

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 17 MAY 2006

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the level of budget approved by Communities Scotland for Private Sector Housing Grant in 2006/07 and provide details of the projects and activities for which the funding has been approved.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Communities Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, wrote to the Council on 20 October 2005 indicating a central Resource Planning Assumption per annum for the Council of £929K and inviting the submission of a detailed bid against this figure for Private Sector Housing Grant funding for both 2006/07 and 2007/08.
- 2.2 They further requested that our bid should be submitted in a format that would allow our central Resource Planning Assumptions to be varied by + or - 10% depending on both the level of resource requests submitted by other Councils and Communities Scotland's valuation of the quality and validity of bids.
- 2.3 The projects and activities for which funding was requested under this offer is detailed in section 3 below.

3. PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

3.1 Mandatory Grants (Order served)

To service mandatory grant requests for Below Tolerable Standard properties and properties on which a Repair Order has been served, in the amount of £60K.

3.2 Mandatory Grants (Standard Amenities for Disabled)

To service mandatory grants for the provision of standard amenities for disabled applicants in the amount of £385K

3.3 Care and Repair

To fund a Care and Repair service to all Council areas following the successful pilot and roll out of the scheme council wide in the amount of £193K and comprising £150K to cover capital costs and £43K to fund associated revenue cost of staffing and administration through Shire Housing.

3.4 Communal Repairs

To address requests for financial assistance from common/adjoining owners affected or involved in our Housing investment Programme in the amount of £120K. Provision of this level of funding is considered necessary to ensure the co-operation of owners to achieve our revised Standard Delivery Plan as submitted to the Scottish Executive.

3.5 Supporting Area Regeneration

To provide support to private sector landlords to encourage them to enter into partnerships with the Council to provide equal access to an adequate supply of good quality affordable housing and in the amount of £20K

3.6 Townscape Heritage Initiative

To assist in the redevelopment of the outstanding conservation areas within the Kilmarnock and Catrine town centres in partnership with Historic Scotland and Communities Scotland and in the amount of £40K.

3.7 Administration/Business Improvement

To achieve increased output and support on Disabled grants, Care and Repair Services, the provision of a Lead Tenancy Scheme, a Landlord Leasing Scheme and improved information services by the provision of financial support for these elements and the additional staff required to administer them, in the amount of £154K.

4. OUTCOME

- 4.1 On 27 March 2006, Communities Scotland provided a formal offer of Private Sector Housing Grant for 2006/07 in the amount of £972K thereby reflecting the central Resource Planning Assumption. Although no offer of budget was provided for 2007/08, the correspondence did include permission to assist in forward financial planning by allowing the council to forward commit a maximum of 50% of the 2006/07 allocation pending confirmation of the 2007/08 offer.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the offer from Communities Scotland will be sufficient to address the grant requirements under each project/activity for 2006/07.

6. LEGAL AUTHORITY/ IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council is required to comply with the conditions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended October 2001, when exercising its authority to make grants available to the private sector.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Use of the funding as outlined in the terms of this report will support delivery of the objectives set out in the East Ayrshire Community Plan and the Local Housing Strategy.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Scottish Ministers, in accepting our proposals and agreeing the funding, have enabled the Council to address its statutory requirements and progress its proposals for 2006/07 as detailed in section 3 of this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Committee are recommended to:
- (i) agree to disburse the available funding under the proposal headings detailed in section 3;
 - (ii) remit to the Head of Housing to monitor the phasing of expenditure in agreement with Communities Scotland; and
 - (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/CMcA/JC2

12 April 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Communities Scotland letter requesting bids for PSHG budgets for 2006/07 and 2007/08 - dated 20 October 2005.
2. East Ayrshire Council PSHG bid submission - dated 7 December 2005
3. Communities Scotland letter of confirmation of award - dated 20 March 2006

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone (01563) 576658 and ask for Jim Clark.

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