

Ref:

Called in

Yes/No

THE THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF CABINET

Cabinet Member

Councillor Whitehead

Relevant Portfolio:

Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods

Date of Decision:

17 February 2020

Subject:

Housing management options appraisal; outcome of formal consultation

Key Decision

Yes

In Forward Plan

Yes

Brief summary of matter:

An options appraisal was completed in October 2019, reviewing the delivery of housing management services provided by East Kent Housing (EKH) on behalf of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Thanet District Council.

The four councils each agreed that the preferred option for future service provision to the four councils' tenants and leaseholders is that it should become an in-house service, subject to consultation.

This report sets out the outcomes from the formal consultation exercise undertaken with EKH tenants and leaseholders. It proposes that officers from across the four councils be instructed to negotiate ending the agreement with EKH and to make preparations for the housing management service to be brought in-house.

Decision made:

Cabinet agreed the following:

1. That having noted the results of the tenant and leaseholder consultation, the cost/benefit analysis and the risk analysis, it is agreed that the management of the council's housing stock be brought back in-house;
2. That the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods be authorised to terminate the management agreement with EKH as soon as practicable;
3. That the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods be authorised to take such decisions as may be necessary to facilitate the process of bringing the housing service in-house, including the use of Housing Revenue Account balances as required for any one off transition costs incurred;
4. To delegate authorisation to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer for the use of up to £250k of HRA Reserves for transitional costs.

Reasons for decision:

The decision was taken for the following reasons:

1. EKH has experienced serious performance problems and health and safety non-compliance issues.
2. Tenants and leaseholders have expressed their views clearly, that they would prefer their homes to be managed by the individual councils rather than retain the existing Arms-Length Management Organisation structure.
3. It is in the best interests of tenants and leaseholders for the four councils to terminate the management agreement and transfer housing services back in-house.
4. The integration of the housing management service with each council's remaining housing services would provide a more transparent and accountable structure for the housing service.

Alternatives considered and why rejected:

Cabinet considered whether to:

1. Withdraw from East Kent Housing and return housing management services back in-house under direct management of the council, or
2. Reject the recommendations of this report and decide to retain the current EKH arrangements.

The decision taken was for the reasons set out above.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by any executive Member who has been consulted and of any dispensation granted by the Standards Committee:

None

Author of Officer report:

Bob Porter, Head of Housing and Planning

Background papers

Cabinet Report 17_2_20
Annex 1_ ALMO Guidance Note December 2012
Annex 2_ Cost benefit analysis
Annex 3_ Risk analysis
Annex 4_ Consultation documents
Annex 5_ Consultation Responses - Canterbury
Annex 6_ Consultation Responses - Dover
Annex 7_ Consultation Responses - Folkestone & Hythe
Annex 8_ Consultation Responses - Thanet
Annex 9_ Equalities Impact Assessment

Statement if decision is an urgent one and therefore not subject to call-in:

None

Last date for call in:

28 February 2020