

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Monday, 7th October, 2024, 3.40pm – 3.50pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Peray Ahmet – Leader of the Council

ALSO ATTENDING: Robbie Erbmann, Ayshe Simsek

9. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Leader of the Council referred to the filming at meetings notice and attendees noted this information.

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

11. URGENT BUSINESS

None

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

13. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / QUESTIONS

None

14. ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES UP TO £700,000 FOR HOUSING USE

The Leader of the Council considered the report which sought approval of the acquisition of 40 larger sized family homes over two years capped at a maximum total sum of £28,000,000.

The Council had a significant Temporary Accommodation (TA) challenge like many local authorities across the country with over 2446 families in temporary accommodation.

It was noted that the Council has a successful programme of purchasing properties and leasing them through Haringey Community Benefit Society (HCBS) to help address this TA need. Based on the data and requirements of the TA list, the Council required at least 10% of 4-bedroom properties and above to meet demand.

It was further noted that the average price of a 4-bedroom property in Haringey was £750,000, therefore, the report recommended that approval was granted to acquire larger family homes, which were valued up to £700,000, through the acquisition programme.

In response to questions, the Leader noted:

- That changes to funding arrangements meant that there was more opportunity to find and purchase more 4 bedroom properties.
- These were much needed properties for temporary accommodation purposes and there were four properties already identified and in the pipeline.
- The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning(Deputy Leader) would be kept informed of the purchases which would also be considered through the Council's internal governance process via the Temporary Accommodation Board.
- These delegated decisions would also be reported to Cabinet.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the acquisition of 40 larger sized family homes over two years capped at a maximum total sum of £28,000,000. This equates to acquisition of 40 homes at an average of £700,000 per property through the acquisitions programme, which meet the current assessment criteria for purchasing properties outlined in 6:10; and
2. To delegate authority to the Director for Placemaking and Housing , after consultation with the Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Legal and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer), to negotiate and purchase of each of the 40 individual properties up to a value of £700,000 which meet the current assessment criteria for purchasing properties.

Reasons for decision

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) sets out the duties to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. If a main housing duty is accepted, housing authorities must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and their household until the duty is brought to an end, usually through the offer of a settled home. A suitable offer of a settled home which would bring the main housing duty to an end includes an offer of a suitable secure or introductory tenancy with a local authority, an offer of accommodation through a private registered provider (also known as a housing association) or the offer of a suitable tenancy for at least 12 months from a private landlord made by arrangement with the local authority.

Whilst the wait for social housing is long for all family sized accommodation, historically there has been a shortage of larger homes available to let to families in TA,

resulting in even longer stays in temporary accommodation. Additional supply of larger sized family homes would have a positive impact on the length of time waiting for accommodation for residents who require this property size.

Accepting this is an opportunity to lever larger homes into our programme - which will mean overall we are able to deliver more homes for rent and save on costly temporary accommodation providing larger properties which will contribute to the overall Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Alternative options considered

Continuing to use temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation relies heavily on private sector supply. The private sector market has changed significantly in recent years and those properties that are secured have been at increased cost. The reduced supply has also led to the increased use of commercial hotels and B&Bs, more properties secured further afield and increased TA costs. Typically, commercial hotels and B&Bs do not have cooking facilities or separate living areas, only a bedroom and bathroom, and therefore long-term use has an impact both on families mental and financial wellbeing.

Purchasing and relocating families outside of the borough in lower value properties. Whilst this is an option we can and will pursue to increase the number of properties acquired through the programme, various additional factors need to be considered before this could be treated as a viable option. These include affordability of areas outside of the borough to residents and or viability, enabling households to retain their family, employment, schooling, and community links as well as the consideration of practical ongoing management and maintenance costs

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date