

Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme – Homes England Audit

Synopsis of report:

Update on the successful outcome of the independent audit carried out by Homes England regarding Runnymede Borough Council's administration of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme grant funding.

Recommendation(s):

That Committee acknowledges the outcome of the report.

1 Context of report

- 1.1 In October 2021 Runnymede Borough Council was awarded £225,000 through the Homes England Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP), also known as Next Steps. The funding was provided to assist the Council in the purchase of three properties that would be specifically used to house rough sleepers.
- 1.2 3 x one-bedroom properties were purchased, one in Egham, another in Chertsey and the third in Addlestone.
- 1.3 The purchase of properties using grant provided by Homes England is subject to certain requirements as set out in the Capital Funding Guide. These include:
 - Ensuring that the grant is used for the purposes stated in the grant agreement,
 - Maintaining proper records which comply with Homes England's terms and conditions of grant,
 - Providing relevant information to Homes England in accordance with the requirements of the grant conditions.
- 1.4 Homes England will typically carry out an audit of at least one scheme/site per year for each grant recipient organisation, especially where it is the first time that a provider has received a grant.

2 Audit and outcome

- 2.1 The Housing Service were notified on 13 June 2022 that Homes England's Compliance Audit Team would be carrying out an audit of one of the properties purchased through the RSAP.
- 2.2 As is required under the agreement, independent auditors were appointed to carry out the audit and report back to Homes England. TIAA, who have completed other work for the Council, were instructed. Comprehensive documentation was provided to TIAA regarding the purchase of the property.
- 2.3 TIAA reported directly to Homes England. A copy of the report from Homes England is included at Appendix A. The Judgement Summary can be found below:

- 2.4 Breaches in meeting the programme requirements and guidance can have a negative impact on providers' ability to access future grants from Homes England.

On review of the evidence provided, the outcome of the audit has shown the provider has complied with all the programme requirements and guidance. A GREEN grade has been assigned and no breaches were identified.

3 Resource implications

- 3.1 None.

4 Legal implications

- 4.1 None.

5 Equality implications

- 5.1 None.

6 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 6.1 Although the audit did not take account of environmental factors, it was a requirement to obtain Energy Performance Certificates for each property. Two of the three have EPC ratings of D, with the third already achieving a C rating. Future works to the properties that are rated D will ensure they meet a minimum of a C rating. This may not have happened were they to remain in private ownership.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The outcome of this audit is positive and ensures future opportunities to access a valuable source of income from Homes England. This will assist the Council in meeting its strategic housing development goals.

(For information)

Background papers

Appendices
Homes England Compliance Audit Report