

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
THURSDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER 2008

Housing & Planning Delivery Grant 2008/09

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY THEME	A Better Environment for Today & Tomorrow
CORPORATE PLAN AIMS	A Sustainable Environment
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Stephen Clee
HEAD OF SERVICE	Head of Planning, Health & Environment
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APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the new Housing & Planning Delivery Grant award for 2008/09 of £167,810.00 and to agree its expenditure.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **DECIDE:**

- 2.1 that the 2008/09 Housing & Planning Delivery Grant award be noted and to agree its use within the Planning, Health & Environment Division as set out in paragraph 3.8 of this report:
- 2.2 that the Head of Planning, Health & Environment, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Environment & Regeneration, be given delegated authority to vary monies between the areas of expenditure, and between years if necessary.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In July 2008 the announcement was made of the provisional allocations of new Housing & Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) which replaced the previous Planning Delivery Grant annual award.
- 3.2 HPDG is now based on, and seeks to incentivise, the delivery of the Local Development Framework and increased housing supply.
- 3.3 HBDG is a response to the Kate Barker Review of Housing supply which indicated that increased supply was required to meet demand and, therefore, meet housing need. The aim is to target funding to recognise and incentivise growth, rather than

supporting other housing outcomes. The Government has indicated, through the award of HPDG that they will closely monitor both the housing market and the impact of HPDG which will then be considered and necessary changes made in the light of emerging evidence.

- 3.4 The planning element of HPDG recognises the important work of the authority in delivering outcomes that create pleasant, thriving places where people want to live and work. This is now achieved through the delivery of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and HPDG is designed to continue to resource and incentivise the delivery of LDF documents.
- 3.5 Prior to the introduction of HPDG, the Government has made annual awards of Planning Delivery Grant which were principally aimed at incentivising improvements to the planning service, particularly performance against development control targets and this has been in place since 2003/04.
- 3.6 For 2008/09, the Council has been awarded £167,810 but it should be noted that a significant element of this is based on previous housing delivery since 2004 when, of course, the market was significantly more buoyant than it is currently. It, therefore, follows that any future HPDG awards are unlikely to be as generous and, thus, it is considered prudent to consider the 2008/09 award for future support of the delivery of services, rather than to anticipate similar awards in the coming years.
- 3.7 It should be noted that the award, at this stage, is still provisional and it may vary in the final outcome, although it is unlikely to differ significantly from the figure currently proposed.
- 3.8 The proposed areas of expenditure for the 2008/09 award are as follows:

2008/09

- Increase subsidy for Decent Homes Officer post: from previous year's Planning Delivery Grant a contribution has been set aside of £15,000 over two years with £20,000 over 2 years from capitalisation of the Decent Homes windfall monies; this balance could be altered. £10,000
- Purchase Homelessness Module software in support of Choice Based Lettings implementation £10,000
- Continued support for affordable housing facilitation (Rural Housing Enabler post contribution and South Housing Market Area needs assessment update) £8,000
- Preparation of and scanning of historic files and documents £25,000
- Training budget top up £10,000
- Extension of Assistant Conservation Officer post for an additional 12 months (post is totally Planning Delivery Grant funded already) £30,900
- Economic viability assessment of affordable housing in Core Strategy DPD £20,000
- District wide aerial photography update £8,000
- Update of OS Pictometry for Kidderminster £4,500

TOTAL	£126,400
For future use in 2009/10 and beyond	£41,410

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All of the expenditure indicated can be met entirely from the Housing & Planning Delivery Grant award for 2008/09. A requirement of the HPDG is that a two thirds/one third split between revenue and capital is maintained.

5.0 LEGAL & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal and policy implications arising from this report.

6.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Although the HPDG award is not ring fenced, “the Government strongly encourages Local Authorities to invest the money in their planning services”. It therefore follows that not investing the money in the planning services could well jeopardise the delivery of the Local Development Framework within the timescales set out in the Local Development Scheme and could subsequently hold back future delivery of housing on allocated, available sites.

7.0 CONSULTEES

Head of Financial Services
Leader of the Council

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Executive reports:
22nd April 2004,
1st October 2003
12th June 2003
20th March 2003
- Cabinet reports:
September 2004
April 2005
April 2006
August 2007
- Housing & Planning Delivery Grant 2008/09 – CLG June 2008

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