



Report to: Cabinet

**Subject: Information Item
Additional Regional Housing Board Grant**

Date: 28th May 2009

Author: Head of Planning & Environment

Purpose of Report

To advise Cabinet of the additional funding received for 2009-10 and the need to employ a temporary member of staff on a fixed term contract to enable the authority to administer and deliver the housing renovation service.

Background

Regional Housing Board grant money is a capital grant programme that is allocated to local authorities to enable them to improve the private housing stock through grants and other adaptations. It is generally used to provide grant money to improve the condition of houses to those in most need, principally those on benefit and above the age of 60.

Each year local authorities make bids for this money and the final allocations do not become known to the authority until late in the financial year, indeed in this year's case – in the final few days of March. Accordingly it is incumbent upon us to make an estimate as to the level of grant that we will receive and employ staff to meet that demand.

The budget figure approved by Cabinet in February was based on previous years allocations at £200,000. However we were successful in our bid for additional funding and have been allocated £567,500 for 2009-10. The current staffing levels are insufficient to administer this additional resource and to so to avoid having to return unspent sums to Government it is proposed to convert £31,500 into staffing support to enable the authority to deliver the service. The additional member of staff will be employed to carry out professional surveys of the work required in individual properties, in line with similar work already being carried out within the Public Protection section.

SMT and the Chief Executive under delegated powers have taken the following course of action:

- Increased the capital programme for Private Sector Grants by £367,500, to be financed from the additional grant received
- Established a fixed term contract for 1 year at a pay scale of Band 8, to be financed from the additional grant received

Financial Implications

There are no on-going financial implications to the local authority as the payment of the staffing cost will be wholly from the Regional Housing Board money and the employment will be on the basis of a fixed term contract.

Recommendation

That members note the content of this report.