

Record of Cabinet member decision

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision made by	Matthew Barber, Cabinet member for finance
Key decision?	No
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	13 June 2014
Name and job title of officer requesting the decision	Shona Ware, Communications and grants manager
Officer contact details	Tel:01235 540406 Email:shona.ware@southandvale.gov.uk
Decision	To approve the Interim new homes bonus community fund policy and procedure for 2014/15, attached at Appendix 1.
Reasons for decision	<p>We need to produce a new policy and procedure for awarding new homes bonus grants, as the previous one expired on 31 March 2014.</p> <p>We had planned to review the scheme in March this year, in order to draw up a new policy before the scheme opened again in July. However, following comments from Members, further improvements are to be considered and so we delayed the review until after the second round in November when these can be addressed. The other reason for delaying the review until then is to give the committees an opportunity to discuss the scheme at their November meetings and make recommendations for the cabinet member to consider prior to budget setting. For these reasons, we've produced an interim policy to enable the scheme to open as planned on 16 July 2014.</p>
Alternative options rejected	The alternative would be to delay opening the scheme and open for a much shorter period in order to develop and agree a full policy. However this wouldn't give the area committees an opportunity to influence the scheme and is likely to prove unpopular with organisations that need funding. For these reasons we rejected this option.

Legal implications	<p>New homes bonus funding is not ring fenced for a particular purpose, therefore the council can chose to use the money it receives to offer grants for community projects.</p> <p>According to the council's scheme of delegations, the cabinet member for finance can approve the Interim new homes bonus policy and procedure.</p>			
Financial implications	<p>The council agreed a budget of £100,000 for the New homes bonus community fund at its budget setting meeting in February 2014.</p>			
Other implications				
Background papers considered				
Declarations/conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/officer consulted by the Cabinet member?				
List consultees		Name	Outcome	Date
	Ward councillors			
	Legal	Pat Connell	Approved	10/6/2014
	Finance	William Jacobs	Approved	10/6/2014
	Human resources			
	Sustainability			
	Diversity and equality			
	Communications			
	Strategic Management Board	David Buckle	Approved	5/6/2014
Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt category?				
Call-in waived by Scrutiny Committee chairman?				
Cabinet member's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	<p>Signature _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>			

APPENDIX 1

INTERIM NEW HOMES BONUS COMMUNITY FUND POLICY AND PROCEDURE 2014/15

This scheme seeks to support community initiatives in areas that have accommodated new housing. The council will consider applications from groups for funding towards a variety of community projects aimed at improving local facilities or services, or integrating new communities.

Budget

The council set a budget of £100,000 for this scheme at its budget setting meeting in February 2014. This budget has been split amongst the area committees according to its areas' proportion of the district's increase in band D equivalent properties (in per cent) between September 2012 and September 2013. This approach directs the funding to the areas where the new homes bonus was generated, and follows on from the last round, which included the figures up to September 2012. The splits are as follows:

Committee	Percentage budget split	New homes bonus community fund budget
Abingdon	15%	£15,000
North east	26%	£26,000
West	12%	£12,000
South east	47%	£47,000

Funding criteria

The area committees will normally only consider applications for funding in 2014/15 against the following criteria:

- from constituted voluntary community groups and town and parish councils for revenue and/or capital funding
- for projects **with the necessary** planning and/or listed building consents in place
- for projects that will benefit the communities where housing growth **has taken place since September 2012**, unless the scheme is under subscribed when the committees can consider applications for other projects within their areas.

The area committees will not consider applications for retrospective projects or those that other organisations would be expected to fund.

Application and decision dates

The scheme will open on 16 July, following an advice workshop on 15 July. It will close on 15 September so the area committees can consider any applications at their November meetings.

Conditions of grant awards

The following standard terms and conditions will apply to the successful grants:

- the project must be completed within one year of the area committee awarding the grant and comply with all relevant statutory regulations and consents
- council staff must be allowed to inspect the work being carried out, at any time, in line with any necessary health and safety requirements
- the organisation must acknowledge the council's support in any publicity on the project receiving a grant.

Area committees may also apply specific conditions to the grants they agree to award.

Equalities

The council is committed to promoting equality and diversity and welcomes applications from organisations representing minority or vulnerable groups.

Payment of grants

The council will normally pay the grants as soon as possible following the area committee meetings. The organisation receiving a grant will be required to sign a declaration, confirming it will only spend the money on the project described on the application form and will return any unspent money after the 12 month award period.

Monitoring of grants

Organisations receiving a grant will be asked to provide evidence that they've spent it on the project described on the application form, when it's complete.

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

For Democratic Services office use only		
Form received	Date: 11 JUNE 2014	Time: 14:50
Date published to Scrutiny Committee	Date: 11 JUNE 2014	
Call-in deadline	Date: 18 JUNE 2014	Time: 17:00