

**Extract from the Draft Minutes of Policy and Development Group – 12 MARCH 2014**

The Head of Housing presented the report to Members. He highlighted to Members the four grounds for calling-in the decision and that the report took each ground in turn and provided information to address them.

Councillor S Sheahan advised the Committee that the call-in request had arisen following a routine briefing and he had concerns over the magnitude of money that was required. He requested a breakdown of how much of the additional £1.6 million was required for each of the four elements stated in the report.

The Head of Housing informed Members that £810k was required for roofing work, £226k was required for asbestos removal, £405k was required to offer a level access shower in suitable properties in lieu of a standard bathroom and £210k was required to cover inflationary pressures.

Councillor S Sheahan asked if it was the aim of the Head of Housing to complete the work within the budget and if the overspend could have been avoided.

The Head of Housing advised Members that it was his objective to complete all work within budget, however Officers could not predict any additional works that may be required once the original work had begun. He stated that the additional money that was required was not an overspend, it was required as additional costs following surveys that had been completed in December, however in the future Officers would ensure that the surveys would be carried out in the earlier quarters so that any additional costs could be incorporated. He advised Members that on this occasion the additional costs could not have been avoided.

Councillor S Sheahan went on to ask if the additional costs that had been raised had come from just one contractor or both, and if the Council would use the Term Partnering Contract in the future.

The Head of Housing responded by advising Members that the contractors worked in different areas and it would depend on the age of the property and previous materials used as to the costs that each contractor would incur, however should contractors come to Officers with an increase in costs they must provide reasons and justify the increase. He went on to advise Members that he would recommend the use of the Term Partnering Contract again in the right circumstances, but would let experience decide if it was the right option for the work that was needed.

Councillor D Everitt asked that if the contractor found additional work, was the Council able to verify this itself and once the work had been completed was it signed off with the tenant, as to being completed to an acceptable standard.

The Head of Housing advised that Officers from the Council did go out to verify the additional work and that Council Officers, tenants and contractors would sign the work off together.

Councillor N Clarke raised concerns over the use of the Right to Buy money as this would affect the One to One Policy.

The Head of Housing advised Members that despite selling more properties, the decrease in value had not led to the income reaching a level to trigger the policy.

Councillors A C Saffell and J Geary expressed concerns at the lateness of the report and felt that they had not received enough time to take in the information provided.

Councillor J Geary stated that he was finding it difficult to understand the amount of money that was required, as he felt that Council should know the amount of asbestos within properties and the roofing materials should not be a big costing. He expressed doubts as to how the costs were procured.

The Head of Housing responded that it was difficult to know where the asbestos was in properties as it may have been built in behind objects in the past and with carrying out pre-inspections, Officers were locating more and completing the register that was required for contractors to view, and with regard to roofing materials, it was not until the purlins were removed that it was becoming apparent that the roof structures did not meet the standards. He advised that this could not be predicted by just looking into the roof space.

Councillor S Sheahan stated that he would be happy to receive a future report regarding the additional non-decent homes, but queried if the Council could secure additional external funding.

The Head of Housing advised that funding was only available for Authorities with more than 10% of homes requiring work by April 2015 and that he did not envisage the Council having more than 10% at that time.

Councillor N Smith stated that he had replaced many roofs over the years and informed the Committee that until you stripped the roof off you could not know what additional work may be required to ensure the safety of the structure.

Councillor N Clarke stated that he supported the Decent Homes Programme as a lot of the work had been carried out within his Ward and thanked Officers for all the hard work that had been put into the programme.

It was moved by Councillor M Specht, seconded by Councillor J Cotterill and

**RESOLVED THAT:**

No further action be taken.