

**5<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

**Housing & Health Committee**

**Appointment of Consultant to undertake Option  
Appraisal on Procurement of a Choice Based Lettings  
system**

**Report of:** *Helen Gregory, Acting Head of Housing Services*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council currently operates a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) System to advertise all properties that are available for letting.
- 1.2 The current service has been provided by Locata (Housing Services) Limited since 1st June 2007. The contract is due to expire in June 2015.
- 1.3 The Council needs to begin to plan the procurement process in order to re-tender the contract.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To appoint Cameron Consulting (UK) Limited to undertake and complete the soft market testing exercise in advance of Choice Based Lettings Contract with Locata expiring in June 2015 upon the terms and conditions set out in the Agreement negotiated by the Consortium on behalf of the Council and attached in Appendix A to this report.**

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 Brentwood Borough Council is a member of the Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium ('the Consortium') ; a consortium of local authorities

made up of the following:- Brentwood Borough Council; Broxbourne Borough Council; Chelmsford City Council; East Herts District Council; Epping Forest District Council & Uttlesford District Council.

- 3.2 The Consortium has operated the choice-based lettings (CBL) and enhanced housing options scheme with Locata since 2007 and, as stated above, the current contract with Locata is due to expire in June 2015.
- 3.3 Therefore the Consortium needs to prepare for re tendering the CBL contract in advance of the existing contract expiring with Locata.
- 3.4 The Consortium is planning to undertake a future procurement exercise to make recommendations for suitable operators to provide a Choice Based Lettings (CLB) Interactive Website Service on behalf of the Consortium

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

- 4.1 The existing Choice Based Lettings Contract with Locata is due to expire in June 2015.
- 4.2 The Council will need to make preparations to re-tender the Contract in advance of this date; it is essential that there no failure in delivering this valuable service to customers.
- 4.3 The advantages of the Council's present membership of the Consortium is that it enables the Council to maximise cost savings in procuring a new contract in addition to the sharing of good practice with other local authorities.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 To ensure Brentwood Borough Council takes advantage of the Consortium's arrangements for undertaking crucial preparatory work for the forthcoming procurement exercise and so the Housing Service is fit for purpose in delivering a Choice Based Lettings Service that better seeks to meet the requirements of customers and Registered Providers and that is expected to deliver future value for money.

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 None.

## **7. Reference to Corporate Plan**

7.1 We will have a new approach to allocating council homes and manage our housing differently to recognise council housing as a valuable and limited resource for those in greatest need.

## **8. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Acting Chief Executive**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312712 / jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk**

8.1 The costs of commissioning a specialist consultant are £7,600. These costs will be divided between the six Local Authorities in the Consortium. The amount required to be paid by Brentwood Council will be £1,266.67 plus VAT.

8.2 There is current budget provision of £12,000 per annum to cover the costs of operating Locata CBL system.

## **9. Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Chris Potter, Monitoring Officer and Head of Support Service**

**Tel & Email: 01277312860 / christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk**

The corporate governance of the Consortium is such that it is not a separate legal entity and so cannot contract in its own name. Members of the Consortium are each separate legal entities and each needs to carefully consider whether to enter into this contract and be bound by its terms and conditions.

## **10. Background Papers**

None.

## **11. Appendices to this report**

Appendix A – Copy of agreement

### **Report Author Contact Details:**

**Name:** Helen Gregory, Acting Head of Housing Services

**Telephone:** 01277 312540

**E mail:** [helen.gregory@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:helen.gregory@brentwood.gov.uk)