

HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2016

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on Wednesday, 16 March 2016. Decisions made by the Portfolio Holder will be subject to call-in. Recommendations made to the Cabinet or to the Council are not subject to call-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Victoria Wallace.

1. WILFORD FURLONG/ BRICKHILLS WILLINGHAM REGENERATION PROJECT

The Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the revised phasing and longer term approach to the Wilford Furlong/Brickhills regeneration scheme as specified in Option C:

- To use existing revenue budgets, and top slice them to achieve 'energy efficiency improvement works' (EEIW) to each of the Council owned properties on the estate.
- Postpone any work on infill property construction or hard and soft landscaping works until all potential alternative funding options have been explored. Should there be a means by which the Council can proceed, a case for decision on this will be put before Portfolio Holder at a future date

This requires:

Final property surveys by April 2016 to assess suitability for the following works funded in 2016 and beginning by Q2 2016/17:

- New electric Quantum Heating Systems
- New windows and doors
- New bathrooms and kitchens as appropriate

The following works funded in 2017:

- Installation of External Wall Insulation (EWI). Works staggered to allow for budget and to ensure all internal and external works completed before EWI installed.
- Continued roll out of Solar PV installations across the council owned properties on the estate.

Other Options Considered:

Option A:

The Council has the option to withdraw from the project completely and do nothing on the estate other than routine works.

The impact on the budget and resources is nil if this option is pursued.

This could have a negative impact on the local community and could damage the reputation of the Council given the longstanding and documented intention to improve the Wilford Furlong/Brickhills estate in Willingham coupled with the longstanding community involvement work to achieve this intended outcome.

Option B:

The Council can postpone any works until we have certainty about the rent levels in year 5.

The impact on the budget and resources is nil if this option is pursued.

This could have a negative impact on the local community and could damage the reputation of the Council given the longstanding and documented intention to improve the Wilford Furlong/Brickhills estate in Willingham coupled with the longstanding community involvement work to achieve this intended outcome.

Option C:

Use existing revenue budgets, and top slice them to achieve 'energy efficiency improvement works' (EEIW) to each of the Council owned properties on the estate.

And

Postpone any work on infill property construction or hard and soft landscaping works until we have explored all potential alternative funding options. Should there be a means by which we can proceed a case for decision on this will be put before Portfolio Holder at a future date

This requires:

Final property surveys by April 2016 to assess suitability for the following works funded in 2016 and beginning by Q2 2016/17:

- New electric Quantum Heating Systems
- New windows and doors
- New bathrooms and kitchens as appropriate

The following works funded in 2017:

- Installation of External Wall Insulation (EWI). Works staggered to allow for budget and to ensure all internal and external works completed before EWI installed.
- Continued roll out of Solar PV installations across the council owned properties on the estate.
- i) The Council has submitted a bid to the EU for £1.5m EU funding plus £120k for ongoing monitoring, analysis and research to fund the roll out of solar PV onto the estate. We await the result of that Bid. If we are successful this element might commence in 2016.
- ii) The Council is also pursuing other avenues of funding PV installation rollout. Note: The recent cut to the Feed in Tariff is making solar PV a much less attractive investment option for funders.

Reason For Decision: The original option to progress work on this estate was first published in the August 2013 Forward Plan. A set of recommendations to proceed were agreed by Portfolio Holder in March 2014. This report is being brought forward as a decision because there have been changes affecting the original recommendations which need ratification by the Portfolio Holder.

As a result of reduced rental revenue for the HRA, a review of the master plan approach to the overall regeneration scheme proposed for Wilford Furlong/Brickhills estate was undertaken in the latter part of 2015. This review has resulted in the Option C recommended in the report.

2. THE HOUSING HANDYPERSON SERVICE PILOT PROPOSAL

The Housing Portfolio Holder:

- a) **APPROVED** the Handyperson Service pilot proposal
- b) **AGREED** to a further report to be brought back in January 2017 for consideration following evaluation of the initial 9 months of the service.

Other Options Considered:

A: To agree to the setting up of a one year pilot of the Handyperson Service as a chargeable service. This will be monitored closely and a report brought back to the Housing Portfolio Holder after nine months of operation, to review the viability of the scheme at that stage.

B: To decide not to go ahead with a pilot of the service and to no longer offer a handyperson service.

Reason For Decision:

1. The Handyperson Service remains a demand from tenants voiced through the residents groups.
2. As a chargeable service run for a year the pilot project will be open to tenants and leaseholders.
3. Should the pilot project prove to be viable it could be extended to a further fixed term.
4. During the trial period as a free service demand was proven, however, to provide a sustainable service it requires to be both chargeable and run for a year throughout different seasons.

3. AFFORDABLE HOMES DRAFT SERVICE PLAN 2016/17

The Housing Portfolio Holder:

- a) **APPROVED** the Affordable Homes Service Plan for 2016/17
- b) **NOTED** the progress to date on existing projects within the 2015/16 Service Plan.

Other Options Considered: The Portfolio Holder is requested to approve the key actions identified for the 2016/17 Service Plan and to suggest changes or additions where required.

Reason For Decision: The draft Service Plan actions for 2016/17 set out in Appendix 1 of the report have been developed taking into account the key aims and objectives of the Council, central government direction and the forthcoming priorities for the Affordable Homes Service.

4. COUNCIL NEW BUILD PIPELINE

The Housing Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the contents of the report, in particular the pipeline of schemes currently funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and the sale of the HRA plots to provide an ongoing income stream.

Other Options Considered:

1. The Housing Portfolio Holder may wish to request further information about the new build pipeline.
2. The Housing Portfolio Holder may wish to request further information about the self build vanguard and the potential income streams to support new housing development.

Reason For Decision: The report sets out the new build schemes already committed to by the Council and the plans to utilise existing resources and policies to maintain a future pipeline of new development.