

**COUNCIL: 22 JULY 2002**

**REPORTING OF URGENT DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO  
HOLDER FOR HOUSING**

**ALLOCATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL HOUSING  
GRANT**

**SWAYTHLING HOUSING SOCIETY  
HAZEL FARM, TOTTON (Phases 3 and 4)**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 On 30 April 2002 the Portfolio Holder for Housing authorised the allocation of £1,509,613 of Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) to Swaythling Housing Society to enable a scheme to deliver 27 affordable dwellings at Hazel Farm, Totton to proceed. This was done as a matter of urgency in accordance with Paragraph 3, Chapter 7 of the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2 This decision came within the definition of a "key decision" in the Council's Constitution, because the expenditure the Portfolio Holder for Housing was being asked to approve exceeded £50,000, and also one-quarter of the entire LASHG budget.
- 1.3 The proposed allocation of funding was both within policy and within budget.
- 1.4 The proposed decision was not included in the appropriate Forward Plan of Key Decisions, as information that the developers wished to proceed so quickly, and that the Housing Corporation had not allocated specific grant to the scheme, was not received until after the deadline for the Forward Plan had passed.
- 1.5 The Monitoring Officer confirmed that she was satisfied that it was not reasonable to delay making the decision until it could be included in a Forward Plan. As required in legislation and the Council's Constitution, full details of the proposed decision were notified to the Chairman of the Housing, Health and Social Exclusion Review Panel by letter and a copy of that letter was made available for public inspection.
- 1.6 No objections were received to the notification.

## **2. Options**

- 2.1 The proposal involved the provision of affordable housing on a market housing site. The affordable housing had been secured through the land-use planning process. The timing of the delivery of units on sites is controlled largely by the private sector housebuilder. The Council was informed in early April of the housebuilder's intention to progress the scheme as a matter of urgency. As the Housing Corporation had, shortly before this, indicated they were unable to offer specific grant funding for the scheme due to financial constraints, Local Authority Social Housing Grant was necessary for the scheme to proceed.
- 2.2 No alternative source of funding is currently available. Without LASHG support, the scheme will not be built. LASHG may only be used for the capital funding of affordable housing schemes.
- 2.3 Had LASHG not been made available the delivery of the affordable housing units would have been delayed and their cost very probably increased.
- 2.4 Choosing the option of not providing the funding or dwellings would increase pressure on the Housing Register.

## **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The allocation of LASHG was made from within an existing budget that was established to fund affordable housing projects. LASHG is financed from the District's spending power, with the grant itself refunded by the Housing Corporation.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that £1,207,690 will be required in the current year, and the remaining £301,923 will be a commitment against the 2003/4 Social Housing Grant programme. The level of resources for next year will not be known until December. However, assuming the same level of resources are made available to support the programme as in the current year, this commitment can be accommodated.

## **4. Environmental Implications**

- 4.1 The provision of new homes can have environmental implications. However the local planning authority have taken account of a range of these implications in granting planning permission. It is also important to balance environmental implications with the need to provide homes for people in housing need.

## **5. Crime and Disorder Implications**

- 5.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising as a result of this report.

## **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The proposal for which funding has been agreed represents good value for money and will help meet an identified housing need.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 That the decision is noted.

**CLLR P C GREENFIELD  
PORTFOLIO HOLDER : HOUSING**