

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 28

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Private Sector Renewal & Housing Adaptations Update

Date of Meeting: 7th July 2010

Report of: Director of Housing, Culture and Enterprise

Contact Officer: Name: **Martin Reid** Tel: **293060**
E-mail: Martin.reid@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

Private Housing Renewal

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove City Council is the lead authority for the delivery of the 2008-2011 Private Housing Renewal Programme for Brighton and Hove and East Sussex (The BEST consortium).
- 1.2 The consortium receives funding from the Regional Housing and Regeneration Board (RRHB) and has received the largest allocation of funding across the South East for 2010/11, and the sixth highest allocation in the country, £8,579,190
- 1.3 The partnership has received 28% more funding than previously expected for this financial year, due to our ability to deliver, and evidence, a comprehensive programme of capital works across a successful partnership of local authorities.
- 1.4 The BEST consortium was also successful in an in-year bid for £1m of additional funding, which was received in January. £0.467 of this funding is carried forward to 2010/11 (£1m funding less £0.474m paid to our partners less £0.059m used in 2009/10)

Disabled Facilities Grant

- 1.5 The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is individual government grants towards capital spending on providing disabled adaptations to housing.
- 1.6 The DFG grant covers 60% of the DFG expenditure. Brighton & Hove City Council uses the RRHB grant to match fund this grant.
- 1.7 We have received £660K DFG grant settlement in 2010-11, and this will be match funded by £440K BEST funding.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That it is noted that that the council has been awarded £8,579,190 Private Housing Renewal Grant from the Regional Housing & Regeneration Board for 2010/11. This has been allocated across the BEST consortium according to the agreed split below.

B&HCC	£4,514,369
Hastings BC	£1,871,979
Eastbourne BC	£1,319,479
Rother DC	£277,107
Wealden DC	£290,834
Lewes DC	£305,419
	£8,579,190

- 2.2 That it is noted that the council's share of the 2009/10 £1m mini-bid, £566,200, has been carried forward to 2010/11.
- 2.3 That is noted that the council has been awarded £660,000 by the government for expenditure in 2010-11 on Disabled Facilities Grant
- 2.4 That the progress made by the BEST partnership in year 2 of the RHB private sector renewal programme 2009/10 be noted

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

Background

- 3.1 In 2007, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Hastings, Wealden, Lewes and Rother formed the BEST consortium specifically to bid for Regional Housing and Regeneration Board (RHB) 2008/11 private sector renewal funding. The Government Office for the South East (GOSE) reported that the bid was successful. Money is released each financial year in March based on previous performance in spend and delivery. This is now the last year of the programme.
- 3.2 The renewal programme for BEST covers energy efficiency/fuel poverty, decent homes, empty homes and other interventions such as landlord accreditation.
- 3.3 The BEST partnership was also successful in bidding for additional £1m of funding in a mid year bid opportunity. This funding was received in January from Central Government and it has been agreed to carry this forward to 2010/11.

- 3.4 In June 2010, GOSE reported to the RRHB on progress in the first six months made by all the bids throughout the South East and noted of our performance:

“The Brighton & Hove and East Sussex partnership again demonstrated highly efficient delivery, coordinating the largest allocation through a programme that has over fifty individual elements. The partnership hosted a regional seminar in the spring that showcased effective practice and brought together over a hundred energy efficiency and private sector practitioners. This has been followed up by a series of workshops to share effective practice and broaden the skills of practitioners from across the region.”

- 3.5 Brighton & Hove are the lead authority in the BEST consortium and host the programme management team. BHCC as the largest local authority with the greatest need receive over 50% of the funding.
- 3.6 The 2010-11 Settlement, based on the BEST partnerships ability to spend and achieve outcomes, means that we are now the 6th largest partnership (out of 236) in the country, after Liverpool, Manchester, Barnet, Bradford and Birmingham.

Progress in Brighton & Hove

3.7 Private Sector Renewal

Progress in Brighton & Hove 2010/11 was excellent, and the Private Sector Housing Team delivered the following key outcomes

- 1680 Homes made decent or moved towards decency by financial assistance
- 85 properties improved by formal enforcement action
- 101 HMO licences issued
- 800 energy efficiency measures installed for those in fuel poverty
- 650 tonnes of CO2 saved
- Private Sector Renewal Assistance for 31 empty properties back into use for homeless families
- 99.2% of the capital budget spent

