



ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

**Record of Officer
Executive Decision
032/ADforHH&P/23-24**

Date of Decision: 25 March 2024

If you have any questions about this decision please contact Democratic Services on 01903 221006 or email democratic.services@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Record of Decision: 032/ADforHH&P/23-24 - LAHF Property Purchases (WBC)

Decision taken by: Assistant Director Housing, Homelessness & Prevention (CLT)

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: I do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest, or conflict of interest.

Delegated authority:

Under 2.6.8 of the Scheme of Delegations, a Director has delegated authority to do all matters in relation to procurement and the letting of contracts after consulting with the Assistant Director for Finance and the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Services and in accordance with Contract Standing Orders.

The approval by Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee (JSSC) on 5th December 2023 for the provision of six homes for refugees under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) funded programme included 'the delegation of authority to the Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness Prevention to approve the selection of properties which we will acquire through the fund'.

This report sets out details of the proposed properties and requests approval for the purchases.

Decision:

Worthing Borough Council has been allocated £809,083 from the LAHF which is a government fund specifically for the provision of rented housing for refugees. The allocation is to provide six homes (of which one must have four bedrooms and the others at least two bedrooms). Given the timescale attached to the funding, the acquisition or improvement of existing homes was considered to be the only way to deliver these in Worthing.

Options were considered, with the preference being for new property which could be quickly and easily acquired.

The following properties have been identified and are considered suitable. Full building surveys have been carried out and legal reports produced. Approval to purchase them is requested:

1 Violet Close, Worthing (4-bed house) for the sum of £415,000

Flat 2 Deora Place, Worthing (2-bed flat) for the sum of £235,000
Flat 4 Deora Place, Worthing (2-bed flat) for the sum of £255,000
Flat 7 Deora Place, Worthing (2-bed flat) for the sum of £255,000

The following properties have also been identified as suitable for purchase utilising the LAHF grant money. To purchase these additional budget is required, which has informally been approved by Officers, however, formal approval from Worthing JSSC will be sought in June 2024. Should the budget be approved, we propose purchasing the properties, subject to the successful undertaking of legal reports and building surveys.

The approval to purchase the following properties, subject to the above conditions, is requested:

Flat 5 Ordinges Place, Worthing (2-bed flat) for the sum of £275,000
Flat 7 Ordinges Place, Worthing (2-bed flat) for the sum of £285,000

Total purchase cost: £1,720,000

Key Decision: Yes

Reason For Decision:

The Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) is a £500m capital grant fund, launched in December 2022, to support local authorities in England to provide housing for those displaced by war and conflict, in particular in response to the Afghan and Ukraine humanitarian schemes which offered a safe and legal entry route to those fleeing conflict

Refugees were identified as one of five priority groups in Worthing District Council's (draft) Housing Needs Assessment (September 2023).

Worthing's Housing Team will work with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) colleagues to allocate the properties to those who are eligible, homeless or at risk of homelessness and who currently live in unsuitable temporary arrangements. WSCC also has funding to meet costs associated with move-on and set up of a home as well as assist with rent and rent in advance if needed and there would be no additional financial burden to the council.

A report setting out the funding allocation and the budget for delivery of the six homes under the LAHF programme was approved by Worthing JSSC on 5th December 2023. Authority was delegated to the Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness Prevention to approve the purchase of the properties identified.

1 Violet Close is a freehold house, and the properties at Deora Place and Ordinges Place are leasehold purchases.

Alternative Options Considered:

Whilst there is provision in the fund for refurbishing existing council-owned properties, Worthing does not own any housing stock. Therefore acquisition, which is the overall aim of the fund, is the only option for spending the fund.

The option to do nothing and hand back the funding allocation was considered however this would have meant a failure to produce much needed homes, and it was demonstrated that the amount of grant available allowed these to be delivered with no additional burden on the Council's budget.

| Other Matters Considered: | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Legal Advice and Issues | x | Financial Advice and Issues | x |
| Sustainability Issues | x | Equality Issues | x |
| Community Safety Issues | x | Human Rights Issues | x |
| Reputation | x | Risk Assessment | x |
| Health & Safety Issues | x | | |
| Consultation: The Worthing Cabinet Member for Housing has been consulted and supports the acquisitions. | | | |
| Background Papers: 2023.12.05 - WJSSC Worthing - Agenda item 9 - Local Authority Housing Fund grant funding allocation for Worthing Borough Council | | | |
| Contact Officer: Anthony Probert Senior Development Manager, Major Projects & Investment anthony.probert@adur-worthing.gov.uk | | | |
| Call-in: The call-in deadline for this decision will be 5:00pm on 3 April 2024 | | | |

Date: 25/03/2024

Name:



Rob Jarvis, Assistant Director Housing, Homelessness & Prevention