

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Commissioning of professional advice to develop the housing model chosen by developing a full business case at a cost of up to £50K and utilising up to 20k for Housing Programme Manager Project Management Office costs
Date of decision:	12 March 2021
Decision maker:	Solicitor to the Council and Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>Cabinet decision on 26 November 2020 approved the commissioning professional advice to proceed with the outline feasibility work up to £71k to develop recommendations for potential sites</p> <p>Link to decision: Decision - Options for the Delivery of Council Owned Affordable Housing - Herefordshire Council</p>
Ward:	County Wide
Consultation:	The Cabinet Member Housing, regulatory services and community safety, Commercial Services and Legal Services have been consulted and confirmed that the decision may be taken.
Decision made:	<p>That the work required on the development of the business case is commissioned from ARK Consultancy (ARK) through the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) Consultancy Services framework, number 644. ARK have previous knowledge of the affordable housing strategy and provided advice that was included in the report to Cabinet on 26 November 2020 and informed the decision of the cabinet on the same date. The work will be undertaken up to a value of £50,000.</p> <p>To allocate £20,000 of the approved budget for Housing Programme Manager Project Management Office costs, who will be leading this key strategic work on behalf of the council.</p>
Reasons for decision:	<p>The council is keen to progress the investigation of delivering affordable housing as quickly as possible. Expert advice is required to inform decisions regarding the feasibility of housing schemes on sites across Herefordshire.</p> <p>ARK have the expertise in this area and are able to contribute detailed financial analysis and modelling to accelerate progression and support the council in meeting the timescales required to feed into the planning for bringing forward housing developments.</p> <p>ARK already have knowledge and experience of the council's requirements having previously provided advice that was included in the Cabinet decision on 26 November 2020.</p> <p>The council has opted to use the ESPO framework which identified ARK as the supplier best able to meet the council's needs based on their current knowledge and experience, their ability to start the work immediately and on market rate pricing comparison with other suppliers on the framework. ARK have subsequently offered the council a discounted ESPO framework rate to complete the work. The procurement process complies with the council's contract procedure rules.</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>Not awarding this work to ARK would compromise the council's ability to deliver on time, utilising the services of a procured partner is considered value for money.</p> <p>The council have a statutory duty to deliver housing solutions to meet the needs of the county, affordable housing is essential to address the housing inequalities in Herefordshire</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Commission elements individually or manage them in house. This option has been rejected as the council does not have sufficient capacity or expertise in house and this approach would jeopardise financial modelling and potentially put the council at risk due to the lack of expertise and knowledge.

Details of any declarations of interest made:	None
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Signed:

Claire Ward
Solicitor to the Council and Acting Deputy Chief Executive

Date: 12 March 2021