

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS**

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness held on Monday, 25 October 2021 at 4.30 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

### **Present**

Councillor Darren Sanders (in the Chair)

Councillors Cal Corkery  
Scott Payter-Harris

#### **24. Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **25. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest although in the interests of transparency Councillor Sanders said that he has sometimes been contacted by residents of Shootpool.

#### **26. Acquisition of Viking Court and Shootpool**

Jo Bennett, Head of Business Growth, Play & Youth, introduced the report.

Councillor Kirsty Mellor made a deputation. Deputations are not minuted but can be viewed on the livestream

[Agenda for Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness on Monday, 25th October, 2021, 4.30 pm Portsmouth City Council](#)

In response to questions from Maria Cole, officers explained that if the decision to acquire the properties is approved they would speak to Vivid and the current residents to assess their housing needs before considering people on the housing register. Acquisition is another term for buying and in contrast to a compulsory purchase order the arrangement is voluntary and agreement has been reached with the properties' owners.

In response to questions from members, officers agreed that if the council had built the properties the rooms would be larger but the accommodation is considered adequate and a good investment.

With regard to exchange of contracts there is a little more work to be done but officers are ready to start discussing a date, depending on today's decision. A six-month notice period is not unusual in commercial transactions. Officers will keep members updated with progress.

A percentage contingency on the refurbishment price as well as a standard project contingency has been built into the plans in view of possible shortages

of building materials and labour. Officers are happy to share the information with members.

Only when there is a decision on the acquisition can officers prepare the remainder of the deal and understand eligibility for grants from Homes England. Officers can bring updates on Homes England bids and grants to future meetings. They can also provide a breakdown for members of the unsupported borrowing used for the acquisition.

Councillor Corkery urged that the residents are kept informed as much as possible to allay potential anxiety about future accommodation. He noted there are ongoing issues, particularly with maintenance and the relationship between Vivid and the properties' owners. If the properties are owned by the council relationships may be better. It is not acceptable for people to be left with nowhere to live.

Councillor Sanders agreed timely engagement and communication with the residents is crucial and was keen they should have a permanent home. The decision to acquire the properties will help prevent homelessness and once it has been made, detailed negotiations can take place. Discussions could be held with Vivid and the landlords as to why the repairs noted in the report have not been done.

**The Cabinet Member agreed to**

- 1. Approve Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Expenditure of £3,250,000, to deliver 24 units of accommodation.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services in consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources & S151 Officer to agree the use of either Grant funding or 141 receipts to support this acquisition.**
- 3. Delegate to the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services to apply for any grant funding to support the acquisition.**
- 4. Delegate to the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services in consultation with the City Solicitor to enter into contracts and grant agreements as needed to support the acquisition.**

The meeting concluded at 5.04 pm.

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Councillor Darren Sanders  
Chair