

11 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT - INVITATION TO BID (AN85-2004)

The Committee is asked to note the arrangements for the allocation of Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) which are to be implemented for the financial year 2004/05.

A structured bid approach has been introduced by the Scottish Executive, with the allocation being in two parts; the "baseline" and "bid" elements. The baseline element recognises historical levels of expenditure. Of the £60 million available to local authorities, 82% (£49.2 million) has been allocated to baseline funding with the remaining 18% (£10.8 million) forming the bid element of available funding.

Dundee City Council has been allocated £1.987 million of a baseline allocation and this amount of grant will be allocated in both 2004/05 and 2005/06.

The bid element of the allocation is intended to encourage an appropriate level of investment in private sector housing conditions and bids are expected to reflect both national and local priorities, reflecting the recommendations of the Housing Improvement Task Force. These include:

- Improvement of BTS houses and adaptation of houses for those with particular need.
- Extension of the Care & Repair service
- Support and encourage owners with communal repair responsibilities
- Partnership working arrangements with the private rented sector
- Improved data and information acquisition
- Specific problems and core priorities at a local level linked to regeneration

Dundee City Council has been allocated an indicative bid element of £270,000 and will, subject to a satisfactory bid, be allocated at least this amount.

Communities Scotland will administer both the baseline and bidding elements of PSHG.

Invitations for proposals for the expenditure of the bidding element and the bidding template were received on the 21st and 26th January 2004 respectively and preliminary discussions were held with Communities Scotland on the 6th February 2004 to discuss the likely content of this Council's bid. The closing date for bids is 3rd March 2004.

Proposals for the bidding element will reflect the recently announced Scottish Housing Quality Standard, will reflect a cross tenure approach and will compliment existing and proposed regeneration in keeping with the Council's Local Housing Strategy. The need however to generate expenditure within the very limited timescale of the forthcoming financial year together with anticipated lead times for some proposals will influence, at least initially, the activity undertaken.

Proposals will include activity to address Energy Efficiency, Environmental Improvements, Security, Unsafe Electrical Wiring, Lead Plumbing, Disabled Adaptations, a Care & Repair Handyman Service, defects in Non Traditional Housing and Improved Data and Information on BTS Housing, Disrepair and Abandoned Properties.

Due to the timescales involved it is not possible to report to Committee prior to the bidding date and Committee are asked to authorise the preparation and submission of a suitable bid within the timescales indicated. A full report will follow.