



Lewes District Council

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 11 June 2020

Subject: Cabinet Report Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme – Housing Delivery Update

Cabinet Report of: Nathan Thompson, Commercial Development and Investment Manager and Leighton Rowe, Specialist Project Manager

On 2 June, all the members of the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee met informally to consider and discuss the recommendations of reports going forward to Cabinet on 11 June 2020. The following members were present for this discussion:

Councillors Joe Miller (Chair), Liz Boorman (Deputy-Chair), Robert Banks, Nancy Bikson, Christine Brett, Roy Burman, Isabelle Linington, Milly Manley, Christine Robinson, Adrian Ross and Steve Saunders

The Cabinet is asked to consider the comments of the members of the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee on the recommendations set out in the Cabinet report.

The majority of the members of the Committee agreed:

- 1) **To support recommendations 1 and 2** (subject to any changes Cabinet agrees are appropriate on the recommendations below) and to support **recommendations 5 and 8**.
- 2) **To support the recommendation 3** in the report – subject to Cabinet being requested to consider prior to making the decision whether this is the best option for delivering, taking into account any information from officers as to the reasons for the recommendations and the financial appraisal versus an alternative approach suggested by some of the members :
 - a. That Saxonbury be developed for private housing or a split between private housing and shared ownership (as per the original design for the scheme) with the right-to-buy receipts and sale profits used to deliver more affordable homes across the District.
- 3) **To not support recommendation 4** in the report and instead request the Council go back out to tender, in accordance with contract procedure rules.
- 4) **To support recommendation 6** in the report subject to the following amendment
 - a. That the level of sub-delegation by the Director of Regeneration and Planning to other officers be limited to a maximum of £25,000.

- 5) **To request that recommendation 7 in the report be deleted** and request instead that any such decisions be taken by Cabinet or the Leader, using urgency powers if time-critical, in order to enable proper scrutiny.

Reasons for suggested amendments:

Some members expressed concern as to whether value for money was being achieved by moving forward with the recommendations, in particular in relation to Saxonbury. There was also a question as to whether a different funding approach might deliver additional affordable housing but over a longer time scale. It was felt that alternative approaches and a financial appraisal of these should be considered by the Cabinet, prior to making the decision. There was some concern around the waiving of the contract procedure rule.

A minority of members were concerned about the increase in financial risk and the potential for a delay in the delivery of affordable housing, should the original recommendations 2 and 3 not go forward.

Members also expressed concern over the lack of opportunity for scrutiny of delegated decisions, and wished decisions under recommendation 7, to be made by Cabinet or the Leader even if it was necessary to use urgency powers.

For a copy of the report please contact Democratic Services:

Tel. (01273) 471600.

E-mail: committees@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

A copy may be downloaded on the Council's website by following the link below:

<https://democracy.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=417&MId=2975&Ver=4>