



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price
Report by: Tom Bremner, Interim Head of Housing
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing 22/9/2016
Scrutiny Committee
Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge
East Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham
Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington
West Chesterton

SOCIAL LETTINGS AGENCY BUSINESS PLAN

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

This is a brief report following on from the social lettings agency update report brought to this committee in January of this year, which set out the outcomes, direction of travel and business plan for *Town Hall Lettings (THL)*, the Council's social lettings agency. The January report highlighted the need to identify funding from April 2017 to retain THL, and this report aims to update members on the outcomes and business plan so that officers can obtain 'in principle' approval to submit a budget bid to support the service from the General Fund from 2017-18.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To approve, in principle, the proposed business plan for Town Hall Lettings (THL), and support the inclusion of a budget bid as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process to meet the subsidy requirement, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report – this will allow continuation of the service from April 2017. Continuation of the service will therefore be subject to approval of this budget bid at Council in February 2017.

3. Background

- 3.1 The report submitted to this committee in January of this year is attached at appendix 2 and provides background on the development of THL and the scope of its operation. A refreshed business plan is

attached at appendix 1. Paragraph 3.4 of the January report details the project outcomes as follows:

- The service has engaged with 543 single homeless people (of which 363 were from Cambridge)
- The service has directly placed 201 people into permanent accommodation (of which 147 were from Cambridge)
- It has assisted 59 people to find their own accommodation (of which 35 were from Cambridge)
- It has established long term management agreements with landlords for 9 properties (providing 29 bed spaces at its peak)

These outcomes have now progressed to:

- The service has engaged with 806 single homeless people (of which 523 were from Cambridge)
- The service has directly placed 307 people into permanent accommodation (of which 215 were from Cambridge)
- It has assisted 90 people to find their own accommodation (of which 55 were from Cambridge)
- It has established long term management agreements with landlords for 14 properties (currently providing 34 bed spaces) – two of these properties are provided in support of the council's programme to resettle Syrian refugees.

3.2 In the current financial year the service is on course to place approximately 150 people into accommodation in 16/17. If this projected figure proves to be correct it will represent an increase of one third on the previous year

3.3 Rent collection rates have also improved significantly, from 46% at March 2015 to 81% in 2015-16.

3.4 South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils continue to be active partners in the scheme along with Cambridge City. There are some funds still remaining from a second tranche of funding for the single homelessness service from the Department of Communities and Local Government. These funds total £62,954 and will be used to subsidise the three local authority contributions across future years. The distribution of these fees is reflected in the THL business plan at appendix 1.

3.5 Since the January report, Town Hall Lettings has taken two of the twenty three Cambridge City Housing Company properties at Water Lane and Aylesborough Close into management. The remaining twenty three are expecting to come into THL management during this financial year.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The social lettings agency will require subsidy from the General Fund from 1st April 2017. These subsidy requirements are outlined in appendix 1.

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

None

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

This report covers the proposed extension of an existing service supporting those in housing need, so an equalities impact assessment has not been deemed to be necessary at this point.

(d) Environmental Implications

Nil

(e) Procurement

There are no procurement implications

(f) Consultation and communication

Legal services, environmental health, business transformation and finance have been consulted internally. Additional legal advice has been sought and received from an external source.

(g) Community Safety

There are no community safety implications.

5. Background papers

Appendix 1 of the January 2016 report to Housing Scrutiny Committee.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Town Hall Lettings Business Plan 2017-2022
Appendix 2 – Social Lettings Agency Update report to Housing Scrutiny
Committee (January 2016)

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report
please contact:

Author's Name: David Greening
Author's Phone Number: 01223 - 457997
Author's Email: david.greening@cambridge.gov.uk