

Annex A. Main Housing Funding Streams

1. Community Housing Fund grant

- 1.1 In 2016 the Government announced a £60 million fund to support community-led housing developments in areas where the impact of second homes is particularly acute. West Oxfordshire was allocated £376,966 funding for the 2016/17 financial year. The funding was allocated to Local Authorities proportionate to the number of holiday homes in the local area and taking account of the affordability of housing to local people.
- 1.2 In February 2017 Cabinet endorsed the programme to deliver, amongst other things, a Community Self Help Project targeted at younger people. This was subsequently named the 'Our House' project.
- 1.3 This funding for the Our House project will end in March 2022. The objective of the equivalent funds in recent years has leaned more towards increasing housing supply in England by increasing the number of additional homes delivered by the community-led housing sector, rather than changes of use to existing stock. On that basis, bids to this fund have not met the criteria.

2. Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) Funds

- 2.1 The Rough Sleeping Initiative was first announced in March 2018 to make an immediate impact on the rising levels of rough sleeping. This round of funding combines the Rough Sleeping Initiative and Rapid Rehousing Pathway into a single, streamlined funding programme.
- 2.2 RSI bids are typically applied for as a partnership with all other County Local Authorities and the County Council and fund jointly available projects/schemes such as the Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs. These projects and schemes can be accessed by anyone in the County but are located in the urban centres to reflect need and access to services.
- 2.3 Local Authorities can, however, apply for funding for specific local projects. West Oxfordshire has been successful in securing funds for the Support element for the Old Court House and a contribution to the costs of providing a Pre-Prevention Complex Needs officer to address issues that could threaten a person's accommodation issues at the earliest possible stage.
- 2.4 The funding stream is currently in its fourth year (RSI4). Details of RSI5 will be announced in October as part of the wider Government budget, with discussions due to start on bidding for funds from in November.

3. Temporary Accommodation Uplift

- 3.1 Local Authorities were awarded additional Uplift payments to supplement the Rough Sleeper Initiative 3 awards. These funds were awarded in recognition of the increased temporary accommodation costs of the Everyone In directive and included an element of 'move on' costs to enable Local Authorities to support people into longer term accommodation.
- 3.2 West Oxfordshire District Council was awarded £100,000 to reflect the increase in approaches made by single people who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping due to the pandemic.
- 3.3 The (then) MHCLG, now DLUHC, agreed that any underspend of this Uplift could be utilised by West Oxfordshire District Council to extend our successful Housing First Project until the end of March 2022.

4. Homelessness Prevention Grant 2021/22

- 4.1 In 2021/22 a £310 million Homelessness Prevention Grant was created which combines and increases what was previously the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Grant. In 2021-22 the two funding streams have been combined and increased by £47 million, giving Local Authorities more control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who at risk of homelessness.
- 4.2 Ministry Of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funding allocations letter dated January 2021.
- 4.3 West Oxfordshire District Council was allocated £253,329 for 2021/22, the proposed spending of which was agreed by Cabinet in February 2021.

5. Housing Reserves

- 5.2 Housing Reserves have built up from unspent grants in recent years. Significant portions of grant funding have been allocated to increasing staff numbers and creating projects to target specific groups. Some of the unspent funds have accrued due to vacant posts.
- 5.3 The Housing Team also work proactively with agencies and charities to unlock grants for clients as well as partners such as Aspire who have brought grant funding to the Council.

6. Nationwide Community Fund

- 6.1 Aspire Oxfordshire approached West Oxfordshire District Council and Cottsway Housing Association in January 2020 to seek support for a bid to the Nationwide Community Fund.

- 6.2 The bid was for funding to create a Housing First Scheme specifically in West Oxfordshire following successful equivalents in our neighbouring authorities.
- 6.3 The bid was successful and the Housing First scheme was set up in mid-2020.

7 Homes England / Investment Partners

- 7.1 Homes England have multiple funding streams available including the Affordable Homes Programme 2021 – 2026, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and the Community Housing Fund.
- 7.2 The Affordable Homes Programme 2021 – 2026 also includes an element of funding towards Supported Housing / Homelessness Supported accommodation
- 7.3 A key requirement of bidding for Homes England funding is that a Local Authority becomes an Investment Partner (IP). West Oxfordshire District Council may wish to consider this option further in order to ‘unlock’ these funding streams further. However, further work is needed to understand the implications of applying for IP status.