

Subject: Procurement Programme for the Future Delivery of
Housing Repairs, Planned Maintenance and Capital Works

Date of Meeting: 29 March 2018

Report of: Executive Director Neighbourhoods, Communities &
Housing

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Wards Affected: All Wards

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Action Required of the Committee:

To receive the item referred from the Housing & New Homes Committee for noting:

Recommendation: That the following be referred to the Committee for consideration:

- 2.1 That committee notes the commencement of an options programme in relation to the future delivery of repairs, planned maintenance and capital works for the council's housing stock, as detailed in the body of this report.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE
14 MARCH 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

Councillor Meadows (Chair) Councillor Hill (Deputy Chair), Councillor Mears (Opposition Spokesperson), Councillor Gibson (Group Spokesperson), Councillors Atkinson, Bell, Druitt, Lewry, Moonan and Wares.

DRAFT MINUTE

PART ONE

83 PROCUREMENT PROGRAMME FOR HOUSING REPAIRS, PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL WORKS

- 83.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing which updated members on the commencement of an options programme in relation to the future delivery of repairs, planned maintenance and capital works for the council's housing stock. The Council currently operated a ten year partnering contract with Mears Limited under which the following services and works are provided for the council's housing stock:
- Responsive repairs and empty properties maintenance
 - Planned maintenance and improvement programmes
 - Major capital works projects
- 83.2 The Mears Limited contract expired on 31st March 2020 and therefore the options for the future delivery of the services and works that are currently covered under this contract now needed to be assessed. Officers were engaging with residents through the Area Panels, workshops and sessions with residents. The report was presented by The Business and Performance Manager and the Business and Performance Project Manager.
- 83.3 Councillor Moonan stated that the report was an outline of a process and had been well received by the Area Panels. The committee would be discussing this matter further on future agendas. Councillor Moonan considered that this was an opportunity to bring the service back in house and wanted this to be investigated as an option.
- 83.4 Councillor Atkinson referred to page 84, paragraph 3.4, relating to the programme board. He asked who would sit on the board. Officers explained that it was an officer board and included officers from Housing Services and other parts of the authority, including procurement, finance, legal and HR. Members governance was through the Members Procurement Advisory Board.

- 83.5 Councillor Mears welcomed the report and made the following points:
- It was an opportunity to move forward and look at what had happened in the past.
 - It was important to emphasise that the Mears contract was never “light touch”. The council were responsible for managing the contract.
 - The work being carried out was welcomed but it needed to be recognised that unless the contract was managed in the proper way, there could be problems in the future.
 - There needed to be clarity with regard to how the contract was let in the first place, and that the same mistakes were not made again.
- 83.6 The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing agreed that the management of the contract was a key consideration and would be a large part of the work being carried out. Officers had identified what tenants and leaseholders expected and would listen to their views. Tenants and leaseholders would also be asked to monitor the work and the Project Board would look at management arrangements.
- 83.7 Councillor Hill observed that it was a large contract and she hoped that the council could be open to having different parts of the service let to different contracts. This would give more power to tenants and leaseholders.
- 83.8 Councillor Bell stressed that leaseholders made up 20% of housing stock and their views were very important. He personally received more complaints from leaseholders than tenants. Officers confirmed that there was a working group with leaseholders reflecting the current provision. The process for consultation was outlined in the report. Officers would look to arrange workshops for feedback from both tenants and leaseholders. There was a multi stage consultation. There would be an initial consultation with leaseholders before the contract went out to tender.
- 83.9 Councillor Gibson stressed that it was important to ensure the consultation was meaningful. He believed that public provision was a better model because the council was not out to make a profit, and the council provided better conditions to its staff. The problems raised with the Mears contract would be more easily and openly resolved if the council ran the contract and bringing it back in house was desirable. Councillor Hill’s suggestion about breaking up the contract should be considered.
- 83.10 Councillor Wares made the point that there were many tenants who were not involved with Area Panels, workshops or associations. It was very important to reach all these people when carrying out the consultation. The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing concurred and stressed that this was probably the largest consultation in ten years. Officers would inform tenants through “Homing In”, and would work with ward councillors and tenants. The council were now able to use social media and there was a better digital platform. Officers would contact as many tenants as possible.
- 83.11 Councillor Wares stressed the importance of adequate management and checking of work carried out. There was a need to learn from past experience.
- 83.12 Councillor Druitt agreed with the idea of splitting the contract. He expressed concern that the report seemed an officer consultation led. The wording was not clear that it would be a resident led programme. He referred to paragraph 3.10 which stated that

there would be a number of workshop sessions. He would rather that the Project Board updated members on key decisions. Meanwhile, he was concerned about how much information was readily available during the decision making process, and asked how it compared to other contracts. How much background information would be considered?

83.13 The Executive Director stated that residents would be involved in the process but the decision makers were ultimately councillors. The performance report showed that Mears Ltd performance in responsive repairs was very good. There needed to be a balanced view about Mears performance. Tenants were largely satisfied with Mears responsive repairs programme. Officers knew that the management of the contract was now robust but that there had been times in the past when it had not been. The Executive Director was happy to have tenants and leaseholders involved in the process.

83.14 The Business and Performance Manager stated that there was also a formal process for engagement. In terms of access to information, the council held all the information which was needed. Although Mears were the main contractor, and had the lead IT system, every piece of information came into the council's own system so it had all historic information. All the performance information including the key performance indicators were controlled through the council. The process was at a very early stage. The Business and Performance Project Manager was working on a resident engagement plan which officers would be happy to share with Area Panels and members. Some of processes around engagement were governed by legal processes.

83.15 **RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That committee notes the commencement of an options programme in relation to the future delivery of repairs, planned maintenance and capital works for the council's housing stock, as detailed in the body of this report.