



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING

TOPIC – ALLOCATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING GRANT TO A2DOMINION TO SUPPORT THE EMMAUS PROJECT AT BAR END WINCHESTER

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Scrutiny Panel (individual Ward Members are consulted separately where appropriate). In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Simon Maggs, Tel: 01962 848 203, Email: smaggs@winchester.gov.uk

Committee Administrator: Nancy Graham, Tel: 01962 848 235, Email: ngraham@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

Emmaus Hampshire/A2Dominion are seeking financial support from the Council for the Emmaus project at Bar End.

Emmaus Hampshire is a charitable project aimed at helping homeless people. It provides accommodation as well as support, training and employment opportunities. The project opened in early 2009 and the numbers of homeless people helped so far has exceeded expectations.

Of the current 18 residents, several have been in resident for a number of months and have been supported in many different ways including accessing local training courses. Referrals have been taken from a range of places, including the Night Shelter and Trinity, the Citizens Advice Bureau in Lymington, and from Southampton, together with self referrals with Winchester Connexions and from Scotland and Berkshire.

The shop, which sells second hand furniture and other household goods, is doing well and the income generated supports the Emmaus Community and wider activities. Emmaus have also supported various local families in need with free household goods, and the meeting room is used by local groups. Emmaus have started working with other locally agencies.

Considerable support for the project has been given by A2Dominion, one of the Council's partner Registered Social Landlords, in the form of providing access to Homes and Community Agency funding, and a direct loan to support the capital costs of £1.5m associated with the residential element of the scheme.

A2Dominion and Emmaus are seeking a grant of £150,000 from the Council in order to reduce the level of the loan by a partial early repayment. This will improve Emmaus' cashflow situation and so ensure more resources are available to invest in service provision.

There are sufficient resources in the Council's capital programme for affordable housing development to make such a grant. The grant payment must be made to A2Dominion and they have agreed to discharge an equivalent amount of capital from the Emmaus loan once this is done.

In view of the size of the award and previous expenditure by the Council in the current financial year the award of this grant can be dealt with under General Consent provisions of the Local Government Act 1988. General Consent F (relevant to this case) allows up to £330,000 of small amounts of financial assistance to be provided in the financial year. Together with £180,000 of assistance identified in Report CAB1951 (leasing of properties to Stonham Housing) this assistance to Emmaus would take the Council up to that limit for 2009/10. Report CAB1951 also referred to the possibility of leasing up to 4 additional properties to Stonham. That proposal may now require an application to the Government for special consent, or more likely, the timing would allow it to come under the 2010/11 allocation for General Consent F.

The Head of Strategic Housing confirms that the proposal comes within the terms of the CLG guidance on EU procedures for State Aid to Registered Social Landlords.

The provision of affordable housing supports the Corporate Strategy Objectives of *Economic Prosperity, High Quality Environment, and Safe and Strong Communities*.

DECISION

An affordable housing grant of £150,000 to be made to A2Dominion to support the aforementioned scheme subject to the prior completion of a legal agreement to include a requirement that the grant is used to discharge an equivalent amount of the capital on the loan provided from A2Dominion to Emmaus Hampshire.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The funding will support the provision of affordable housing.

The alternative is not to provide funding. This would impact on the level of service provided by Emmaus Hampshire.

The alternative use for the Council's resources from its affordable housing grant budget would be the support of other new build affordable housing schemes in the District.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

n/a

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

n/a

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision 26.01.10

Councillor Beckett – Leader (acting on behalf of Portfolio Holder for Housing)