

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

8 October 2007

Report of the Director of Health and Housing

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD BID FOR PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL FUNDING

Summary

This report outlines a partnership bid for an allocation of the South East Regional Housing Board Private Sector Renewal Programme 2008-11. The partnership is made up of eight local authorities in Kent and the bid is being led by Tonbridge & Malling BC. A number of activities focused on energy efficiency improvements and the decent homes agenda are proposed with a move away from the traditional grants culture to the recycling of funding including loans.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Members will be aware of the windfall capital allocation the Council received in 2006/07 and 2007/08 of £503,000 from the Regional Housing Board (RHB). We were one of 22 local authorities to receive funding on the back of the results of our Private Sector House Condition Survey (2000) which indicated levels of unfitness in the private sector above the criteria set by the RHB. A separate report on the agenda explains further how this funding has been utilised, what the future proposals for spend are and reinforces that the Council was given discretion in the design of its programmes to meet local need.

1.1.2 For the funding period 2008-11 the RHB have invited local authorities in partnership with neighbouring authorities to make a bid for funding to support work to improve the condition of private sector homes. The RHB will only consider funding submissions from a partnership comprising at least two local authorities.

1.2 Objectives of the funding

1.2.1 The RHB is committed to focusing part of the available funding on improving the living conditions of vulnerable households in the private sector. A vulnerable household is defined as one that is in receipt of an income or disability related benefit. The funding is to be used to improve the condition of housing to the decent homes standard, address more widespread regeneration needs and foster

improvement in domestic energy efficiency to combat fuel poverty and reduce the region's carbon emissions.

1.2.2 The bid must cover the three year period 2008-11 and a total of £80 million has been sought by the RHB from central Government for the south east region.

1.2.3 The RHB have issued bid guidance that indicates the following:

- an expectation that energy efficiency measures will play a prominent part in bids;
- bids must explain how the local effectiveness of the Warm Front programme (central Government energy efficiency improvement programme) and Carbon Emissions Reduction Target programme (utility funding for energy efficiency measures) will be driven up;
- bids should have an emphasis on distributing funds through loans and equity release products and development of this throughout the three year period; and
- an expectation of contributions from the local authorities in the partnership as well as maximisation of other potential sources of funding e.g. Warm Front programme and utility funding.

1.3 Partnership

1.3.1 A partnership of local housing authorities has been meeting regularly since mid - August 2007 in order to take the bid forward. The partnership is made up of eight local authorities: Tonbridge & Malling BC, Tunbridge Wells BC, Sevenoaks DC, Maidstone BC, Ashford BC, Dartford BC, Gravesham BC and Medway UA.

1.3.2 Tonbridge & Malling BC is acting as lead authority for the bid. This has proved to be a challenge for the private sector housing team in pulling the bid together and ensuring the partnership remains focused and purposeful. It is however an excellent opportunity for the Council to influence the bid proposals and steer what is hoped will be an exciting three year initiative.

1.4 Bid application

1.4.1 The partnership is currently working on proposals for a number of activities that will form part of the overall bid. Initial discussions with Government Office for the South East have been positive and encouraging.

1.4.2 The bid will be assessed against four criteria: need and rationale; value for money; delivery plan and track record and innovation and collaboration.

1.4.3 The deadline for submission of the bid is 14 October 2007.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 None arising from this report.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 The opportunity to bid for this funding represents the only possible means by which the Council could secure capital resources from central government to fund its private sector renewal (ie Decent Homes) programme during 2008-2011.

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 None arising from this report.

Background papers:

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Nil

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