

AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Report on Housing Allocations for meeting on the 27th November 2001

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report on Housing Allocations is to clarify how Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) manages the process, including the following:

- How does AVDC support bids for the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme (ADP)?
- How do local service providers and housing associations link into the process?
- Is there any scope for the Partnership Forum to influence the prioritisation of schemes?

2. Background

Each autumn the Housing Corporation invites bids from Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) for the provision of affordable housing. Funding for this is allocated on a regional basis with regions competing for a proportion of the central pot of money. The allocation process is guided by the priorities outlined in the Government's Regional Housing Statements, which are produced in partnership with the Housing Corporation. There are 9 priorities including affordable housing, key workers, homelessness, supported housing, BME groups, rural sustainability, private sector renewal, crime reduction and regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.

In order to allocate within each region, the Housing Corporation has a regional investment strategy consisting of 4 main priorities:

Household Growth
Employment/key workers
Regeneration
Rural

Each bid must link in with one or more of these priorities. It must also be able to demonstrate that there is a need for the proposed development, that it will produce value for money, deliverability, affordable rents, and comply with the scheme development standards set by the Housing Corporation.

3. How does AVDC support bids for the ADP programme

Before they submit their bids the Housing Corporation requires housing associations to seek the support of the local authority in whose area they propose to develop. As strategic enablers, local authorities are well placed to do this. Authorities collect information on housing need through housing needs surveys, the Housing Register, homelessness presentations, local house prices, and the availability and type of housing stock throughout the district. Planning departments advise on the feasibility of the scheme in relation to planning policy.

At AVDC, we will be preparing an enabling strategy, drawing together information on needs and supply, resources, partnerships and options.

4. How do local service providers and housing associations link into the process

There are a number of mechanisms in which service providers link in to the process:

- AVDC Housing Investment Strategy - Aylesbury Vale consults widely on its Housing Investment Strategy, which sets out the housing priorities for the district
- Buckinghamshire Supported Housing Group – AVDC is a member of this group along with the three other district councils in Bucks, Social Services, the Health Authority and the Probation Service. One of the Group's tasks is to consider new supported housing schemes across the county and look at their feasibility in terms of the amount of support required and existing provision
- Aylesbury Vale Housing Forum – this group meets quarterly and has a wide membership, including statutory and voluntary agencies, and housing associations. The main brief of the group is to act as a non-political co-ordinating group for these agencies involved in housing provision and advice in the area. It undertakes research, exchanges information and is consulted on related strategies
- Aylesbury Vale Housing Association Forum - this group meets twice a year with representatives from housing association partners, the Housing Corporation and AVDC Housing and Planning divisions. Housing associations work in partnership with local authorities to achieve new affordable housing and contribute to the development of the housing strategy by sharing their expertise in development and provision

5. Is there any scope for the Partnership Forum to influence the prioritisation of schemes?

Several Forum members are already involved in one or more of the consultation processes above.

The Forum may wish to join our list of consultees for our Housing Investment Strategy.

There are severe financial constraints on both the ADP allocations and AVDC's capital programme, which means that only a proportion of bids are successful. If the Forum had access to additional resources to supplement these limited sources of finance, then this would help us to achieve more.

Bucks Partnership Forum
- Housing Allocations (Housing Corporation Funding)

Background

Currently, the Housing Corporation operates an annual bidding round for housing associations who are seeking SHG (Social Housing Grant) to help fund new schemes. This annual process is known as the ADP (Approved Development Programme).

The Housing Corporation initially allocates ADP funding on a county-by-county basis. The county's overall ADP allocation is based on its HNI (Housing Needs Index) rating. HNI takes account of a range of factors in assessing the relative need of different areas.

Once the Corporation has decided on the county-wide ADP allocation, it will then decide which schemes within the county should receive funding. The Corporation's regional office in the south requires that schemes should aim to meet one or more of its regional priorities, which are:

- Employment
- Key Worker Initiatives
- Regeneration
- Household Growth
- Rural/Small Villages/Market Towns

The Corporation will consult with the district councils to consider which schemes should be supported. This consultation with the districts takes place because each Council is the strategic housing authority for its area. Therefore the Council's input is important to help the Corporation decide where the funding should go.

The latest ADP bidding round closed at the end of October 2001. Allocations will be announced in February 2002, with the successful bids receiving SHG funding in 2002/03.

The Corporation has stated that it is considering moving away for a once-a-year annual bidding round and introducing an ongoing year-round process instead. Details are not yet available.

Chiltern District Council

- *Managing the Process*

As highlighted above, CDC's main role in the ADP process is to provide informed comment to the Housing Corporation when it is assessing the bids that have been submitted. Consequently, CDC asks its all of its housing association partners to provide details of any bids that are being submitted to the Corporation. The onus is on the association to make sure that the Council is aware of any bids that are being put forward. If an Association submits a bid without advising the Council, then this will reduce the bid's chances when the Housing Corporation assessment takes place.

The deadline for bids for funding in 2002/03 had now passed. CDC is meeting the Housing Corporation on 22/11/01 to discuss the bids for Chiltern District. CDC will look at the bids that have been put forward and decide which ones will best meet local housing needs. CDC will then advise the Corporation about which schemes it would like to see prioritised for funding.

In practice, CDC normally only has a small number of bids within the district because development opportunities are scarce. A large proportion of ADP funding for 2002/03 and the following year has already been committed to an ongoing re-development in Chesham. Therefore, there is likely to be limited funding available for any other schemes within the district during this time.

- ***Local Service Providers/Housing Associations***

As highlighted above, associations that are submitting bids should be contacting CDC to provide details etc. Other local service providers will not normally be involved unless the scheme directly impacts on their area of work (e.g. special needs). However, the CDC consults all local service providers and other partners when it drafts and updates its Housing Strategy. This strategy sets down CDC's housing priorities.

- ***Bucks Partnership Involvement?***

Each district when assessing how schemes should be prioritised can obviously take the views of the Partnership Forum into account. However, giving the Partnership Forum a more direct role could present problems if one or more of the districts disagree with the Forum's views on what should (or should not) be prioritised. The Forum may have a role to play if schemes are proposed that cover more than one district. It is worth bearing in mind that cross district Forums already exist (Bucks Housing Enabling Forum, Supported Housing Forum etc.) that bring officers from the districts together to consider issues such as ADP funding etc.

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