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Date: *2 May 2012*

NOTIFICATION OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION(S)

On 2 May 2012, Cllr Jill Cleary (Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder), made the following decision. Any member of the Council, who is not a Portfolio Holder, who considers that this decision should be reviewed should give notice to the Monitoring Officer (Grainne O'Rourke) (in writing or by e-mail) to be received **BY THURSDAY, 10 MAY 2012**.

Details of the documents the Portfolio Holder considered are attached.

DECISION:

To increase the number of properties in the Council's Private Sector Lease Scheme.

REASON(S):

Please see report.

ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:

Please see report.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED:

None.

For Further Information Please Contact:

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Background Papers:

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE SECTOR LEASED PROPERTIES MANAGED BY THE COUNCIL

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek a Portfolio Holder decision to increase the number of properties managed by the council under the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Scheme from 80 to a maximum of 150 properties.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 New Forest District Council's PSL scheme was set up in February 2007 to increase the supply of temporary accommodation for families in housing need and to reduce the numbers of families in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation. The scheme has been very successful in meeting this objective but the pressure on B&B continues. The costs of B&B can be high and anything that reduces these costs can only be of benefit to the organisation. In addition, B&B accommodation is not the most appropriate accommodation for families and anything that can be done to provide better accommodation is welcomed.

3 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 In the current economic environment where the housing market is relatively stagnant, many property owners are choosing to rent their properties rather than sell. The Council's PSL scheme offers guaranteed income to the property owner for a period of two years while allowing the Council to access suitable temporary accommodation which enables homeless households to have a more settled environment whilst waiting for a permanent social rented property to become available.
- 3.2 The current maximum number of properties is 80 and with the need for temporary accommodation, Officers consider that a more realistic figure in the current climate would be a maximum of 150.
- 3.3 The management of this scheme is currently carried out by the Strategic Team within Housing Services and the success of the overall scheme is a credit to this team and those involved in ensuring high quality and consistent services are provided to both tenants and landlords.
- 3.4 The Housing Service is currently undergoing a review of its structure and it is considered that the management of any additional temporary tenancies can be incorporated within current resources, since economies of scale can be achieved.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The current PSL scheme provides an income to the Council and it is expected that by increasing the number of properties within the scheme that this income will rise. Currently we receive £175 per month for each property for management of the tenancies and since the scheme started this has accrued income above costs in excess of £300,000.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Increasing the number of properties within the scheme will alleviate homelessness and reduce the need for B&B accommodation. This will provide families with more stable accommodation which in turn will assist in the reduction and risk of crime and disorder.

7 PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENT

7.1 It is essential that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in respect of alleviating homelessness and ensures that as few as possible households are in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. This proposed increase will allow us to accommodate more families in as stable an environment as possible. In addition, the scheme assists many owners who may face financial difficulties in the current financial climate and provides them with a regular and stable income from their asset. Finally, we should not ignore that the scheme brings much needed additional resources to the Council.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the number of properties in the Council's Private Sector Lease scheme be increased from the current 80 to a maximum of 150.

I agree the recommendation CLLR J CLEARY
~~Councillor Jill Cleary~~
Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder

Date: 2/5/2012

Date Notice of Decision Given: 2 May 2012

Last Date for Call-in: 10 May 2012

For further information contact:

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