

**21 March 2018**

**Extra Ordinary Council**

**Housing Repairs and Maintenance functions**

**Report of:** *Steve Summers, Chief Operations Officer*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public (Appendix – Exempt)*

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a delegation of authority to Brentwood Borough Council to enter into agreements with Basildon Borough Council under Section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, in relation to the delegation of Housing Repairs and Maintenance functions.
- 1.2 This approval will formalise the partnership between Brentwood Borough Council and Basildon Borough Council – supporting the Councils partnership aspirations to deliver quality front and back office services in partnership.
- 1.3 In order for the proposed collaboration to achieve maximum success, it is recommended that Extra Ordinary Council grants the approval for the Council to enter a sharing agreement contract for Housing Services only for the scope of the Repairs and Maintenance functions.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 Approves that the Council enter a new sharing agreement for provision of the Housing Repairs and Maintenance responsibilities with Basildon Borough Council on the basis set out in Appendix A of this report.**
- 2.2 That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council as appropriate, to agree and formally enter the agreement once negotiations have been completed.**

### **3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 As the pressure on local government resources increases the need to develop new efficient and innovative approaches to service delivery has intensified. In the past local authorities have managed the demands on their resource and budgets by reducing costs to deliver savings through approaches that include departmental restructuring; reductions in contingency budgets and non-essential internal costs and the improved procurement of goods and services.
- 3.2 With local authorities having achieved most of these 'easy to deliver' savings and efficiencies, attention has now turned to delivering efficiencies and maximising economies of scale through more formal shared working arrangements. These include the development of partnerships with other local authorities, other public sector organisations or the private sector. It is within this context that the potential for developing a shared service partnership with Basildon Borough Council was first considered.

### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 There is a requirement for a major investment in the repairs and maintenance services to ensure the authority meets its minimum statutory requirements for compliancy related matters and improved delivery of a key council service.
- 4.2 In addition this issue has been identified by the ongoing Housing Transformation Project and the 2017 Audit Report, highlighting the matter as a high risk of concern.
- 4.3 Therefore the Council is looking for a housing managed Repairs and Maintenance service to meet the gaps in expertise and contract support in various areas of the service. This is in order to:
- Achieve 'quick wins' on identified contracts
  - Plan long-term contract strategies that involve obtaining value for money and effective partnership working with Service Providers
  - Contract management

- Decrease void property letting times
- Ensure compliance

4.4 In order to achieve the wider benefits for the Council and local communities, the benefits of the shared services arrangement enable the following:

- Supports the Council's MTFP budget target.
- Provides a sustainable model to preserve service levels.
- Demanding value for money from our Housing Service.
- Illustrates Brentwood's reputation and leadership amongst Essex Authorities by being innovative and progressive.
- Effectively compete within the Shared Service market.
- Maximise opportunities for further income generation and cost recovery.
- Develop the Council's commercial competence through gaining buy-ins and resources.
- Provide a model of longevity to deliver an ongoing income stream.
- Drive continuous improvement in the delivery of a cost-effective, efficient service that meet users' needs and expectations.
- Public sector value and experience 'By public sector for public sector'.
- All income generated from such shared service arrangements are paid back to the benefit of the wider public purse.
- Ability to reduce costs through innovation designed for the communities.
- A partnership approach rather than outsourcing.
- Provide a mechanism for Councils to retain their identity.
- Create a model for future partnerships.

- 4.5 Repairs and maintenance staff will be situated at Brentwood Borough Council locations and the opportunity for future co-location with external contractors will be explored.

## **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 To enable the Council to deliver effective and efficient Housing Services for the benefit of the Council and its customers.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken at this stage.

## **7. References to Corporate Plan**

- 7.1 Delivering an effective and efficient Housing Services will help meet the Modern Council key priority.

## **8. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title:** Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, (Section 151 Officer)

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- 8.1 Our Repairs and Maintenance Service does require additional support and investment in order to maintain service delivery. In light of this, sensible negotiations will be made in order for the HRA to be financially sustainable as well as to obtain the expertise it requires.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title:** Daniel Toohey, Monitoring Officer

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- 8.2 Legal Services are available to advise and assist with concluding the terms of the arrangement and to ensure compliance with employment, legislative and constitutional requirements, including the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.3 None

**9 Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)  
Ordinary Council 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017

**10 Appendices to this report**  
Appendix A – This appendix is exempt

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