

To: Oxfordshire Growth Board

Title of Report: Letter to Secretary of State- Community Housing Fund

Date: 26 January 2021

Report of: Paul Staines- Interim Head of Programme

Status: Open

Executive Summary and Purpose:

This report asks the Growth Board to endorse a letter- attached as the appendix- to the Secretary of State asking for the continuation of the Community Housing Fund (CHF).

Recommendation(s):

That the Growth Board endorses the letter attached to this report.

Appendices:

Letter to Secretary of State

Introduction

1. The Community Housing Fund (CHF) was a £163 million national housing grant fund established in 2018 with the intention of promoting the development of Community Led Housing (CLH). The Board will be aware that CLH is characterised by being developed, owned and occupied by people from the local community where the housing is situated.
2. The CHF was designed to provide CLH schemes with finance, both revenue and capital to develop housing and was established in recognition of the fact that such schemes often struggle to access finance, both revenue to work up schemes to development stage and then the capital to build out.
3. Several CLH schemes in Oxfordshire have benefitted from the CHF, enabling them to develop proposals for housing schemes and bring them forward. In addition, the Board will recall the Oxfordshire Community Led Housing Study reported at the July 2020 meeting, this study was also funded by the CHF.
4. The current CHF ended in March 2020 of this year and to date no announcement about its extension or replacement has been forthcoming. In recognition of the value, both to Oxfordshire and nationally of the CHF, the Growth Board Housing Advisory Sub-group requested that officers compile a letter in support of the CHF's continuation. This letter, attached as an appendix to this report is offered to the Board for their consideration and endorsement, prior to it being signed and forwarded to the Secretary of State.