

HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2014

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on Wednesday, 15 October 2014. 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. FLATS AND HOUSES AT 1-14 FAIRVIEW LONGSTANTON (KEY)

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the recommended Option C; to dispose of the site at Fairview Longstanton to Icen Homes/Hundred Houses Society for nil value, to enable the development of an affordable housing scheme.

Other Options Considered: Option A: To consider disposal of the site on the open market. Messrs Pocock and Shaw have advised that on an open market scenario, the site would probably be worth around £1,700,000. Although we would expect to achieve 40% affordable housing on any new private development, possibly between 4-7 affordable homes dependent on the scheme, this would mean a loss of affordable housing in the village.

Option B: To consider disposal of the site to a registered provider. Messrs Pocock & Shaw have advised that the value of the land for a new scheme providing 100% affordable housing would be £150,000. This option is not financially viable for the housing association.

Option C: To make the scheme financially viable for the Housing Association, the site could be transferred at nil value as a subsidy for the provision of 17 affordable homes. The housing association would pay the Council's legal costs and would also compensate the Council for any home loss payments made to tenants.

Reason For Decision: This option is most likely to ensure that the site will be redeveloped for affordable housing by the deadline in 2017.

2. REQUEST FOR DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO PROCURE A NEW CONTRACT FOR THE SUB-REGIONAL HOME-LINK SCHEME

The Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the recommendation to procure a new contract for the sub-regional Home-Link scheme in the current financial year (2014/15).

Other Options Considered: There is no option but to procure a new contract for the scheme but there are options about how this is done:

- The first option is through a tender process following the OJEU regulations due to the total contract value across the sub-regional partnership. The Home-Link

Management Board would decide which tender process was appropriate to the contract following advice from the Procurement Officer.

- The second option is to use a Government Framework Agreement where likely suppliers are signed up. Currently only one of the major CBL system suppliers is signed up to a Framework Agreement but a decision on when other lead suppliers will be accepted onto the framework will not be made until December 2014. When there is more than one suitable supplier a comparison between their offers can be run through the Crown Commercial Service (similar to the scoring of tenders). However, due to the fact that December 2014 is the earliest point two suitable suppliers will become available for a comparison, this option was discounted by the Home-link Management Board.

Reason For Decision: Without a new contract in place the current service to customers would cease in February 2015, with no viable alternative available. This would leave the Council with no system to allocate available properties to applicants in housing need (with the resulting void rent loss), no system to provide housing options and process homeless applications, and no system for tenants to access mutual exchanges locally or nationally.

Advice has been taken from the Council's Procurement Officer, who recommends that a full procurement for a new contract must be undertaken to remain compliant with the legislation.

3. **REVIEW OF HRA FUNDED AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY**

The Portfolio Holder **APPROVED:**

- a) The revised Aids and Adaptations policy.
- b) The employment of an in-house Occupational Therapist.

Other Options Considered: There is an option to contract with the services of an Independent Occupational Therapist rather than employ an OT directly however this would potentially hamper the scope and the opportunity for growth that a direct post affords.

The option to do nothing in terms of the Occupational Therapist service would mean that we could not improve our service to tenants in terms of reducing the time taken for an assessment or provide a more holistic approach, as this would continue to be outside of our control.

Reason For Decision: The new Care Act 2014 focusses on integrated services where housing plays a key role in promoting health and wellbeing in the community.

The report has drawn on feedback from residents and staff about the existing policy and how it could be improved. The dissatisfaction expressed has mainly focussed on not being able to meet the expectations of residents following an OT assessment. It has also drawn on historical finance and demand data to assess the positioning of the budget.

Significantly the report has drawn on tenants' experience of having to wait 18 weeks to

be assessed. This is a consistent waiting time which results in prolonged hardship for disabled residents struggling to cope in their home.

4. HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder **APPROVED:**

- a) The extension of the current Shared Service Agreement by a further twelve months to 31 March 2016.
- b) The adoption of the key performance indicator:
Average time (in weeks) between date of referral to practical completion for minor jobs up to £10k.
- c) The preparation of an Outline Business Case for the expansion of a county-wide service, with final agreement being subject to agreement by Cabinet in 2015.

Other Options Considered: The current three-year Shared Service HIA Agreement runs out in March 2015. This agreement requires review and further development if it is to include potentially two other local authority HIA services in future. The Agreement provides for extension year on year with the agreement of all parties and will require at least one further year extension in order to prepare an outline business case for a wider shared service across Cambridgeshire. It is proposed to renew the agreement for one further year.

Officers will work with the CHIA Manager on an outline business case which will be subject to Member endorsement across all three councils in 2015.

Huntingdonshire DC and Cambridge City Council have already approved these recommendations.

Reason For Decision: The shared service CHIA has been successful in meeting its initial aims and objectives within two years, with potential to achieve further efficiencies both internally and externally into the future.

The opportunity to broaden the shared service to include the other districts within Cambridgeshire provides an opportunity to deliver further efficiencies and benefits for commissioners and customers.

The current three-year Agreement runs out in March 2015. In order to allow time to work up the proposals to deliver a countywide shared service an extension to the current Agreement is required.

The under £10k works are the majority of the smaller works completed and this fits with our collective priority to streamline/optimize DFG completion times.

5. AFFORDABLE HOMES DRAFT SERVICE PLAN 2015/16

The Portfolio Holder **ENDORSED** the service plan actions.

Other Options Considered:

Reason For Decision: A list of service projects needs to be agreed in the autumn to enable service and financial planning to be put in place for effective delivery by April

2015. The proposed list represents a continuation of key projects already underway (5) and a series of new projects (8) designed to take forward key developments identified in previous years work and to further enhance the service to customers.

6. EQUALITY SCHEME 2012-2015 (2014-2015 UPDATE)

The Portfolio Holder **AGREED** the 2014-2015 update of the Council's Equality Scheme 2012-2015.

Other Options Considered: The Portfolio Holder may agree, amend or reject the Single Equality Scheme as presented, bearing in mind that the Council has a legal obligation to publish one or more equality objectives.

Reason For Decision: Previously, the Portfolio Holder endorsed an earlier version of the Equality Scheme 2012 – 2015 for the Council - this was previously known as the Single Equality Scheme. An updated version of the Equality Scheme has been developed for 2014 – 2015 in response to changes to the Council's corporate Aims and Objectives and new data on the community profile of South Cambridgeshire.