

HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) process for this year and invites Members to consider priorities for use of the Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) which is included within the approved Capital Programme.
- 1.2 The report also suggests priorities to be identified for Housing Corporation funding for 2001/2002.

2 HIP ROUND 2000

- 2.1 Guidance has been received on this year's HIP round. HIP is the process by which local housing authorities are required to submit a range of documents and information, as outlined below, to enable decisions to be made about funding allocations to individual authorities for investment in housing.
- 2.2 The following documents must be submitted.
 - (a) Housing strategy statement (by 31 July)
 - (b) Housing annual plan (by 31 July)
 - (c) Operation information form (Section 1 by 23 June; Sections 2-4 by 31 July)
 - (d) Progress report on the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 and Fuel Poverty report (by 31 July)
 - (e) Extract on housing from the audited Best Value Performance Plan (31 July)
- 2.3 The Government Office for the East of England (Go East) recognises that Committee timetables may make it impracticable for all the information to be submitted by the deadlines. This will be the case for the update to the Housing Strategy which will be sent in draft to Go-East pending Members' consideration of the document in September.
- 2.4 Resources are allocated through the HIP process partly on assessed need and partly on Ministerial discretion, using recommendations from Go-East.
 - 2.4.1 The Council's performance in housing is currently assessed as below average by Go-East.
 - 2.4.2 The Go-East assessment summary for 1999 includes the following issues:-
 - New survey on private sector housing conditions is needed.

- Partnerships with Registered Social Landlords need to improve further.
- No registration scheme for houses in multiple occupation. Risk based inspection programme to be implemented.
- Scope for improvement on energy efficiency work.
- No strategic options appraisal undertaken.
- Little strategic direction to investment.
- Slight underspend on 1998/99 programme.

3 FUTURE CHANGES TO HOUSING STRATEGY

3.1 There are two major issues which will influence the Council's future strategy development.

- (a) The Housing Green Paper – the report elsewhere on this Agenda outlines the key proposals in the Green Paper.
- (b) Best Value – the Council has just started best value reviews of housing strategy and housing management.

Best Value will require a fundamental re-evaluation of the Council's approach to external providers and management of its own stock including, for example, how it deals with the issue of un-improved sheltered housing schemes.

3.2 These are both likely to have a significant influence and it is , therefore, considered most appropriate to update the existing strategy, rather than attempt to produce a new one ahead of the conclusions from the reviews and Government announcements on the outcome of the Green Paper consultation process.

4. LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT (LASHG)

4.1 (LASHG) can be provided by local authorities to assist financing housing association developments which address housing priorities identified by the Authority.

4.2 The current year's approved Capital Programme includes £120,000 LASHG.

4.3 Discussions have taken place with several housing associations about possible projects and Members are invited to consider allocation of the current year's budget as follows:

- John Groomes Housing Association - purchase and adaptation of one property for a wheelchair user.

Indicative allocation £40,000.

- Estuary Housing Association – purchase and repair of two, 2 bedroom properties in Rayleigh/Hockley for social renting.

Indicative allocation £80,000

Both these proposals meet priorities identified in the Council's Housing Needs study. Some adjustment between the two projects within the overall total may be necessary, dependent on the properties available.

5 HOUSING CORPORATION APPROVED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (ADP)

- 5.1 ADP funding is another form of social housing grant to housing associations, in this case distributed by the Housing Corporation which is a Government agency.
- 5.2 Local Authorities are invited to identify in the Housing Corporation's regional statement what projects it would like housing associations to bid to the Housing Corporation for funding to carry out. Funding is always limited, so only the highest priority and best supported projects in each district are likely to receive funding.
- 5.3 Based on the conclusions of the housing needs study, the priorities are:
- 1 and 2 bedroom houses to rent in Rayleigh and Hockley
 - Wheelchair adapted housing.
- 5.4 A major difficulty in the provision of new homes for rent in this area is the high cost of land. Unless housing associations can identify suitably priced land or the Council can provide it free or at a discount, it is unlikely that new-build social rented houses can be provided. Housing Associations are, therefore, likely to have to purchase existing properties.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The location of new social rented housing is important to ensure a balanced community.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The LASHG is included within the approved Capital Programme.
- 7.2 The Council's Housing Strategy and performance has an effect on the funding allocation it receives.

8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) To note the HIP 2000 process.
- (2) That the Local Authority Social Housing Grant in the approved Capital Programme be allocated as set out in the report.
- (3) That the Council's priorities for Housing Corporation ADP funding be as set out in the report.

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Background Papers:

Letter from Government Office for the East of England: Housing Investment Round 2000.

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