



North Devon Council

REPORT TO: COUNCIL

Report Date: 20 November 2024

Topic: Ilfracombe Healthy Homes and Community Land Trust, Combined County Authority BIDs

Report by: Nina Lake, Head of PMO and Environmental Health & Housing

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. North Devon Council submitted two business cases to Government (Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities that changed to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government after the last general election) for a total funding amount of £2,790,000. Project 1 entitled Healthy Homes Pilot with a financial ask of £1,980,000; and Project 2 named Additional Low Carbon Community Land Trust Affordable Housing in Isolated Areas with an ask of £810,000.
- 1.2. Both those Bids were successful and this report seeks to vary the capital programme to incorporate the total allocation.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members approve the use of the allocated Government Fund for the 2 projects set out in Section 4 of this report.
- 2.2 That, subject to 2.1 above, Council vary the Capital programme by £2,790,000 and that funds be released, subject to the signing of the Final Grant Funding Agreement, upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Positively intervene into the housing market in Ilfracombe; and continue to support the pipeline of Community Land Trust projects.
- 3.2 To ensure that all variations gain appropriate approvals.

4 REPORT

- 4.1 The 2 projects set out below have gone through a rigorous process where the strategic, economic, commercial, financial management cases have been scrutinised by independent parties to test the robustness of the proposals.
- 4.2 **Project 1:** A pilot project to assess if intervening in the Ilfracombe local housing market would help to improve the housing standards of existing low quality homes in terms of cost and quality plus the overall living conditions and wider health determinates of the residents.

- 4.3 These funds will enable NDC to purchase two empty properties, refurbish them by introducing sustainable elements and measure the impacts noted in 1.3. This will set a blueprint for standards.
- 4.4 The next phase if this pilot delivers the desired outcomes, outside of the scope of this project, will be to identify additional low quality, poorly converted properties, move those tenants to healthy empty homes within our control while improvement renovations take place of their original properties. This would need to be subject to a separate business case. In line with the business case, the project objectives are then to utilise the next revenue from the first properties to be ring-fenced and recycled towards financing capital borrowing costs for the next property acquisition(s). Improving the environmental performance of the properties will create sustainable accommodation for residents and improve their own disposable income.
- 4.5 The level of deprivation is significant and accepted by County and MHCLG colleagues. To date, funding requests/business cases have not been successful and therefore the Council have been unable to pursue opportunities to intervene in the private rented sector, which this funding would enable us to do; bringing empty and poor quality homes back into use.
- 4.6 **Project 2:** To replace NDC committed funds to complete the build of 27 units of Community Land Trust (CLT) low carbon affordable housing for social rent in Woolacombe and Parracombe.
- 4.7 This would enable NDC to recirculate those funds originally allocated to these schemes and reallocate them more flexibly to support the build out of another 19 Passivhaus CLT affordable homes in Georgeham and support a further 28 homes through the planning systems at Lynton, West Down and Braunton to take them to delivery stage.
- 4.8 In total this will progress 84 low carbon CLT affordable homes for social rent in isolated areas.
- 4.9 To note this BID has gone through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority to attract this government funding.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The agreed funds will be issued to the Council as grant payments under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 5.2 The overarching capital funding will be provided by MHCLG to the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, pass ported to Devon County Council based on the final funding agreements.
- 5.3 Staff time to complete all associated monitoring forms.
- 5.4 Staff time to project manage both of these projects.
- 5.5 External Professional Services for elements of the purchase of the properties.
- 5.6 Establishment of a model to hold these assets following refurbishment. This will be dealt with under a separate project under the Housing and Community Safety Programme.



6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1 Both projects will go through an equalities assessment as part of the initiation phase.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1 These projects have gone through independent checks and their environmental outputs will be reported on as part of the prescribed monitoring.

8 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1 What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1 + The commercialisation agenda: adding to our property portfolio and reducing revenue costs.

8.1.2 + Housing: A blueprint for what a healthy, sustainable home could look like plus adding to the number of community land trust properties.

8.1.3 + People: Tests to see if decent homes improve the overall wellbeing of a tenant and enables local people to access affordable homes.

8.1.4 + Regeneration or economic development: purchasing new properties supports local housebuilding.

9 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1 The decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made pursuant to Article 4.2 of the Constitution.

10 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Final business cases for both projects.

(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

12 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author Nina Lake Confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate

Councillors and Officers:

Councillor D Clayton Leader

Councillor H Walker Chairperson

Council G Bell Lead Member for Housing

Ken Miles Chief Executive



Jon Triggs Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland Head of Place, Property & Regeneration

Simon Fuller Senior Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

Wendy Slate Private Sector Housing Lead

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