

REVIEW OF ESTATES PRIDE QUICK FIX ALLOCATIONS

Report of the Director of Investment & Regeneration

1. SUMMARY

This report suggests adjusting our approach to the way the Estates Pride Quick Fix funding is approved.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the City Board discusses how Estates Pride Quick Fix funding is allocated and approved and consider greater delegation to the Housing Focus Group's (HFGs) to use a strategic approach to projects in close liaison with the area based City Board members.
- 2.2 That the £300k budget for Estates Pride Quick Fix funding be delegated in full to HFG's - £60k per HFG per year, with carry over flexibility.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 At the moment, HFGs receive reports from Officers recommending various small scale bids to be spent either from a budget held by the HFG itself (£10k each = £50k) or to go on to the City Board who has delegated authority from the Board to approve up to £250k of 'quick fix' bids.
- 3.2 One issue that needs to be addressed is the route for funding bids. It is important that City Board members work closely with Officers to agree how best to tackle issues on our estates. Sometimes an idea can come from a series of complaints and the solution be suggested by an Officer and sometimes the idea for a solution comes directly from tenants. It is important that a working relationship exists between HFG's, City Board members and Officers to make this work.
- 3.3 The HFG meetings appear to get late submissions from various sources, sometimes without costings and only recently with any budget information about how much they have spent. There is also a lack of clarity about which bids are being approved by the HFG and which are forwarded on to the City Board and why any items go to either. There is effectively no reason for tenants to say no to a proposal. They are almost always approved as there is no consequence for the HFG as a group in saying yes, or no. But if they say yes it will happen. This isn't a real choice being presented to the HFG and is a bit pointless and sometimes random in its effect.
- 3.4 In addition there is a bit of a pressure to get the money spent or it will be 'lost' to the relevant group which needn't be the case. Tenant scrutiny should be ensuring that we always get better value for money. If the group 'owns' the funding it will hopefully be more cautious about its spending and will consider its options more carefully.

- 3.5 It is suggested that the launch of HRA reform means that we should reconsider the schemes and their governance arrangements. The first principle to follow would be that the budget remains unaffected at £300k per year.
- 3.6 Other key principles that could be adopted include:
1. To allow any under-spent balance in a HFG budget to be carried forward. This means that the HFG can 'save up' for something larger or draw down previous balances. We will place any unused funds into a reserve specifically for this purpose. Formally the funds are Derby City Council's so we will need to obtain their approval to this arrangement.
 2. Completed funding bids with estimates of cost and anticipated values of expected outputs need to be made available for HFG's to make informed decisions.
 3. Any proposal to the HFG to use HFG funding must state the balance in their fund and the amount. If necessary a range of cost must be quoted if an exact price is not known at or before the meeting so that the group understands how much it is committing to.
- 3.7 The overall idea is that there is a process that requires the HFGs to balance the merits of individual projects and in effect rank their importance. HFGs could then hold contingencies against truly urgent issues but would in effect consider an order of importance of bids submitted. Over time, the ability to build up reserves could mean that works of a more substantial nature can be considered.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

We have not consulted on any proposed changes until the City Board has agreed any need for change. If agreed, detailed discussions and approvals would be needed with the Council before implementation.

5. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The Estates Pride Quick Fix budget is delegated to Derby Homes to determine from the Council's Capital Programme and is budgeted for until 2013/14

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org – Phone: 01332 888528

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Supporting Information: None.