3.8 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

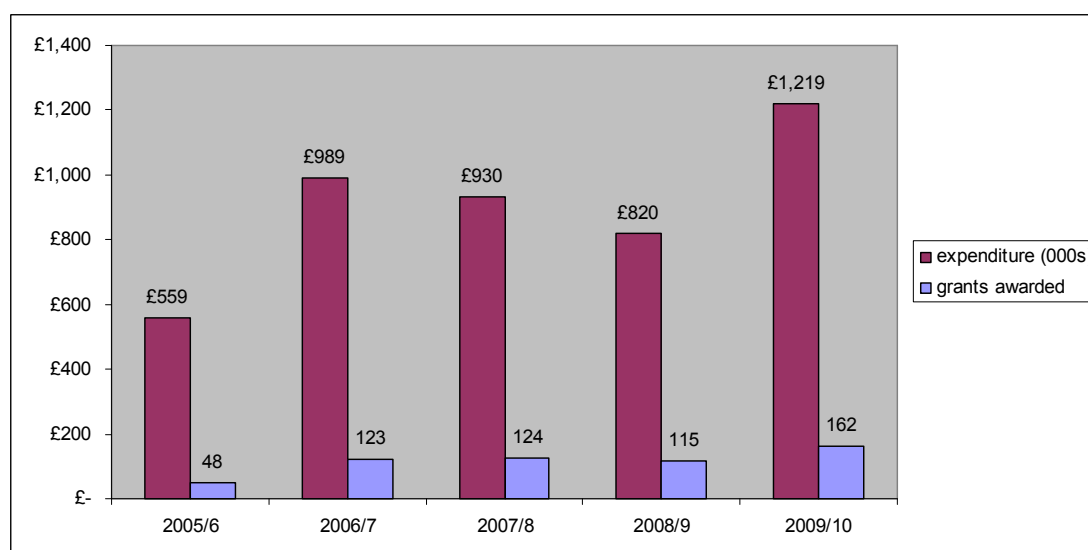
DFG is a mandatory entitlement administered by local housing authorities to help fund the provision of adaptations to enable disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their homes.

- 3.9 Eligible work is wide-ranging, providing for access to the home and basic facilities within it, for example: providing ramps, door widening,

stair lifts and level access showers. The grant is subject to an assessment of need and a financial means test.

- 3.10 Brighton & Hove received £660K DFG grant settlement in 2010-11, this is matched funded with £440K BEST funding. In the last financial year, Brighton & Hove achieved the highest ever spend and numbers of adaptations for disabled residents.

DFG Spend and measures 2005-10



Future Plans

- 3.11 Funding for Private Sector Renewal Work for 2011/12 is uncertain, so the Programme Steering group will be considering a number of issue to sustain the programme in future years, including an increased use of loans to ensure funding is recycled back to the council, sharing of services to cut costs, possible carry-forward of some funding and a focus on key priority areas.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy was established following a comprehensive consultation exercise conducted both within the Council and with external stakeholders.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1.1 The Private Sector Housing Renewal grant allocation for 2010/11 is £8.579m, of which £4.065m is paid to our partners, leaving Brighton & Hove City Council with £4.514m. In addition there was a carry forward of £0.467m from 2009/10 for the additional funding received in January 2010. Staff resources have been committed by the council to ensure that the BEST consortium can closely monitor expenditure under this programme and to fully meet the obligations for reporting to the Government Office for the South East
- 5.1.2 The Disabled Facilities grant allocation for 2010/11 is £0.660m
- 5.1.3 Currently it is unclear what the impact will be on the 2010/11 funding from the recent government announcement on reducing grants to local authorities

Finance Officer Consulted: Neil Smith

Date: 22/06/2010

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As the report is for noting only, there are significant legal or Human Rights Act implications to be considered.

Solicitor Consulted:

Liz Woodley Date: 22/06/2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The availability of grant as part of the Council's Housing Renewal Policy provides help and assistance to disadvantaged householders.
- 5.4 Disabled Facilities Grants provide resources to help disabled people with restricted mobility to live independently.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 Housing is one of the key objectives in the Council's sustainability strategy which aims 'to ensure that everyone has access to decent affordable housing that meets their needs'.
- 5.6 The Council's housing renewal activities identified in this report help to prevent ill-health, provide for basic needs by ensuring that dwellings are fit for habitation, are suitable for the needs of disabled occupiers, are energy efficient and help to reduce the level of fuel poverty in the City.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.7 Continuing to tackle empty properties, which can attract vandalism as well as making grants available for home security, will complement works to reduce crime and disorder in Brighton & Hove.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.8 Policy development in this area is undertaken with due regard to appropriate risk assessment requirements.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.9 The Private Sector Housing RRHB Grant funding will enable proactive approach to dealing with standards in the private sector housing of the City and ensure all homes meet the Decent Homes standards and provide a better use of energy into the future. The funding will also enable the Council to meet statutory duties.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices: none

Documents In Members' Rooms: none

Background Documents

1. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
2. Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2008-11