

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

26 March 2018

Attendance:

Councillors:

Horrill (Chairman)

Brook (in the Chair) (P)

Miller (P)

Standing Deputies:

Councillor Godfrey (deputy for Councillor Horrill)

Other invited Councillors:

Berry
Elks (P)

Scott
Tait (P)

TACT representatives:

Mrs M Gill (P)
Mr M Fawcitt (P)

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That in the absence of Councillor Horrill, Councillor Brook be elected as Chairman for the meeting.

2. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

Councillor Brook announced that the Council had received formal notice from Galliford Try for the sectional completion of Chesil Lodge over a two week period from mid to end May, with occupation by residents from early June 2018.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 31 January 2018, be approved and adopted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

5. **EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY UPDATE AND REVIEW**

(Report CAB3025(HSG) refers)

The Head of Housing Options and Allocations introduced the report, highlighting a number of key matters and responded to Members' questions as summarised below:

- The Case Studies outlined in the report emphasised the difficulties facing the Council in taking enforcement options to address empty homes;
- If the Council was successful in obtaining an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) this authorised seven years management of a property and some costs could be recovered from rental of a property. A Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) would enable the property to be sold and costs recovered from the proceeds of the sale. However, there was no provision for recovery of costs from owners if the application for either Order was not successful.
- The potential impact of a house in bad repair and/or derelict on the neighbouring properties was also recognised. There were powers available to the Council under the Building Act if a building became a danger to the public generally. There were also various provisions under Environmental Health powers which might be used.
- The Strategy was not designed to address matters where properties were unoccupied for large periods of a year, for example because the owners had another property elsewhere.
- Investigations had indicated that there were a relatively low number of empty homes in the Winchester district; however there were 40 properties that had been vacant for more than 5 years. A small number of these belonged to other authorities and/or were no longer used for residential purposes and clarification of the exact status of these was being sought.

During debate, some Members expressed concern about the recommendation in the report to endorse the principle of applying an additional Council Tax: Empty Homes Premium on homes that had been empty for two or more years. They believed that various other options suggested in the report should be considered further in order to offer support and encouragement to owners. The Head of Housing Options and Allocations emphasised that such options could have resource implications for the Private Sector Housing Team. The Committee agreed that this could be considered as part of a future report.

On behalf of TACT, Mrs Gill confirmed that the report had been considered at a recent TACT meeting and its recommendations supported.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons outlined above and set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress made within the Empty Homes Strategy be noted.
2. That a report be submitted to a future meeting investigating further other possible options for bringing empty homes back into use.
3. That the limitation of the current enhanced options be noted and the continuation of the current 'case to case' approach to bringing empty homes back into use be supported.

6. **CONTRACT AWARD FOR NEW HOMES MAYLES LANE, KNOWLE (LESS EXEMPT APPENDICES)**

(Report CAB3024(HSG) refers)

The Head of New Homes Delivery introduced the report and advised that FE Chase (the lowest tenderer) had previously completed four schemes for the Council to a good quality. Since the initial proposals for the scheme had been approved in 2016, some delays had occurred due to various ecological issues which required various actions to be taken. If the report was approved, it was anticipated that work could commence on site May 2018 with completion due in approximately March 2019.

The Committee moved in exempt session to consider the information contained in the two exempt appendices to the report, before returning to open session to consider the report recommendations.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons outlined above and set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Corporate Head of Housing be authorised to enter into a design and build contract to construct 13 properties at Mayles Lane, Knowle, Wickham with FE Chase & Son Ltd for the sum of £1,858,275.36.
2. That in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 6.4, capital expenditure of up to £2,075,775.36 including the contingency referred to in Exempt Appendix 1, paragraph 2.2 and estimated fees be approved.
3. That the tenure mix of, 11 flats and houses for affordable rent and 2 shared ownership houses is approved.

7. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
##	Contract award for new homes, Mayles Lane, Knowle (exempt appendices)) Information relating to the) financial or business affairs of) any particular person (including) the authority holding that) information). (Para 3 Schedule) 12A refers)

8. **CONTRACT AWARD FOR NEW HOMES MAYLES LANE, KNOWLE (EXEMPT APPENDICES)**

(Report CAB3024(HSG) refers)

The Committee considered the content of the two exempt appendices which contained the tender report and viability summary (detail in exempt minute).

Following general discussion about the different procurement options available to the Council for Housing related matters, it was agreed that a Member Briefing be arranged on this subject.

The meeting commenced at 4.30pm and concluded at 5.40pm.