

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

19 May 2008

Report of the Director of Health and Housing

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 HOUSING ASSISTANCE – REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD FUNDING

Summary

Members are aware of the North and West Kent Private Sector Renewal Partnership bid for Regional Housing Board funding for 2008-11. The funding for 2008-09 has now been confirmed and indicative amounts provided for the remaining two years. This report updates Members on the allocation for Tonbridge & Malling.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Members are aware that a partnership bid for an allocation of the South East Regional Housing Board (RHB) Private Sector Renewal Programme 2008-11 was made in October 2007. The bid known as the North and West Kent Private Sector Renewal Partnership, was led by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and comprised eight local authorities in Kent: Tonbridge & Malling BC, Tunbridge Wells BC, Sevenoaks DC, Maidstone BC, Ashford BC, Dartford BC, Gravesham BC and Medway UA.

1.1.2 It was reported to the January meeting of the Board that the RHB assessed the bid (along with a further eight others from across the region) and judged it to be the second strongest in the region. A recommendation for funding to the tune of £9.75 million was made by the RHB to Ministers.

1.2 Agreed allocation

1.2.1 Ministers finalised decisions on the allocation of the regional housing pot and they accepted the RHB's recommendation for increased funds for private sector housing - £80 million over the three years to 2010/11.

1.2.2 The allocation for 2008/09 has been confirmed with indicative amounts provided by the RHB for 2009/10 and 2010/11. In total, if the indicative amounts are confirmed the partnership will receive a total of £9,768,000 over the three year period. This is 82 per cent of the total funding bid for.

- 1.2.3 Tonbridge & Malling will receive a total of £1,624,868 over the three years with £405,551 confirmed as the allocation for 2008/09.

1.3 Next steps

- 1.3.1 The partnership is currently revising the activity levels it proposed as part of its bid to reflect the reduced funding received from the RHB. This refiled programme has to be submitted to Government Office for the South East (GOSE) by 15 May 2008.
- 1.3.2 The partnership is also progressing potential partnership arrangements with other agencies in order to ensure the funding is maximised.
- 1.3.3 Tonbridge & Malling is now in a position to move forward in respect of the new activities proposed as part of the bid as Members supported adoption of a new policy at the last meeting of this Board.
- 1.3.4 Further updates on how the RHB funding is being utilised will be presented at future meetings of this Board.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The new policy introduces the recycling of funds back into the Council's capital resources which will boost future capital funding for housing improvements.
- 1.5.2 The new policy includes amendment to the eligibility criteria to passport 'vulnerable' households through the financial assessment. This may mean that applicants who previously had a contribution to make towards the necessary works will now have nothing to pay. Any additional costs ongoing from this change will be met 100 per cent by the resources secured from the RHB.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The policy that this funding supports aims to assist the Council in meeting the Decent Homes targets in the private sector and promoting improvements in energy efficiency of homes including renewable energy. The robustness of the plans to achieve this will be subject to external assessment from the RHB and Government Office for the South East (GOSE).
- 1.6.2 A full risk assessment if failure to provide housing assistance to private sector homeowners is detailed in the Housing Services Risk Register.

Background papers:

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Nil

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