

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HEALTH**

Decision Made: Friday 28 April 2023

#### **Update to Local Authority Housing Fund**

##### **Issue for Decision**

The Cabinet made the decision on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 to participate in the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and so deliver 17 units of accommodation through the scheme (15 smaller and 2 larger) in return for £2,473,597 of grant.

The Cabinet is minded to utilise the monies for the 15 smaller units to refurbish apartments within an existing block that it owns that is now empty as they no longer comply with the Decent Homes Standard. However, this block actually contains 20 smaller flats.

In the process of clarifying the eligibility of that block of apartments with the Department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities, they have offered to increase our allocation of smaller units (from 15) to 20, with the benefit of an additional £640,000 of grant monies, to now total £3,113,597. IE this offer was made so that the whole block could be put to LAHF usage, which is sensible in terms of an asset management approach. This increased offer needs to be accepted in writing by 5pm on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

The grant monies attributable to the 20 smaller flats will be £2,560,000.

##### **Decision Made**

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement vary the Council's Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, to increase the scale of the Council's Local Authority Housing Funding from 17 to 22 residential units, with a pro rata increase in grant funding; and
2. The Director of Regeneration and Place finalise the deployment of those monies in consultation with the portfolio holder for Housing and Health.

##### **Reasons for Decision**

The update relates only to the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), and so not the Temporary Accommodation Acquisition aspect of the previous report. The Council was allocated LAHF grant to deliver seventeen residential units for the scheme (15 smaller and 2 larger).

Through more detailed discussion with the funder, it became apparent that the monies could be utilised for the by the Council to refurbish an existing block of

apartments that the Council owns, which is vacant as it no longer meets the Decent Homes Standard. However, this block contains 20 smaller units (1 & 2 bed flats).

Through these discussions, the Funder offered to increase our allocation for smaller units from 15 to 20, so that the whole block could be refurbished through the LAHF. This is a logical approach, as the whole building could then be provided for the LAHF usage.

In terms of the eventual decision made by the Executive Committee in March 23 on the LAHF aspect of the report, it was as follows: -

- The Council participate in the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) in accordance with its allocation set out in the report, and for the Director of Regeneration and Place to finalise the deployment of these monies in consultation with the portfolio holder for Housing.

The report relating to the matter has been prepared in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

As outlined above, the Local Authority Housing Fund had been considered by the Executive at its meeting on the 22 March 2023. Prior to this, the matter had also been reviewed by the Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee on the 14 March 2023, with support expressed for the Council participating in the LAHF.

### **Alternatives considered and why rejected**

**Option 1** – (Agreed) Agree to increase the Council’s LAHF allocation from 17 to 22 units, with a pro rate increase in grant receivable.

**Option 2** – Leave the Council’s LAHF at 17 units, as per the previous Executive Committee Decision in March 22.

The preferred option is option 1, as this will allow the building in question to be fully refurbished and made available to the LAHF, bringing about an increase in funding for the refurbishment and then the subsequent improved ease of housing and asset management of the block.

### **Background Papers**

None.

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Health

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of the [website](#)

**Call-In:** This decision is urgent as the Council's revised submission to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday 28 April 2023. It is therefore not subject to call-in (and meets the requirements of Part C2, Rule 13.5 of the Council's Constitution).