



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## *Committee Report*

**Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 18 October 2006

**Title:** ODPM FLOOD GRANT - INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

**Report of:** DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**Report reference:** CE27/06

### **Summary:**

Attached is a report (CS47/06) detailing the current position regarding expenditure on various projects from the £1.5 million grant awarded to the City Council by the ODPM to support, enable and expedite housing renewal to properties affected by the January 2005 floods. This report was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 25 September 2006. The Executive passed a resolution (EX.212/06) that the report is presented to Community Overview and Scrutiny for comment with views.

### **Recommendations:**

That Members of the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider and comment upon this report. This will enable the Executive to consider the views of Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee when recommending a plan for use of the residue of the ODPM grant totalling £124,000 at its meeting on 23 October 2006.

**Contact Officer:** Jason Gooding

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES/ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

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Date of Meeting: 25 September 2006

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Public

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Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

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Inside/Outside Policy Framework

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**Title:** OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GRANT – UPDATE ON FLOOD RECOVERY PROGRAMME

**Report of:** DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Report reference:** CS/47 06

### Summary:

The report outlines the current financial and operational position in regard to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister grant of £1.5m awarded in March 2005 to respond to the January floods.

### Recommendations:

It is RECOMMENDED that:-

1. Members are requested to note progress and SMT be instructed to draw up a schedule of initiatives to be funded from the balance of the Grant.
2. The report to be referred to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 18 October for comments and be re-considered by the Executive on 23 October.

**Contact Officer:** Les Tickner

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Head of Environmental Services

**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 In broad terms the capital grant was made by Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in March 2005 to support, enable and expedite housing renewal to properties affected by the January floods. Permission was given for a significant degree of local discretion in determining the spend.

The following parameters were however stipulated:-

- 1.1.1. The resource is solely for properties affected by the flooding.
- 1.1.2 Spend must be in line with Regulatory Reform Order Policy.
- 1.1.3 The additional resource should not displace or substitute other funding already identified for this type of work.
- 1.2 The multi agency Housing Recovery Group Chaired by the Director of People, Policy & Performance, established the main priorities which were accepted as appropriate by Government Office for the North West in May 2005.

Those priorities were:-

- 1.2.1 Completion of a stock condition survey.
- 1.2.2 Joint works with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Environment Agency to improve the decency, security and flood resilience of individual properties and to make linked enhancements to the immediate environment.
- 1.2.3 Where there are cases of exceptional hardship, works to make properties habitable where the owners were under or uninsured.
- 1.2.4 Additional technical staffing capacity to enable delivery.

There was an acceptance that those priorities may need to be amended as further stock data became available.

- 1.3 The grant allocation together with an update is as follows:

- 1.3.1 Stock Condition Survey – Of all housing in the district including every flooded property to find out the real state of repair required (£98,000). Completed October

2005 and has enabled the Decent Homes work programme to be developed. This is also an extremely useful source of information for future investment programmes.

- 1.3.2 Decent Homes – Expenditure on bringing properties affected up to the governments decent homes target (£175,000). Progress dictated by the condition survey and a group repair project in Denton Holme is scheduled to commence in late 2006.
  - 1.3.3 Uninsured Properties – Dealing with repairs needed to properties owned by vulnerable persons who could not insure the property (£325,000).
  - 1.3.4 Energy Efficiency – Improving energy efficiency measures in peoples' homes (£50,000). Ongoing.
  - 1.3.5 Flood Resilience Project – Putting in products such as air vent covers on properties affected in the rural area (£300,000). Substantially completed by early 2006, with 2 properties outstanding.
  - 1.3.6 Environmental Works – Including landscaping, drainage, dealing with footways and cleaning of affected areas (£225,500). Completed August 2006.
  - 1.3.7 Security Patrol – Contribution to the continuation of security patrol in the affected areas (£15,000). Completed September 2005.
  - 1.3.8 Back Lanes – Improvements to back lanes within the flood affected areas (£247,000). Completed July 2006.
  - 1.3.9 Landscaping – Improving smaller landscaped areas (£15,000). Completed January 2006.
  - 1.3.10 Allotments – Improvements to allotments within affected areas (£45,500). Completed January 2006.
  - 1.3.11 Private Lane – Enhancements of private land next to highway (£3,000). Completed January 2006.
  - 1.3.12 Bollards – Restoration of bollards on Warwick Road (£1,000). Ongoing.
- 1.4 As the programme developed the opportunity has been taken to respond to forecast underspends and funding has been re-allocated to other priority areas. A summary of the 3 main areas are as follows:-

