

# Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

5 December 2017

## New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Policy

### 1. Contacts

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### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **That the Council be recommended to approve the New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Policy and the delegations therein.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1. At its May 2014 meeting, the Council approved the New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Policy for the period to March 2018. A pilot scheme had successfully been delivered during 2013 and the Policy both formalised the arrangements and made a commitment for the following four years to pass some of the New Homes Bonus receipt to communities who had received housing development.
- 3.2. Since that time New Homes Bonus has been offered to eligible Parish, Town and City ("Parish") Councils through an annual application process. Over the course of the five years of operation (2013 to 2017) the scheme has approved funding totalling £1,248,880 in 174 different awards. The range of projects that have been supported during this time is summarised in Appendix 1.
- 3.3. Following the recent completion of the process for 2017, Grants and Concessions Panel would like to see the scheme continue to be offered in future years, which will necessitate the revision of the existing time limited Policy.

### 4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1. The Government's intention in creating the New Homes Bonus scheme is to reward communities for taking development. Cabinet have already agreed to the principle of delegating this opportunity to Parish Councils.
- 4.2. The existing aims of the New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Policy are:
  - To improve quality of life for the community, and stimulate cohesive and vibrant communities

- To allocate monies and reward communities where significant development has occurred
  - To facilitate infrastructure where there are deficits within a community or area
  - To enhance local facilities available to new and existing residents
  - To encourage communities to identify their needs and work collaboratively to address them
- 4.3. Implementation of the Policy by the Grants and Concessions Panel detailed a process which by design looks to achieve the above aims. In each successive year, monitoring reports enable the Grants and Concessions Panel to reflect on the progress of previously funded projects. This in turn informed a Review in 2016 which made some minor changes to the scheme, making a stronger connection between the reward and communities that have had significant development, and simplifying the application process for infrastructure projects (where identified by communities in the Infrastructure Business Plan).

## **5. Proposal**

- 5.1. The existing New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Policy was reviewed in 2016 and accordingly it is recommended that the updated Policy (see Appendix 2) should be renewed for a further four years (2018/19 to 2021/22). Proposed changes at 1.3, 4.4 and 7.1 are emboldened for clarity.

## **6. Alternatives Considered**

- 6.1. The Grants and Concessions Review which started in 2015 and reported to Cabinet in March 2016 was tasked to sustain both Discretionary Grants and New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) but to ensure that the funds continued to be used to best effect. The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group were implemented at that time and, in respect of New Homes Bonus, appear to have been successful.
- 6.2. The current scheme cannot continue without the approved revisions to the existing, time limited Policy. Without renewal the scheme would cease. The continued benefit of the scheme to local communities is viewed positively by both the Grants and Concessions Panel, other Ward Members and receiving parishes.

## **7. Resource and Legal Implications**

- 7.1. The existing and proposed updated Policy both highlight that the Scheme would only be offered annually to Parishes subject to the receipt of New Homes Bonus from Government. While the continuance of this form of funding is under further consideration by Government, the 2016 Review endeavoured to sustain the Scheme by reconfirming the annual pot at £250,000 per annum. The Council's 5 year financial plan assumes the Scheme can continue to be offered in future years. However the Policy allows for discontinuance of the Scheme were Government funding to alter significantly.
- 7.2. Administration of the application process and the resultant monitoring of three years' worth of projects are delivered within existing resources.

## 8. Consultation

- 8.1. The 2013 trial process was a useful case study that informed the 2014 Policy, which included consultation with Parishes and Ward Members. The Grants Review of 2015/16 invited comment from Parishes in relation to the New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Scheme. While no specific consultation has been undertaken with Parishes in regard to continuance of the Scheme beyond March 2018, the regular enquiries relating to funding in 2018 would suggest that this would be supported.
- 8.2. Grants and Concessions Panel considered the future of the Scheme both at its Special meeting in September 2017 (where it determined applications for the 2017 bids) and in more detail at its meeting of 18th October 2017. It is the recommendation of that meeting which has prompted this report to cabinet.

## 9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1. This resource benefits communities positively by enabling the delivery of projects to offset the impact of new development. It also contributes to maintaining close working relationships with many of the Parish Councils. Continuing the Scheme demonstrates a strong commitment to seeing the benefits that new development brings realised within District. The role of the Parish Council in this process is both an endorsement of their role and hopefully an encouragement to residents to take a greater interest in their local Council.
- 9.2. The caveat of annual confirmation of the allocation ensures this Council is not financially overcommitted. However, having to withdraw a key funding route in future years could have reputational damage.

## 10. Other Implications

<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	While the projects that could be funded by these monies cannot be anticipated, it is likely that many of them will have positive outcomes in some or all of these impact areas.
<b>Climate Change</b>	
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b>	
<b>Safeguarding</b>	

## 11. Appendices

- 11.1. Appendix 1 – Summary of New Homes Bonus awards 2013-2017
- 11.2. Appendix 2 – Draft New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Policy