

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Development & Environmental Services

Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee: 1 March 2006

Subject: Private Sector Housing Grant

1.0 Purpose:

- 1.1** To inform Members of a delay in the announcement by Communities Scotland of the Private Sector Housing Grant allocation for 2006/07 and to seek approval of provisional spending arrangements.

2.0 Background:

- 2.1** A report was presented to Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee on 2 November 2005. At that meeting it was noted that the full allocation of £1.3m had been spent/committed and it was agreed that no further repair grant applications should be received until funding for 2006/07 was known. It was also noted that a request for £130,000 additional funding for disabled adaptations had been submitted to Communities Scotland. In response an additional award of £80,000 was made and this has been fully committed.
- 2.2** Disabled grant applications to the value of around £182,000 have now built up. Despite stopping receiving applications for general repairs on 4 November, 2005, a considerable waiting list had already built up by that time and there are currently 83 applications on the waiting list.

3.0 Main Issues:

- 3.1** Communities Scotland were to have indicated the grant allocations for all Councils by the end of January, 2006. This has been delayed and the latest indication is for us to be told the allocation around the end of February. Despite making a very strong bid for funding in excess of that received in financial years 2004/05 and 2005/06 it appears that the likely allocation for 2006/07 will be in order of £790,000.
- 3.2** Given the waiting lists already in existence, referred to above, and the requirement to contribute to administration costs for Council staff and for Care and Repair, this allocation will soon be fully allocated. By comparison, the £1.3m from last financial year was fully allocated by October, 2005.
- 3.3** A full report, giving the actual allocation from Communities Scotland and making recommendations for prioritisation will be submitted to the Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee on 3 May, 2006.

However, there are strong pressures, particularly in relation to disabled grant applications, for approval of grants from the 2006/07 allocation in advance of that May Committee meeting date.

- 3.4** Disabled grant applications are scored by occupational therapists as a means to aiding prioritisation. It would be helpful for the highest priority cases if Members could agree to allocate £50,000 from the 2006/07 allocation for disabled grants. Similarly it would help if £20,000 could be allocated to general repairs.

4.0 Personnel Issues

- 4.1** None

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The actions proposed would allow a start to be made in approval of 2006/07 funding, prior to a detailed report going to the May Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee.

6.0 Conclusion:

- 6.1** There has been a delay in Communities Scotland intimating to Councils their allocations for Private Sector Housing Grant for 2006/07. It is likely that West Dunbartonshire Council's allocation will be reduced from £1.3m this year to £790,000 next year. In order to help with high priority cases and to avoid delay until consideration in more detail at the Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee of 3 May, 2006, it would be helpful if Members could agree to allocations of £50,000 to disabled grants and £20,000 to general repair grants in advance of fuller consideration in May.

7.0 Recommendation:

- 7.1** **Members are asked to note the content of this report and to agree to the allocation of £50,000 for disabled grants and £20,000 for general repair grants from the allocation for 2006/07. No grants would be approved until Communities Scotland have made known the Councils allocation and it has been formally accepted but this would allow approvals to be made after 1 April, 2006 but before the next committee in May.**



Dan Henderson
Director of Development & Environmental Services
Date: 21 February 2006

Background Papers: Report to Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee on 2 November 2005 regarding Private Sector Housing Grants.

Wards affected: All

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