<u>Project</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Spend</u>	<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Est. Balance</u>
Vulnerable Properties	£325,000	£0	£120,000	£205,000
Flood Resilience	£40,100	£1,120	£24,000	£14,980
Energy Efficiency	£34,000	£18,000	£7,000	£9,000
<b>Total Estimated Balance</b>				<b>£228,980</b>

The Housing Services & Health Officer read of Housing & Health Services Manager reports the main reason for the underspend against the vulnerable properties budget as being attributable to the low number of people requiring help. Following the flooding it was estimated that up to 125 properties came into this category. This was reduced to 30 and then 15. With a projected cost of £20-25K per property the financial support was allocated accordingly. Only 3 properties have been brought forward to have works done to them at a cost of approx. £40k per property. In terms of flood resilience some money had originally been moved into this budget to extend the scheme and the underspend reflects actual costs being less than anticipated. For the energy efficiency works these are now tailing off.

1.5 This was taken into account when re-allocating budgets:-

- (i) The allocation for environmental works included the establishment of a small team to undertake some of the works. This included an employment initiative through New Deal. As the recovery works to properties has gone on longer than initially envisaged the duration has been extended. The cost is £20,000 and this initiative has proved to be extremely popular in communities affected by the flood.
- (ii) The initial project to provide security patrols in the flood affected areas proved to be extremely effective. Discussions with the Police about a more sustainable strengthening of resources in those flood affected areas. An allocation of £10,000 has been provisionally committed to contribute to funding a Police Community Support Officer in those areas for a 3 year period.
- (iii) Making Space for Water, as agreed at the last Executive £75,000 has been allocated to this initiative.

1.6 Taking into account expenditure/commitments in the initial programme, together with the re-direction set out in para 1.5 a balance of £124,000 remains. It is suggested that subject to the views of Executive, SMT, prepare a programme of initiatives to be funded from this balance and refer this to Community O/S

Committee for their views and this be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 23 October.

## **2. CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 The spend has been monitored at the regular Housing Recovery Group Meetings. All members of that group have been involved in consultations to date however this group has now been disbanded.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is RECOMMENDED that:-

1. Members are requested to note progress and SMT be instructed to draw up a schedule of initiatives to be funded from the balance of the Grant.
2. The report to be referred to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 18 October for comments and be re-considered by the Executive on 23 October.

## **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To make full and appropriate benefit of the Office of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister grant underspends by utilisation in the flood affected areas.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources – The grant can be used to fund additional technical staffing capacity to enable delivery if so decided.
- Financial – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister capital funding grant already in place. Any expenditure funded by this grant should meet the conditions set by Government Office North West.
- Legal – In order to protect the Council’s position, care must be taken to ensure that any expenditure complies with any grant conditions laid down by ODPM, some of which are particularised in paragraph 1 above.
- Corporate – This work links closely to the Cleaner, Greener, Safer priority.
- Risk Management – High public expectation that the grant will be spent to the betterment of the flood affected areas.

- Equality Issues – The application of this grant has been targeted to those people who suffered hardship and were directly affected by the major floods.
- Environmental – Will help to ensure a cleaner more sustainable local environment.
- Crime and Disorder – The grant will supplement the community support already provided in the flood affected areas.
- Impact on Customers – The programme was targeted towards those Citizens/properties directly affected by the floods. In the main these appear to have achieved improvements and have been greatly appreciated.