



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING

TOPIC – APPLICATION FOR A GRANT BY KEYSTONE (WINCHESTER CHURCHES HOUSING GROUP LTD) TO REFURBISH 44A ST JOHNS ROAD, 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 Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer:

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Democratic Services Officer: Nancy Graham, 01962 848 235, ngraham@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

Keystone (Winchester Churches Housing Group Ltd) is a social enterprise providing housing for those in Winchester in need of support. They have 22 units of accommodation (provided in 3 properties) in Winchester and have been supported with loans and grants from the Council since their formation in 1989 to provide housing for housing homeless single people.

44a St Johns Road is an end of terrace house built around 1900 that was bought by Keystone in the early 1990's with a loan from the Council. It currently provides 4 bedsits with shared facilities and an office but is poor condition and is in need of refurbishment. During 2013 Keystone obtained planning consent to refurbish and redesign the accommodation to provide 4 self contained move-on units (3 x 1bed flats and a bedsit flat) which will be let as low support move-on accommodation to previously homeless households who no longer require intensive support. The total cost of the works is approximately £180,000, Keystone have requested a grant from

the Council of £90,000 to assist with the funding of the project. The remainder of the funding will be raised by Keystone through a loan which will be repaid through rents collected. The office has been relocated to the Trinity Centre in Durngate, Winchester.

Under Section 24(1) of the Local Government Act 1988, the Council has power to provide any person with financial assistance for the purpose of conversion, rehabilitation, or improvement of any property which is or is intended to be privately let as housing accommodation. Financial assistance includes making a grant or loan to a person. Such power can only be exercised under a consent from the Secretary of State. The "General Consent under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 for Financial Assistance to Any Person 2010" gives a general consent to local authorities to provide any person with any financial assistance (other than disposal of an interest in land or property) for the purposes set out in Section 24(1). The proposed grant would therefore be within the powers of Section 24(1), and covered by the General Consent.

DECISION

That the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) be authorised to provide a grant of £90,000 to Keystone to assist in the refurbishment of 44a St Johns Road, with the funding being made available from the S106 Developer Contribution Fund.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The new accommodation will be let to previously homeless households who have low support needs, via nominations from the Winchester Supported Housing Panel. It will provide modern attractive accommodation that will be fit for purpose as move-on accommodation of which there is a significant shortage in the District.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The grant of £90,000 will be made available from the S106 Developer Contribution Fund which has a total of £1.3M available to fund new affordable housing developments. Currently the S106 Contribution Fund is fully allocated to support the Council's own new build programme up to the financial year 2019/20. However, it has been calculated that an additional £1,200,000 will become available during this period (based on developer contributions that have already been negotiated on consented schemes). £821,000 has been committed to support the Council's new build programme leaving approximately £380,000 headroom to support other housing projects, and the £90,000 requested from Keystone will be supported from this headroom.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

The planning application for the conversion from a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) to self contained flats was advertised in the normal manner and Keystone held consultations with the surrounding neighbours of 44a St Johns Road as part of the process. There was one objection to the planning application on the grounds of a potential increase in traffic movements.

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

None.

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 20.04.2015

Councillor Miller – The Portfolio Holder for Housing