

Cottsway Proposal – Local Authority Housing Fund

Background

Cottsway as the stock transfer from WODC, has been a supportive partner over the years and has in partnership with WODC delivered several projects as well as delivering many new homes in the district.

We are aware that WODC has submitted a bid for c.£1.8m of grant funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund to provide settled accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes. The bid submitted is to fund delivery of 13 homes.

The Local Authority Housing Fund, prospectus and guidance enable Local Authorities to work with its housing association partners to deliver these homes using the grant funding.

Cottsway proposal

WODC will consider and choose the most appropriate delivery mechanism to achieve the fund's objectives, and to bring on stream the accommodation as quickly as possible, however as a committed and supportive partner of WODC we want to facilitate maximising the grant funding available.

Our proposal is that the grant is transferred to Cottsway to purchase the homes. The benefit of doing this is that with the c.£1.8million currently bid for, we can deliver the 13 homes WODC have identified they need plus a further 3 homes (subject to current discounts remaining available). As the additional homes will not have grant funding attached to them, they could be used for either temporary accommodation or general needs housing.

Using an agreed lettings plan WODC will retain control of the allocations to these homes, if and when the homes are no longer required for settled accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes they will be made available and allocated using the WODC choice based lettings scheme, as per other Cottsway properties.

Our offer in more detail:

- Use our skills, experience, and connections to source the homes at the best price possible which will enable us to provide more than the 13 homes
- Fund the purchase of the 13 homes plus any additional homes in conjunction with using the c£1.8m of grant funding
- Work closely with WODC to identify and agree the homes to purchase
- Ensure the homes purchased meet the requirements of the Local Authority Housing Fund prospectus and guidelines
- Ensure the homes meet the size and specification requirements to meet the standards required for affordable housing
- Agree a lettings plan with WODC to ensure homes are allocated in line with grant guidelines
- Manage and maintain the homes
- In agreement and where required or appropriate, potential to swap out homes with existing Cottsway properties on sites to prevent them being grouped together

Conclusion

Cottsway would welcome the opportunity to partner with WODC and can provide WODC with the skills and experience to source these homes, ensuring they meet the requirements of WODC and the grant funding prospectus and guidance. We can generate extra value to enable additional homes to be purchased and can manage and maintain them. If additional funding were made available, beyond the c.£1.8m, we are happy to work with WODC and can fund extra homes.

If WODC decided on an alternative delivery method and was looking for a partner to manage and maintain the homes, we would consider this however to meet the Regulator of Social Housing requirements this would be a commercial arrangement and would need to be of a relative scale to add value to Cottsway.