



DECORATING SUPPORT SCHEME FOR COUNCIL HOUSING TENANTS

Report of Repairs and Maintenance Services Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To request ICMD approval to appoint additional suppliers who will accept decorating vouchers from Council Housing tenants in exchange for decorating materials and associated sundries.			
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	22 nd December 2023		
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Approval is provided to appoint decorating suppliers sourced via a framework provided by Procurement For Housing.
- (2) Approval is provided to enable Council Housing tenants to continue to exchange decorating vouchers with local suppliers who are prepared to accept them.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The request for approval to appoint additional decorating suppliers is required to ensure Council Housing tenants continue to have an extended selection of suppliers they can expend their decorating vouchers with.
- 1.2 Unfortunately, the availability of local decorating suppliers has reduced significantly over recent years. This is due to either not wanting to participate in the decorating voucher scheme or have ceased trading due to increasing operating costs. This situation has also been further impacted by the closure both locally and nationally of Wilko stores.
- 1.3 The reduction in the availability of local suppliers limits the selection/choice of decorating materials for Council housing tenants and overall value for money.
- 1.4 In addition, current local suppliers do not offer tenants the ability to select

materials via the web.

- 1.5 To ensure the Council is able to offer its tenants opportunities to increase their choices relating to decorating materials and costs, additional suppliers must be sourced and appointed.
- 1.6 A range of procurement options was considered by Officers and the decision was made to use the Decorative Solutions framework provided by Procurement For Housing (PfH).
- 1.7 PfH deliver procurement services for both the private and public sector and is supported by the National Housing Federation and Chartered Institute of Housing. PfH has also previously been used for services by the Council.
- 1.8 Decoration vouchers are currently issued to new and existing tenants depending on the rationale for redecoration. Typically, vouchers will be issued to any new tenant who can undertake redecoration works themselves or following intrusive repair works to existing tenanted properties.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 Following discussions and scoping requirements with PfH two additional suppliers have expressed their interest to provide services to Council Housing tenants.
- 2.2 The two suppliers to be appointed are Johnstones Paint (decorating centre located in Morecambe) and Dulux (products available in a range of outlets across the district). Both suppliers enable customers to view and select products from their various web site/pages.
- 2.3 Both Dulux and Johnstones currently operate similar schemes for other social housing providers enabling tenants to exchange vouchers with a pre-determined value for paint and other decorating products. The volume of materials required will be calculated for tenants to enable the correct amount to be purchased depending on the size of a particular room.
- 2.4 Due diligence has been undertaken and conversations have taken place with other social housing providers using this particular framework.
- 2.5 It is intended to appoint both suppliers for an initial period of 2 years with the option to extend by a further year subject to satisfactory performance and feedback from residents.
- 2.5 The appointment of both suppliers is proposed to commence following approval of this report. This will minimise the potential impact currently experienced by tenants who have a limited selection of suppliers and decorating materials.
- 2.6 The estimated annual value of decoration vouchers currently being issued is £90,000.
- 2.7 The Council will continue to promote current local suppliers who have agreed to participate in the decorating voucher scheme. These include PADS (based at White Lund, Morecambe) and Homemakers 1st Stop DIY Morecambe.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Not applicable- the appointment of additional decorating suppliers will increase the availability of products, enhance choice and value for money. However, we will collaborate closely with tenants to ensure we have their feedback regarding the scheme and the overall decision to extend the arrangement (or not).

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Approve the proposed appointment of 2 additional suppliers	Option 2: Do not approve the proposed appointment of 2 additional suppliers
Advantages	To award a contract to Dulux and Johnstones which will increase the availability of suppliers, maximising choice, and costs for tenants	None
Disadvantages	None	A limited selection of suppliers prepared to participate in the scheme limits choice and cost for tenants.
Risks	None	Vouchers are not expended and deterioration in property decorative condition.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 6.0 The officer preferred option, is option 1. Appointing two additional suppliers prepared to participate in the decoration voucher scheme will benefit Council Housing tenants.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The report requests that the Portfolio Holder approves the recommendation above. This is a key element of services provided for new and existing Council Housing tenants.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

This decision supports delivery of the Council Housing Service Improvement Plan

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

No formal impact assessment conducted, however, to not undertake these works could impact on a tenant's overall enjoyment of residing in a Council Housing property.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Decorating vouchers are currently being issued from within existing budgets.

As part of the current 2024/25 revenue budget setting process, anticipated spend on decorating vouchers has been separately identified to aid ongoing monitoring of take-up by tenants. The coding changes are cost neutral.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

n/a

Information Services:

n/a

Property:

n/a

Open Spaces:

n/a

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The value of this contract, taking into account the annual price and optional extension period, makes this a Key Decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact Officer: Den Graham

Telephone: 01524 582453

E-mail: dgraham@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: