

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023/24
Decision No.
2511

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 5 February 2024

Portfolio	Housing
Subject:	Fareham Housing Responsive Repairs Framework Contract Extension
Report of:	Director of Housing
Corporate Priority:	Provides Housing Choices

Purpose:

To seek Executive approval for an extension of up to 12-months to the existing Responsive Repairs Framework Contract with the respective suppliers.

The Responsive Repairs Framework provides a framework of contractors who were awarded contracts to undertake repairs or specialist works, in Council homes, which cannot be undertaken by the Council's in-house Building Services Direct Service Organisation (DSO). It forms part of the delivery of the repair service for Fareham Housing. The original contracts were entered into on 20 January 2020 and they will expire on 19 January 2024.

During 2023 there have been many changes to the social housing landscape. This includes the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (sometimes referred to as Awaab's Law) and increasing focus by the Regulator of Social Housing relating to matters of repair. This has coincided with a significant increase in the cost of repairs (materials/labour) in recent years.

Key contracts for the Housing Property service will expire in 2024. One is the Fareham Housing Voids Property Repairs and Refurbishment Works (new contract due to be awarded in October 2024), along with the series of contracts awarded under the Responsive Repairs Framework (subject of this report). It is considered appropriate to take the opportunity to recognise the synergies between the works undertaken across both contracts, and opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.

An extension of the existing Responsive Repairs Contracts will allow for a continuation of service delivery, ahead of many of the repair works being incorporated into the, soon to advertised, Void and Property Improvement Works contract (anticipated to be in place for Oct/Nov 2024). This amalgamation of some of the contract elements will assist in contract management, monitoring quality, service delivery and timeliness of repairs, and improved clarity on costs.

In November 2023 an internal review commenced to look at the existing framework contract performance. The review is aimed at ensuring an appropriate standard of repair works takes place alongside good quality customer service, whilst also improving efficiency and identifying opportunities to reduce the financial impacts of the repair process.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Director of Housing, following consultation with the Executive Member for Housing to enter into an extension of the existing Responsive Repairs Contracts with the respective suppliers, for a period of up to 12 months.

Reason:

To ensure repair works to occupied Council homes continue whilst a new tender pack and procurement exercise is concurrently prepared which will incorporate many of the responsive repairs works with the voids and property improvement contract.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 5 February 2024

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023/24
Decision No.
2512

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 5 February 2024

Portfolio	Planning and Development
Subject:	Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Corporate Priority:	Leisure Opportunities for Wellbeing and Fun; Provides Housing Choices; Respond to Climate Change and Protect the Environment; Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

Purpose:

To adopt the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

Planning obligations are legal obligations used to secure mitigation for the direct impacts of development. They can be used to secure the direct provision or a financial contribution towards the provision of new or improved infrastructure, services and facilities. Planning obligations can also secure the funding for their ongoing maintenance to ensure that new development is acceptable.

The Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides detailed advice to applicants regarding infrastructure they may be required to deliver and/or contributions they may be required to pay to mitigate the impact of development.

The draft Planning Obligations SPD was subject to six weeks of public consultation. The version proposed for adoption has been amended in response to the points raised in the representations received during the consultation.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- (a) adopts the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document as set out in Appendix B to the report with effect from 20 February 2024;
- (b) approves the publication of the Companion Cost Schedule as set out at Appendix C to this report alongside the SPD;
- (c) delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration to review and update the Companion Cost Schedule on an annual basis as necessary;
- (d) delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Development to make any minor amendments to the document following consideration by the Executive prior to the adoption; and
- (e) agrees that the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (excluding Welborne) adopted in April 2016, be superseded on 20 February 2024.

Reason:

To enable the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document to be adopted and afforded due weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 5 February 2024

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023/24
Decision No.
2513

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 5 February 2024

Portfolio	Planning and Development
Subject:	Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document for Consultation
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Corporate Priority:	Provides Housing Choices; Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

Purpose:

To seek approval to consult on the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – setting out the Council's approach to the delivery of affordable housing in the Borough.

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 sets out the priority to provide housing choices for the Borough residents. The strategy recognises that the ratio between average house prices and earnings is higher in Fareham than the national average.

To address this, the Corporate Strategy sets out that the Council will continue to provide high quality affordable housing that offers choice to residents. The Fareham Local Plan 2037 supports this priority through its Provision of Affordable Housing Policy, requiring development to include affordable housing in their delivery of homes.

The purpose of the Affordable Housing SPD is to enable the successful delivery of affordable homes through planning applications by way of providing further detailed advice and guidance on policy requirements in the adopted Fareham Local Plan 2037.

This report provides a draft of the Affordable Housing SPD and seeks approval to progress the draft document to statutory public consultation. It is the intention to consult over a six-week period from 16 February 2024 following which the Executive's approval to adopt the SPD will be sought.

Options Considered:

The comments of the Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that Executive:

- (a) approves the Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document as set out in Appendix A to the report, for public consultation for a six-week period; and
- (b) agrees to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Development, to make any minor amendments to the document prior to the consultation.

Reason:

To consult on an Affordable Housing SPD which sets out the Council's approach to affordable housing delivery in the Borough.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 5 February 2024

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023/24
Decision No.
2514

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 5 February 2024

Portfolio	Policy & Resources
Subject:	Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget & Council Tax 2024/25
Report of:	Assistant Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priority:	Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

Purpose:

The report seeks final confirmation of the recommendations to be made to Council, on 23 February 2024, in respect of the revenue budget, capital programme and council tax for 2024/25.

On 08 January 2024, the Executive reviewed the Council's overall finance strategy and considered proposals relating to the revenue budgets and the council tax for 2024/25. The report updates the Council's budgets to reflect the decisions taken and other known changes since 08 January 2024, including the provisional local government finance settlement.

The capital programme for the years 2023/24 to 2027/28 will be £58,678,500.

The net revenue budget for 2024/25 will be £13,292,600. With core funding estimated to be £5,079,839 and no payment from the collection fund, the total amount due from the Council taxpayers will be £8,212,761.

Taking these changes into consideration, the council tax for 2024/25 will be £185.86 per Band D property. This represents an increase of £5.40 per year from the Council tax set for 2023/24 and is within the 2.99% referendum threshold set by the Government.

Options Considered:

The comments of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive approves and recommends to the meeting of the Council to be held on 23 February 2024:

- (a) the capital programme and financing of £58,678,500;
- (b) an overall revised net revenue budget for 2023/24 of £12,376,100;
- (c) a net revenue budget for 2024/25 of £13,292,600;
- (d) a council tax for Fareham Borough Council for 2024/25 of £185.86 per band D property, which represents a £5.40 per year increase when compared to the current year and is within referendum limits;
- (e) an unchanged Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25; and
- (f) that the Council continues to disregard the whole of any incomes prescribed in the Housing Benefit (War Pensions Disregards) Regulations 2007 and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012.

Reason:

To allow the Council to approve the Council Tax for 2024/25.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 5 February 2024

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023/24
Decision No.
2515

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 5 February 2024

Portfolio	Policy & Resources
Subject:	Housing Revenue Account 2024/25
Report of:	Assistant Director (Democracy) & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Corporate Priority:	Provides Housing Choices

Purpose:

The report seeks Executive approval for the revised budget for the Housing Revenue Account 2023/24, the base budgets and the rent increases for 2024/25.

The Executive recommended, and the Council approved, in February 2023, the base budget and rent increase for 2023/24, for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) services.

The report sets out some revisions to the Housing Revenue Account revised budget for 2023/24 and base budget for 2024/25 along with the capital programme and financing for the years 2023/24 to 2027/28. The report examines the issues affecting the Housing Revenue account including rent changes with effect from 01 April 2024. In particular it highlights the increased expenditure needed to maintain the Council's housing stock in the next 2 years and meet the LAHF commitments to deliver three homes for Afghan families and one home for temporary accommodation to be held in the Housing Revenue Account. This will mean that we will not be able to fully continue with our debt repayment put aside in these years. However, any surpluses that do arise will be considered for this purpose.

Council budgets are susceptible to change in the level of expenditure and income caused by factors inside and outside the Council's control. A risk assessment has been carried out to indicate the effect on housing balances of changes in the level of expenditure and income. This can be used to estimate the account balances needed to provide a prudent level of reserves and a working balance. Actions continue to be taken by officers to reduce expenditure where possible. There will also be increased budget monitoring introduced for this period.

Options Considered:

The comments of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel were taken into account in considering this item.

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive approves and recommends to the meeting of the Council to be held on 23 February 2024 that:

- (a) rents be approved for Council Dwellings as set out in paragraph 27 of the report with effect from 01 April 2024;
- (b) rents for Council garages be increase by 7.7% with effect from 01 April 2024;
- (c) the revised budget for 2023/24 be approved;
- (d) the base budget for 2024/25 be approved; and
- (e) the Fees and Service Charges at Appendix E to the report be approved

Reason:

To allow the Council to approve the Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2024/25.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 5 February 2024

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023/24
Decision No.
2516

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 5 February 2024

Portfolio	Policy & Resources
Subject:	Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25
Report of:	Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priority:	Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

Purpose:

The report considers the draft Treasury Management Strategy and investment Strategy for 2024/25, prior to its submission to the Council for approval.

Regulations require the Council to prepare and formally approve both an annual Treasury Management Strategy and an Investment Strategy. The document for 2024/25 is attached as Appendix A to the report for consideration by the Executive before being submitted to Council for approval.

In the past 12 months, the Council's investment balance has ranged between £18 million and £38 million, lower levels are expected in the forthcoming year due to capital programme expenditure. The Council expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments will therefore be made primarily to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of strategic pooled funds will be maintained to diversify risk into different sectors and boost investment income.

Borrowing levels are expected to be £74.3 million at the end of 2024/25. The Council has previously raised all of its long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) but will consider long-term loans from other sources. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- (a) endorses the draft Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy for 2024/25, as attached at Appendix A to the report; and
- (b) agrees to submit the Strategy to Council for approval.

Reason:

In accordance with the Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services and guidance from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy have to be approved by full Council.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 5 February 2024

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2023/24
Decision No.
2517

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 5 February 2024

Portfolio	Policy & Resources
Subject:	Irrecoverable Debts
Report of:	Head of Finance and Audit
Corporate Priority:	Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council

Purpose:

This report proposes the approval of the write-off of certain debts over £5,000 which are irrecoverable.

The confidential Appendix A to the report lists the debts that are considered irrecoverable. Every effort has been made to recover the debts and, in most cases, there is no further legal action that can be taken.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees that the debts listed in the confidential Appendix A to the report, be written off as irrecoverable.

Reason:

There is no further legal action that can be taken to collect the debt or officers have deemed that the circumstances of the debtor warrant write-off at this point.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 5 February 2024