

This report is public	
Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	7 April 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Nick Cotter
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	10 March 2025
Report of	Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing, Nicola Riley

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the expenditure of the capital grant received from the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 3.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve a capital grant to South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA) for the delivery of new social housing within Cherwell from the grant received from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local government (MHCLG): Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3.
- 1.2 To approve the increase to the Council's capital programme of £1.4m that arises from the report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The LAHF was established by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (then DLUHC) in 2022-23 to help local authorities respond to new and emerging housing pressures faced from resettlement schemes. LAHF round 2 and 3 also included the provision for new temporary accommodation enabled through the grant.
- 2.2 Following successful notification of grant receipt within LAHF Round 3, the report proposes to grant the money received to SOHA for the delivery of 8 new social housing units. These units will either be new houses or new social housing through market purchase. This continues existing arrangements in LAHF Round 2.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	<p>The Council has received confirmation of £1.4m LAHF R3 to deliver 8 units of social housing. The SOHA approach is already tried and tested under LAHF R2. Any revenue costs as a consequence of the new units will be met by SOHA under the grant agreement. Therefore, there are no financial implications arising from this report.</p> <p>Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 10 March 2025</p>			
Legal	<p>Legal Services are working with wellbeing and housing to assist with the preparation of the LAHF 3 grant funding agreements. Legal Services has provided advice in relation to Commuted Sums Agreement including subsidy control, considered and commented on authority for approval. Currently, Legal Services is awaiting a response from the client.</p> <p>LAHF3 comments will be sent to the client shortly but the comments will be similar to those made in connection with the Commuted Sums agreement.</p> <p>Legal Services will continue working with the relevant departments to assist with the implementation of the scheme as required.</p> <p>Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 11 March 2025</p>			
Risk Management	<p>There are no new risks arising directly from this report, which outlines to spend grant received in line with grant terms. Related risks will be managed through the service operational risk and escalated to the leadership risk register as and when deemed necessary.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 7 March 2025</p>			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact	x			The outcome of the report will improve the range and nature of social tenancies throughout the district, supporting low-income households
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics,	x			Low-income households will be better provided for

including employees and service users?				
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		The highest EPC ratings will be encouraged for the units purchased and delivered through the grant
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable
Council Priorities	Housing that meets your needs			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	None			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The LAHF was established by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (then DLUHC) in 2022-23 to help local authorities respond to new and emerging housing pressures faced from resettlement schemes.
- 3.2 The Council has successfully accessed Round 1 and 2 of this funding. It has plans to deliver 56 units as part of these two schemes. This includes the refurbishment of Town Centre House, Banbury.
- 3.3 A third iteration of LAHF has been made available and the Council was successful in an initial bid and a later top up bid. The total capital is £1.4m.

4. Details

- 4.1 The proposed partnership with SOHA is an expansion of existing similar schemes funded through previous LAHF Round 2 and a scheme using Council Section 106 commuted sums. It involves a grant contribution towards the purchase price of the accommodation. In return, SOHA manage the property and provide it for our usage. Our usage is for temporary accommodation, relieving homelessness pressures, or for resettlement families that are being assisted through the various government resettlement pathways.

- 4.2 The grant of £1.4m will provide 8 units of accommodation with 4 units to be used as temporary accommodation for households owed a homelessness duty by the Council, and 4 units to be initially let (at first let only) to those on Afghan resettlement schemes. These units will all be delivered by the end of March 2026 in accordance with grant conditions.
- 4.3 Ongoing revenue costs for management of property will be met by SOHA as part of the grant agreement.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to transfer the grant to SOHA. The Council is under time pressure to deliver units as conditions of the grant. The government have provided the grant based on the Council's assurance to deliver quickly. To use an alternative delivery method, which is not currently known, risks non-delivery and repayment of the grant. This is therefore rejected.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Delivering more social housing in district is a key objective and providing suitable, self-contained, housing for those in temporary accommodation is important. Accepting this grant is a way in which the Council can enable more housing delivery, easing pressures, without significant financial expenditure or risk.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes, financial threshold met
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Richard Smith – Head of Housing

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Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Ian Boll, Corporate Director – Communities, 11 March 2025