

Title: Interim Consultancy Support
 Lead Officer: Lisa Barker, Head of Housing, Health and Communities
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Wightman
 Wards of the District directly affected: None

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder		Cllr P Wightman
Finance		Charlie Griggs
Legal Services		Kathryn Tebbey
Chief Executive		Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change		Dave Barber
Head of Service(s)		Author
Section 151 Officer		Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer		Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group		
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	Yes, Confidential appendix within paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 - Schedule 12A After the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006)	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

To seek approval to extend an interim support consultancy placement in excess of procurement threshold.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) That the current Consultant brought in to support Housing Development be retained until recruitment of Housing Development Partnerships Manager is achieved.
 - (2) That an exemption from the procurement code of practice be agreed to enable ongoing Housing Development Management, specifically awarding a contract for the value and length as set out in Confidential Appendix 1
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1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 A consultant was initially brought in March 2023 to provide interim management support to the Housing Development Team pending a redesign of the service. The redesign has taken longer than initially anticipated and the procurement value has now been exhausted.
- 1.2 The Housing Development programme has grown rapidly in size over the last few years with a desire to create 2030 high quality, energy efficient properties by 2030. The Council has also created Milverton Homes Limited, a company wholly owned by the Council and entered a Joint Venture with Vistry Partnerships.
- 1.3 It is crucial that relationships are forged with Developers and contractors to bring this programme together. With this scale of programme, it is critical that sufficient management oversight and leadership is provided to this programme.
- 1.4 The previous structure was for one senior manager to oversee both Housing Strategy & Enabling and the Housing Development functions. The manager asked to work on a part time basis and elected to cover the Housing Strategy and Enabling function. A consultant was appointed to cover the period whilst a review and redesign of the Management structure could be undertaken. The process took longer than initially foreseen and as a result the means of procurement used to bring in the consultant reached its optimum value. In December 2023, Cabinet approved a proposal to extend the arrangements.
- 1.5 Whilst the redesign was completed at Christmas, the appointment of a new manager for the Housing Development Team has experienced some delays and whilst advertised, with interest being shown, having someone in place could still be some months away given there is a recruitment process to go through and, taking into account notice periods of any potential new starter. The need for this resource is further compounded by other vacancies in the team, leaving the area exposed. Retaining this consultant will provide some stability to the team and to the Council, enabling the current programme to be maintained.

2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 End the current consultancy placement and leave posts vacant. This is not recommended due to adverse implications for the building programme outlined in part 1.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 Under the Code, a contract of this value would ordinarily require public advertisement and a minimum of three quotes/tenders unless let through a purchasing consortium or framework agreement. At the time the consultancy contract was let (without competition), the value was clearly not at or approaching the threshold for quotations/tenders. However, with the ongoing need in the service and the desire to retain the consultant for a longer period, that threshold has now been reached and the absence of competition needs to be approved through the exemption process. The total contract value now meets the threshold in the Code of Procurement Practice where an exemption (if required) can only be granted by the Cabinet.
- 3.2 The report includes a confidential appendix defining the length and value of the proposed contract which is commercially sensitive information. Therefore, it is confidential under paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 - Schedule 12A After the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

4 Financial Services

- 4.1 The costs for this are covered by the vacant post and other vacant posts in the team which are also being recruited to. This means there will be no requests for additional funding from other budgets.

5 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Corporate Strategy which sets three strategic aims for the organisation. Each proposed decision should set out how the report contributes to the delivery of these strategic aims. If it does not contribute to these aims or has a negative effect on them the report should explain why that is the case.
- 5.2 Delivering valued, sustainable services
This process will help the service to attract the right people with the right skills the Council needs.
- 5.3 Low cost, low carbon energy across the district
This post is central to ensuring new housing developments are net zero in operation and meet the climate emergency and other challenges.
- 5.4 Creating vibrant, safe and healthy communities of the future –
This position is fundamental to the delivery of the ambition to increase the volume of high quality, low carbon, affordable and social housing. This will help meet demand for housing and help tackle rough sleeping and homelessness.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no other specific Environmental/Climate Change Implications from this proposal.

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 7.1 At this stage, officers do not deem an Equality Impact Assessment necessary.

8 Data Protection

8.1 There are no data protection issues within the proposal.

9 Health and Wellbeing

9.1 The Health and Wellbeing of staff within the existing Housing Development Team are positively impacted by having experienced leadership during this busy time.

10 Risk Assessment

10.1 The risk of not approving the funding for the interim management consultant will undoubtedly impact on the Housing Development Programme with the Council being forced to significantly curtail the number of new affordable homes that it is able to develop or acquire.