

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL
20 July 2023
CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Council Made at the Cabinet meeting held on 20 July

(c) Land Charges – Fees

This report seeks approval of an increase in fees for Local Land Charge searches. Searches involve a request for information from West Sussex County Council, which has recently increased the fee that they charge Horsham District Council for this service by £5 plus VAT per request. The proposal would cover this increased cost by increasing the fee charged by the Council by £5.

Cabinet are to consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Infrastructure immediately before this Extraordinary Council Meeting. Cabinet are recommended to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

To approve the increase in the Land Charge fee for the additional optional questions from £21 (+ VAT) to £26 (+ VAT)

REASONS

To ensure that the Land Charge search fee charged by Horsham District Council fully covers the costs of undertaking the searches

(d) Housing Grants – Approval of Budget

The Housing Team is required to increase the housing budget so that two grants that have been allocated by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) can be received. The two grants, Homeless Prevention Grant top up and Home Office Asylum Dispersal Grant have restrictions and receipt of them was not known when the annual budget for 2023-2024 was set. Notification of the grants was received in June 2023. The two grants are in the sum of £271,911 and £72,000 respectively.

The housing team is currently investigating options for using the grants both independently and in partnership with colleagues in other District and Borough Councils and West Sussex County Council.

Cabinet are to consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing, Communities & Wellbeing immediately before this Extraordinary Council Meeting. Cabinet are recommended to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- (i) Approve the receipt and expenditure of two grants in the sum of (i) £271,911 for Homeless Prevention Grant top up, and (ii) £72,000 for Home Office Asylum Dispersal Grant
- (ii) To approve an increase in the housing team's 2023/24 revenue income and expenditure budgets of £343,911 to cater for the receipt of the two subject grants

REASONS

- (i) Increasing the revenue income and expenditure budgets in the Housing Service will allow the Council to receive and spend the grants offered by DLUHC
- (ii) Full Council must approve an increase to the housing team's budget
- (iii) To provide appropriate housing options for the cohorts specified in the grant conditions

(e) Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2

In June 2023, Government announced a £250m second round of the Local Authority Housing Fund to run over 2023/24, with the majority of funding used to house those on Afghan resettlement schemes currently in bridging accommodation, with the rest used to ease wider homelessness pressures.

The Council is proposing to accept the allocation of £0.76m funding from Government and add £1.02m of its own funding to provide three large resettlement homes and one temporary accommodation ("TA") home by the 31 March 2024 deadline.

The Council can return unspent funding to the Government should it wish or be unable to deliver all the housing from the allocation.

Cabinet are to consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources immediately before this Extraordinary Council Meeting. The Cabinet are recommended to approve the acquisition by Horsham District Council of up to 4 properties using the funds earmarked for this initiative, subject to Council approval of the below.

As such, Cabinet are also recommended to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- (i) To proceed with the application for, and receipt of, the grant allocation for the Council to provide or facilitate the provision of 3 large resettlement homes and 1 temporary accommodation home.
- (ii) To approve capital spend of £1.78m in the 2023/24 capital programme.

REASONS

- (i) To apply for, receive and use the grant to help purchase / provide more affordable homes for the district.
- (ii) Full Council must approve the capital budget.
- (iii) Subject to Council approval, to avoid the requirement to seek Cabinet's approval for the purchase by Horsham District Council of each individual property that would otherwise be required to give effect to this initiative.