

COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Explanatory Note

The Leader of the Council has established Delegation Schemes by which certain decisions may be made by the relevant cabinet member or specific officers.

Cabinet member decisions are subject to review under the Call-in Procedure.

From the date the notice of the decision made is published there are five working days during which any five Councillors may sign a request for the decision to be reviewed (called in) and deliver it to the Proper Officer.

If, at the end of the period, no request has been made, the decision may be implemented. If a valid call- in request has been made, the matter will be referred to the Scrutiny Panel

Part A – To be completed by the appropriate Cabinet Member/Officer

Title of Report

Acquisition of a family homes from a developer on Cowdray Avenue

Delegated Power

Acquisition is with PFH decision limits.

Decision Taken

To agree to Colchester City Council being able to acquire an additional family home from the developer within the Cowdray Avenue development.

To agree to the appointment of Colchester Borough Homes as a “Clerk of Works” and “Employers Agent” to supervise the quality of the construction of the homes to be acquired.

Key Decision

State whether the decision is a Key Decision

No - Key Decision

Forward Plan

No – not a key decision

Reasons for the Decision

There are approximately 2,561 households on the Council's Housing Register seeking affordable housing and approximately 311 households in temporary accommodation. It is a priority for the Council, as shown by its Housebuilding Programme, to try and find new ways to provide more homes in response to this need.

The Council is delivering affordable homes, but it is still continually seeking new and innovative ways to increase the supply of affordable housing and provide good quality, affordable and secure homes for Colchester's residents who are in housing need.

Although there is a supply of new affordable housing through Section 106 provision, via Registered Providers, alongside Council led projects, supply is not meeting the need.

This agreement will increase the Council's housing stock and diversify the methods to bring forward additional affordable housing. This will also strengthen the Council's investment partner status with Homes England and will provide more opportunities to bid for Affordable Housing Grant within the 2021/26 affordable homes programme.

In Colchester, within the priority Bands A-C, there are approximately 530 applicants on the Housing register with a need for a 3+ bed property. This equates to 36% of housing need on the register.. There is an average waiting time of 39 months for a 3+ bed property for applicants in bands B.

There are approximately 90 families in temporary accommodation within Colchester with a 3+ bed need. Residing in temporary accommodation, over a prolonged period of time, may have a negative impact on the families and their support network, as well as placing the Council's allocated budget under significant pressure.

Proceeding with this and other similar opportunities, to work with developers to acquire units as part of their development, will help to alleviate pressure on the housing register, temporary accommodation and relevant budgets as well as allowing developers to continue to develop within the Colchester area.

It is estimated that this unit will complete by December 2023 and therefore the property may be let to a family in need before Christmas.

Alternative Options

The Council could do nothing, but this will mean the Council will miss out on opportunities to maximise the delivery of newbuild affordable housing in Colchester and it will mean that households on the housing register and in temporary accommodation will wait longer for a secure affordable home.

Conflict of Interest

n/a

Dispensation by Head of Paid Service

n/a

Dispensation by Monitoring Officer

n/a

Approved by Portfolio Holder for Housing

Signature Councillor Paul Smith

Date 02 November 2023

(**NB** For Key Decisions the report must be made available to the public for five clear days prior to the period for call-in commencing)

Part B – To be completed by the Proper Officer (Democratic Services)

Portfolio Holder Decision Reference Number

HOU-009-23

Implementation Date

This decision can be implemented if no request for the decision to be reviewed (call-in) has been made **after 5pm on *Thursday 9 November 2023***

Call-in Procedure

The Decision Notice for this decision was published on the internet on ***Thursday 2 November 2023***.

A request for reference to the Scrutiny Panel must be made by **5pm on *Thursday 9 November 2023***

Signature of Proper Officer

K Barnard