

Name of decision maker: Cllr Janice Marshall

Portfolio: Housing

Date of Portfolio Holder Decision: 13 March 2007

Title of Decision:

Grant to Dacorum Rent Aid

Decision made and reasons: To make a grant of £7000 from the 2007/08 Housing General Fund Budget to Dacorum Rent Aid for clerical support to their rent deposit scheme and £3000 to assist in securing move on accommodation for some of their existing clients. This will enable DRA to maintain their support arrangements for 40 clients in the private rented sector and help existing clients who are able to live without ongoing support to access other accommodation within the private sector.

Reports considered: (here reference can be made to specific documents)

Officer report attached.

Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:

Colin Farrar, Head of Housing

Nazma Abdul-Karim, Housing Advice & Homelessness Manager

Dacorum Rent Aid

Monitoring Officer/ Chief Financial Officers Comments:

Monitoring Officer: "I have no comments to add to the report"

Chief Financial Officer: "I have no comments"

Options Considered and reasons for rejection:

The council could decline to make a financial payment towards the Scheme, however, the organisation currently assists vulnerable single homeless clients to access accommodation in the private rented sector as an action point in the Council Homelessness Strategy and receive funding from Supporting People. The grant will enable DRA to maintain its support levels for 40 clients under their deposit guarantee scheme and for further clients to be resettled into private sector accommodation.

Portfolio Holders Signature:

Date:

Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:

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Date Decision Record Sheet received from portfolio holder: 13 March 2007

Date Decision Published: 13 March 2007

Decision No: PH/022/07

Date of Expiry of Call-In Period: 20 March 2007

Date any Call-In received or decision implemented:

BACKGROUND REPORT

Contact: Colin Farrar, Head of Housing or Nazma Abdul-Karim, Homelessness & Housing Advice Manager

1. Dacorum Rent Aid is a key partner organisation in helping the council to tackle homelessness within the district. They have successfully managed the deposit guarantee scheme for the past ten years, aimed at single homeless clients to access accommodation in the private rented sector. This involves the organisation providing a guarantee to the landlord in respect of loss or damage to fixtures, fittings or furniture. All parties concerned agree to the amount of the guarantee, which equates to one month's rent. The guarantee scheme ensures that single people are not disadvantaged in accessing accommodation by being on a low income or in receipt of state benefits. In turn this directly addresses policy issues such as social exclusion, health and seeking sustainable communities. In 2005/06, Dacorum Rent Aid supported 53 tenancies and received Supporting People funding to support tenants to sustain their homes. They interviewed 240 potential clients last year requesting assistance under the scheme, a clear indication of the demand in the area.
2. Following the retirement of the former chairman and Treasurer in 2006, who undertook a significant amount of day to day operational work that allowed DRA to function at the level it did, the new Board have indicated they will need to reduce their level of operation unless additional resources can be secured. This would have the effect of reducing the number of clients they supported from 40 to in the region of 30. A reduction of this nature would mean fewer privately rented supported housing places for young vulnerable people.
3. It is beneficial to the Council if the number of supported private sector tenancies can be retained at 40 as this is beneficial to its aim of preventative work with clients, who may well find themselves homeless without access to the DRA scheme. The provision of a £7,000 grant will enable DRA to secure part time clerical support that will provide back up to the case workers thus ensuring current case levels can be maintained.
4. In 2006 the Council provided £3,000 to DRA so they could help existing clients with move on accommodation within the private sector, thus freeing up support workers to assist other clients. This has proved effective and it is proposed a further grant of £3,000 is made to extend the scheme.
5. It is proposed these grants, totalling £10,000 are made from the £20,000 social provision made within the 2007/08 Housing General fund Budget for voluntary sector support. This amount would be in addition to the £10,500 DRA will receive in 2007/08 as core funding for their service.