

# Chichester District Council

Grant and Concessions Panel

21 January 2016

## Grants Review – Task and Finish Group

### 1. Contacts

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### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Grants and Concessions Panel are asked to consider revisions to the Grants and Concessions Policy and New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Policy following the Review undertaken by the Task and Finish Group.

### 3. Background

- 3.1. At the last meeting the Grants and Concessions Panel in October, a Task and Finish Group, to be chaired by Cllr Mrs Lintill, was agreed, and the scope of the review considered. The Task and Finish Group consisted of the Chairman with Cllrs Mrs Tull, Mrs Graves and Mrs Plant.
- 3.2. The scope of the review was broadly to consider the longevity of both forms of funding and their continued operation in light of experience over the last three years. The Task & Finish Group have met on three occasions, and have concluded a number of recommendations which have been worked into revised Policy documents, which will need to be recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

### 4. Proposal

- 4.1. The Task and Finish Group recommends that:

#### **In respect of the Low Carbon Chichester District Fund**

- That the remaining £77,843 Low Carbon Fund be reallocated to support the Chichester District Council and Your Energy Sussex Warm Homes Initiative

#### **In respect of New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations)**

- That the New Homes Bonus fund be reduced to £250,000 per year, effective from financial year 2016-17
- Funding will be subject to annual confirmation by Cabinet
- That a £100,000 cap be placed on Chichester City Council New Homes Bonus applications
- That the New Homes Bonus monies be divided between those parishes with a minimum net change of five houses over the last three years

### **In respect of discretionary Grants**

- That the Grants and Concessions fund be reduced to £175,000 per year, effective from financial year 2016-17;
- That the general grants budget uncommitted sums accrued from financial years 2010-11 to 2015-16 be ring-fenced and used to fund the grants programme from 2016-17;
- That the balance held in the Grants and Contributions Reserve and subsequent annual revenue contributions be used to fund the grants programme from 2016-17;
- That Cabinet give consideration to including the funding of the grants programme within the base budget once these funds have been exhausted; currently forecasted to be from 2020-21.
- That the “Priorities and Principles” of funding are significantly refined to give greater clarity regarding what the Council will fund, and by omission, what it will not.

- 4.2. Accordingly, officers have provided draft revised Policies in respect of both New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) (appendix 1) and Grants and Concessions (appendix 3) for consideration by the Panel. Further, revisions have been suggested for the respective Guidance documents (appendix 2 and appendix 4). Whilst these are for the Panel to agree, it was felt necessary to develop these to a point where Cabinet could have a better appreciation of the change in approach.
- 4.3. It has been anticipated by officers that the Panel will need to develop clearer guidance with regarding the eligibility to Discretionary Rate Relief. While this is something that the Panel will consider in the coming year, this has been anticipated and therefore reference to “exceptional circumstances” has been removed from the Policy in section 12.
- 4.4. Assuming Cabinet approve the two Policies, the Grants and Concessions Panel will need to agree revisions to all guidance documentation, including Application Forms before the revised scheme can be implemented. Revised Priorities and Principles will also need to be developed for separate approval by Cabinet.

### Appendices:

- 1 Draft New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Policy
- 2 Draft New Homes Bonus (Parish Allocations) Eligibility guidance
- 3 Grants and Concessions Policy
- 4 Grants and Concessions Eligibility guidance