



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

24 MARCH 2021

REPORT TITLE:	PROPOSAL TO ACQUIRE UNITS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING USE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The report provides for consideration the recommendations of the Housing Committee in respect of increasing the number of homes in Wirral's social housing sector, through the use of existing resources available from:

- commuted sums for affordable housing secured through the planning system;
- adaptations Budget passported through the Better Care Fund; and
- potentially also securing funding from Homes England from the Government's Affordable Housing Programme

The full minute of the Housing Committee of 10 March 2021 and the associated report of the Director of Regeneration and Place is attached.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Housing Committee requests that Policy and Resources Committee approves the following recommendations:

- (1) the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Place, be authorised to negotiate the acquisition of six new social rented housing properties from Lovell Partnerships Ltd and to finalise all necessary associated legal documentation;
- (2) the Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to enter into negotiations with Lovell Partnerships Ltd to negotiate an enhanced energy efficiency specification which may include the installation of solar photovoltaics for such properties.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 This matter is being referred to Policy and Resources Committee because the Housing Committee is recommending that the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Place, be authorised to negotiate the acquisition of six new social rented housing properties from Lovell Partnerships Ltd and to finalise all necessary associated legal documentation. This is associated with a further recommendation that the Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to enter into negotiations with Lovell Partnerships Ltd to negotiate an enhanced energy efficiency specification which may include the installation of solar photovoltaics for such properties.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, decisions regarding land and property including major acquisitions concerning any purchase, sale or transfer of a value in excess of £100,000 is reserved to Policy & Resources Committee

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other options have been considered as reported within the minutes of the Housing Committee and the appended report.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The former Housing Market Renewal Site in Rock Ferry, Sevenoaks, has seen the development of over 220 new homes already. A planning application for the final phase of this scheme for 43 units is currently being considered. This will complete the masterplan for the area with the Council's developer partner Lovell Partnerships Ltd.
- 3.2 The site being developed presents an ideal opportunity for the Council to pilot the approach of purchasing a small number of new build, specially adapted, social rented units. Officers have explored this option with the developer Lovell Partnerships Ltd and the Council now has the opportunity to purchase six units on the site.
- 3.3 There is an acute shortage of this type of accommodation and it is proposed that these new homes could be used to support people who may need temporary accommodation whilst their longer-term housing options are addressed. In addition, the bungalows proposed could assist the Council in supporting people who are not able to be discharged from hospital as they have specific adaptation needs which cannot currently be addressed elsewhere.
- 3.4 The report is brought to the Policy and Resources Committee as the Committee with specific responsibility for a decision regarding land and property including major acquisitions and disposals.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications are detailed within the report submitted to Housing Committee on 4 March 2021.
- 4.2 The remaining financial implications for these units can be found in Appendix 1 to the Director of Regeneration and Place's report to Housing Committee, which is exempt from public information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains commercially sensitive information.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In accordance with the Part 3B of Constitution (Committee Terms of Reference), the Policy and Resources Committee has two main areas of responsibility, which is to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, including making decisions on policies and co-ordinating spend not reserved to full Council, and to maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets.
- 5.2 The Policy & Resources Committee is charged by full Council to provide a co-ordinating role across all other service committees and retain a 'whole-council' view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management. In particular, this includes specific responsibility for a decision regarding land and property including major acquisitions and disposals, which includes reserved decision making concerning any purchase, sale or transfer of a value in excess of, or likely to exceed £100,000. (See Part 3(B) paragraph 1.2 (b) (iv) of the Constitution).
- 5.3 As the matter of business that was the subject of the report to Housing Committee falls under that responsibility reserved to the Policy and Resources Committee, the Housing Committee's resolution is presented as a recommendation.
- 5.4 As the decision in this matter is the subject of a recommendation from another Committee, the Policy and Resources Committee must take into account the resolution of that Committee and give due regard to the guidance and comments made by its members. The Policy and Resources Committee must not, however, consider itself bound by that Committee's recommendations or otherwise fetter its discretion. Its Members must come to their own decision. In doing so, the Committee must satisfy itself that it has been provided with all relevant information or a suitable précis to enable it to comply with its duties and make a lawful decision.
- 5.5 The other legal implications are detailed within the report submitted to Housing Committee on 10 March 2021.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The resource implications are detailed within the report submitted to Housing Committee on 10 March 2021.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The risk implications are detailed within the report submitted to Housing Committee on 10 March 2021.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Engagement and Consultation were covered in the original report submitted to the Committee.

9.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS (EQUALITY, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE)

9.1 Other implications arising from the subject matter were considered as set out in the annexed report and meeting minute.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Andrew Mossop**
Principal Democratic Services Officer
Email: andrewmossop@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Minute Extract

Appendix 2 – Proposal to Acquire Units for Affordable Housing Use Report to Housing Committee

BACKGROUND PAPERS

As listed in the Director of Regeneration and Place's original report to Housing Committee appended.