who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. PSL is a homelessness prevention scheme and plays a vital role in alleviating and preventing homelessness and, therefore, reducing the use/cost of placing households in nightly paid, emergency accommodation. The approximate cost of 45 households being placed into emergency accommodation

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(for 56 days) would be £126,000. The PSL costs for 45 households was £58,215, making a significant saving to Council budgets of at least £67,785 and representing good value for money.

All Documents considered:

Housing Strategy Action Plan
Core Strategy (Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document)
The Community Plan
West Kent Housing & Homelessness Strategy

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

None.

Financial implications

Funding is requested from S106 affordable housing planning gains. There is currently sufficient unallocated funding to support this work. Without this funding, there will be an increased need to place people in emergency nightly paid accommodation, therefore increasing expenditure on Council budgets.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal implications.

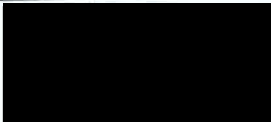

This funding will allow the PSL scheme to help secure private rented accommodation for people facing homelessness. Without the funding to offer incentives for landlords to work with us or to provide deposits, there is a high risk that we will not be able to find suitable accommodation for households in need.

Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)
The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

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Local Member (s), other Portfolio Holders and/or Directors/Heads of Service Consulted Cllr Kevin Maskell - Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health Cllr Julia Thornton - Portfolio Holder for Development & Conservation Sarah Robson - Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer People & Places Hayley Brooks - Head of Housing & Health	
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 Kevin Maskell - Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health Cllr Julia Thornton - Portfolio Holder for Development & Conservation
Signed by Portfolio Holder	 K. Maskell. 
Date of Decision	11/12/2020. 28-1-2021
Record made by:	VN ETHELSON
Date of record:	28-1-2021

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