

# EXECUTIVE MEETING ON 5 JANUARY 2021



## DECISION SHEET

### Record of decisions made by the Executive pursuant to Regulation 12 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Date of publication: 7 January 2021

*\* Executive decisions will not be implemented until the expiry of 5 working days to take account of the Call-In procedure.*

<u>No.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Reasons for the Decision</u>	<u>Details of alternative options considered and rejected at a meeting</u>	<u>Any declarations of conflict of interest and/or dispensations granted</u>
5	Contracting out of Homelessness Reviews	(A) that work to determine and issue, in accordance with the relevant	The benefits of outsourcing the reviews function are considered to be:	Option 1: Keep the reviews function in-house and do not trial contracting out	

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		<p>legislation, the outcome of reviews requested by those subject to homelessness decisions made by the Council up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be contracted out to a suitably qualified and experienced independent contractor.</p> <p>(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it provides an additional layer of independence and further reinforces that the reviewer has not been involved in the original decision</li> <li>• the staff within the contracting organisation specialise in reviews for local authorities and so they have an extensive expertise and knowledge of the law and have the</li> </ul>	<p>– not recommended because, as discussed above, the potential benefits of contracting out indicate the council should pilot this.</p> <p>Option 2: Recruit a specialist reviews officers – not recommended as without seeking to appoint a shared officer with another authority or</p>	

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		<p>and Health to appoint a contractor, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procurement Rules, from the Hertfordshire Framework Agreement for Homelessness Reviews Contracts developed by Three Rivers and Watford Councils</p> <p>(C) authority be</p>	<p>capacity to keep up with changes in case law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it would build resilience into the process as currently there is only one officer in the Housing Service who has experience and the seniority to carry out reviews</li> <li>• it would free up management time for the Service Manager – Housing Services to concentrate on</li> </ul>	<p>authorities, it would be hard to justify even a 0.5 FTE officer given the current numbers of reviews. A 0.5 FTE officer appointed at grade 9 would cost c£26k a year and so is more than the anticipated cost of the outsourced service. This option does not therefore represent best value.</p> <p>Option 3: Trial the</p>	

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		delegated to the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, acting in consultation with the Head of Housing and Health, to review the outcome of the trial of the contracted out service and determine whether or not to contract out this function beyond the trial period.	managing more strategic issues, such as helping ensuring an appropriate affordable housing mix at Gilston Garden Town and other strategic sites, procuring additional temporary accommodation and handling an increasingly complex homelessness, housing allocations and housing development environment.	contracting out of reviews – recommended for the reasons discussed in this report.	

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6	Affordable Housing Research and Overview and Scrutiny Review	<p>(A) that the report into Affordable Housing produced by the Housing Quality Network be used to inform the identification of options for further enhancing the supply of affordable housing informed by local needs.</p> <p>(B) that the Head of Housing and Health, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for</p>	HQN's work provides a valuable source of independent analysis when revising planning policies in the future and, in the more immediate term, the council's Housing and Health Strategy and Tenancy Strategy.	Option 1: Note the HQN report's findings and the recommended actions proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee but choose not to act on either. Not recommended as the HQN's work provides a valuable source of independent analysis and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	

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		<p>Neighbourhoods, draws on the HQN report's findings when revising the council's Housing and Health Strategy and Tenancy Strategy for consideration by Council in due course in 2021/22</p> <p>(C) the Overview and Scrutiny (O&amp;S) Committee's recommendations, presented in section 3, for enhancing the council's working</p>		<p>considers that the actions identified will make a positive difference to tenants' and prospective tenants' experience.</p> <p>Option 2: Draw on the HQN's and Overview and Scrutiny Committee's findings when working with developers and registered</p>	

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		arrangements with registered providers be approved.		providers and revising key council strategies and policies concerned with the development of affordable housing –recommended for the reasons outlined in this report.	
7	Note a decision of the Chief Executive to approve a scheme for Local Authority	(A) That the decision to approve the scheme taken by the Chief Executive be noted.	In accordance with the Government’s response to Covid-19 supports for Business, the local authority is required to	The draft scheme was discussed informally with Executive members	Councillor J Wyllie declared an interest in this item by virtue of the fact that he is

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	Discretionary Grant fund under Urgency Provisions	(B) That delegated authority is granted to the Head of Revenues & Benefit service in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Financial Sustainability to revise the scheme where appropriate.	determine a scheme to allocate the funding made available under the discretionary grant fund. Government refer to this round of discretionary grants as Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)	on 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2020 to identify any alternatives to the proposal, and there were none identified.  Various alternatives could be explored but the time delay incurred is considered detrimental to the objective of giving financial support to businesses in need. Consequently very	a small business owner



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				little variation from the Governments core scheme is proposed.	