

CABINET

Council Housing- Building Programme Manager July 29th

Report of Chief Officers (Environment /Health and Housing)

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To seek approval from Cabinet to use the Housing Revenue Account – business support reserve to fund the establishment of post to manage the Council Housing Building Programme.			
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	30 th June 2014.		
This report is public.			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CLLR LEYTHAM

- (1) That Cabinet approve the use of the Housing Revenue Account Business Support Reserve to fund the establishment of this post for a fixed term of 3 years.
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Resources) to update the General Fund Revenue Budget and Housing Revenue Account accordingly.
- (3) That any need to extend this post in the future be reported back to Cabinet.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Cabinet of 5th Nov 2013 approved the following

- (1) That a programme of new build council housing be established as set out in the report.
- (2) That the Council works with the Lancashire Regeneration Property Partnership (LRPP) to develop a scheme to deliver a programme of new build council housing as set out in the report and that detailed proposals be brought back to Cabinet

for approval prior to entering into any contractual commitment.

- (3) That a scheme for acquiring ex-council housing properties also be established as set out in the report, and that detailed proposals be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

- 1.2 Cabinet agreed that funding for the project would come from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Support Reserve. Use of this reserve needs to be approved by Cabinet. So whilst the establishment of post is delegated to the Chief Executive a decision to fund the post is required from Cabinet.
- 1.3 Within existing capacity much work has already been done to establish an overall direction for the programme. No formal decisions have been required to date but updates on progress have been provided through the Housing Regeneration Cabinet Liaison Group.
- 1.4 The point has now been reached where the officer view is that in order to deliver the project additional officer capacity is required. The purpose of this officer capacity will be to ensure that the plans, decisions and delivery of the project happen in a timely and managed way. Whilst the Lancashire Regeneration Partnership will be engaged in the development and delivery of the scheme this officer will oversee the project in order to ensure the City Council's interests at all times.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The establishment of a Building Programme Manager for a fixed term of 3 years will provide the needed capacity to develop a delivery plan and subject to this being agreed to oversee the building programme.
- 2.2 This post would work solely on the building programme, be funded from the HRA Business Support Reserve and report directly to the Chief Officer (Environment).

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 None

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Agree to fund the establishment of a Building Programme Manager	Option 2: Don't agree to fund the establishment of a Building Programme Manager
Advantages	Provides the capacity required to develop firm proposals for a building programme and then oversee this.	
Disadvantages		There is currently insufficient capacity to deliver the programme without impacting on existing service delivery or increasing the risk to the City Council.
Risks	The proposals for the building programme take longer than expected to be agreed, (eg there may be local opposition). This could require extension of the fixed term contract.	The building programme isn't delivered.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The officer preferred option is option 1.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The building programme is integral to the Council's corporate priority of Health and Wellbeing.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct equality issues arising from this reports. However, the establishment of a post to deal exclusively with the building programme will, help ensure any equality issues identified as part of the impact assessment of the wider housing strategy are given due consideration in the house building programme.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and have no further comments.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the new post at bottom of Grade 6 is £36.5K (£42.2K at top of scale) and can be funded from the HRA Business Support Reserve, which at 31st March 2014 has £8.613M available for allocation subject to audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts.

Members are reminded that this reserve was established to provide support to additional business plan commitment and planned investment opportunities and it is considered that the creation of this post is necessary in order to fulfil that requirement, i.e. to liaise with the LRPP in developing and delivering a programme of new build council housing and a scheme for acquiring ex-council housing properties as agreed by Cabinet at its meeting in November 2013.

It is re-iterated, that prior to entering into any commitment with the LRPP to deliver the new build housing programme or acquiring ex-council properties, there is still a need for HRA officers in conjunction with Resources (Financial Services) to review the current 30-year Business Plan and Rent Policy regarding ongoing affordability associated with the increased housing stock, and that detailed proposals for new build (including identified sites, numbers of properties to be accommodated within each site, and accommodation typologies) and identification of ex-council properties deemed appropriate be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

The Establishment of the post is delegated to the Chief Executive. The draft job description for the proposed post has been evaluated as part of the Council's Job Evaluation Scheme. The score places this post in Grade 6. Any recruitment activity will be compliant with Council policy and legislation.

Information Services:

None directly arising.

Property:

As set out in the report.

Open Spaces:

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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