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**RELEASE OF CAPITAL ALLOCATION IN THE HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME –  
NEW BUILD COUNCIL HOUSING**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Veronica Copeland  
Adults and Housing Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Paul Wildsmith,  
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek the release of funding allocated in the Housing Capital Programme to provide 24 new Council flats for rent on the Branksome estate.

**Summary**

2. Demand for social housing remains high in Darlington and the Government's Right to Buy Scheme continues to erode the number of properties in Council ownership. The Welfare Reforms have resulted in a demand for some smaller, more flexible units of accommodation.
3. An allocation of £5m has been earmarked for this purpose in the Council's Housing Capital Programme for 2014/15. Funding of £2,845,235 now needs to be released in order for the building works for 24 two bedroomed flats to progress. A Council owned site has been identified for this purpose at Eggleston View, on the Branksome housing estate
4. The Council owned properties will complement and supplement current and future programmes of new affordable housing being provided by other Housing Providers.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) £2,845,235 of the £5m allocated in the Housing Capital Programme for 2014/15 for a Council housing new build programme is released.
  - (b) The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources be authorised to proceed with those works indicated at paragraph 8 in the report subject to planning consent.

## Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported to meet the demand for more low cost housing options for rent.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

## Background Papers

Pauline Mitchell: Extension 2505

S17 Crime and Disorder	All works will be carried out to Secure by Design standards to minimise potential criminal activity.
Health and Well Being	The homes are being built to Sustainable Code Level 3 to maximise energy efficiency and households living in these properties will benefit in terms of their health and well-being
Carbon Impact	The properties will be designed to enable low carbon emissions
Diversity	There are no issues.
Wards Affected	The building works will take place in Cockerton West
Groups Affected	The residents living opposite or nearby to the building work will be affected by the noise and disturbance associated with the proposed works but the disruption will be kept to a minimum with care taken around hours of activity. Applicants for social rented housing will benefit from the increase choice available.
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a Key Decision as the spend has previously been agreed
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The recommendation will help to achieve the Perfectly Placed priority by improving the housing offer.
Efficiency	Modern new build properties are more effective and efficient in terms of future maintenance requirement.

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

7. In total over £16m has been set aside in the Housing Business Plan for new Council Housing over the next few years. Funding opportunities to increase the overall amount available are currently being explored through the Homes and Communities Agency's Affordable Housing Programme 2015/18 and increased borrowing capacity. However these are cash limited and subject to successful competitive bidding processes. These options are also not available until 2015/16 onwards.
8. The new build proposal for 24 flats commencing in 2014/15 will therefore be funded from the Housing Revenue Account. A Council owned site has been identified for this purpose and would comprise of 24 two bedroomed 4 person flats at Egglestone View, Branksome. All properties would be built to Sustainable Code 3, including Solar PV panels to provide a high level of energy efficiency.
9. A plan of the sites is attached at **Appendix 1** showing the proposed layout subject to planning permission.
10. Subject to the release of the capital funding, it is proposed that the building works would be undertaken by the Council's Building Services.

### Financial Implications

11. The total scheme cost has been estimated as £2,845,235 and £5m has been allocated in the Housing Capital Programme for 2014/15 for a Council housing new build programme. The work will be funded from the HRA.

### Outcome of Consultation

12. Local residents have been consulted as part of the Making and Growing Places consultation and their feedback reflected in the final scheme layout. Further consultation will take place as part of the planning permission process. The Tenants' Board has undertaken site visits and is supportive of the proposals.



