

HOUSING AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

17 December 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Birch (Chair), Butcher (Vice-Chair), Bicknell, Mrs Cooper, Haywood, Long, Pendleton, Wiltshire, Yeates and Gunner [substituting for English]

Apologies: Councillors Batley and English

336. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors English and Haywood.

337. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

338. MINUTES

The minutes of the Housing and Wellbeing Committee held on 21 November 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.

339. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There were no urgent items.

340. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

341. HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CONTRACT

The Chair invited the Business Improvement Manager to present the report to members. The report sought budgetary approval from the Housing and Wellbeing Committee for the procurement and award of the Housing Management System contract to provide ongoing hosting and support. The current System contract is due to end on 31 March 2025. The future contract will not include implementation of the software as this was included as part of the current contract. A longer-term contract was being sought due to the software being established, offering greater continuity for the Council and no implementation fees. Without the use of the System the Council would not be able to carry out its landlord functions as a social housing provider or manage the Council's housing register. This would put the Council at risk of non-compliance with the Council's statutory requirements. A great deal of work had been undertaken to implement the System to ensure improvements to ensure they improved

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customer experience and the services provided. A contract was now required to ensure there was ongoing licensing, maintenance and support of the software.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Butcher and seconded by Councillor Yeates.

The Chair invited questions and comments from members.

- Responding to questions about cost increases before and after the initial four-year contract period, the Business Improvement Manager advised that after this period the contract would increase in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which had been calculated as an indicative cost, as an upper limit, within the contract value. It was not possible to provide a definitive answer regarding the first four years of the contract. A framework agreement would be used as part of the procurement process and the rules regarding CPI would be set in the terms of conditions.
- The Group Head Housing, Wellbeing and Communities confirmed that an update on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan would be reported to the Housing and Wellbeing Committee on 4 February 2025.
- Responding to a question concerning the previous maintenance costs, the Business Improvement Manager confirmed that the contract was for the utilisation of the Civica CX software currently in place. As regards to the annual maintenance cost for the pre-Civica software, a combination of multiple systems had been integrated into one system and it was confirmed that these costs were comparable. She undertook to provide a breakdown of the maintenance costs for each of the previous systems outside of the meeting.
- It was asked what the payback would be in terms of the cost of £150,000 per year and if it was it a financial saving or a quality of the service. The Business Improvement Manager advised that in terms of a move to one System and whether there would be a financial saving this may not be the case but it would be comparable. However, since the implication of the current system the time taken to process tasks now took seconds rather than minutes and were easier to access. There had also been a measurable impact on customer satisfaction and officers would consider how to quantify the customer experience.
- A member asked that due to the substantial investment this Committee receive monitoring reports, possibly on an annual basis, on the freeing up on staff resources to enable them to undertake other duties. Group Head Housing, Wellbeing and Communities replied that the Housing system was still in the implementation, training and support phase following its implementation in June 2024. It was expected that the savings made would be efficiency gains rather than financial savings. There would always be enough work in the Housing Service to enable staff to carry out other workflow tasks as a result of efficiency savings. He undertook to take the request for a monitoring report forward.

- The Business Improvement Manager confirmed that all contractors had been trained on the system and whilst there had been a few training issues, most were using it.

The Committee

RESOLVED

2.1 To approve the procurement of the Housing Management System Contract to an upper value of £1,500,000

2.2 To approve the award of the contract to a supplier on the chosen framework, if pricing is within the approved budget as set out in 2.1.

342. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme for 2024-25.

343. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Bicknell and seconded by Councillor Yeates.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That under Section 100a (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

344. WARM HOMES BID

The Chair invited the Group Head Housing, Wellbeing and Communities to present the report to members, which informed members of the detail of the Council's Warm Homes Social Housing Fund, Wave 3 bid and to seek approval of the Housing and Wellbeing Committee for the procurement and award of the contract.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Yeates and seconded by Councillor Bicknell.

The Chair invited questions and comments from members. During the debate officers provided clarification of the Housing Improvements and Efficiencies budget in

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terms of the existing budget for planned maintenance, the use of external funding, the expected benefits of providing the scheme.

The Committee then voted on the following recommendations separately.

The Committee

RESOLVED

- 2.1 To approve the procurement of the delivery programme, subject to the outcome of our bid of £5,188,773.20 match funding.
- 2.2 To approve the direct award of the contract to E.ON through the Fusion 21 decarbonisation supplier framework.

RECOMMENDED TO THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 2.3 As per section 3.2.1 of the Constitution, the approval of a virement of £2.2m from the Housing Improvements and Efficiencies budget over the period 2025/26 to 2027/28.

(The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm)