

PAB minutes from 27/1/20

Please find below the minutes for the Provision of Home Improvement Agency Services report:

- 66.1 Sarah Potter, Housing Development Manager introduced the report on the provision of the Home Improvement Agency services. She confirmed that the HIA provided casework support for making an application for work and that the grant was means-tested and provided a Housing Options advice service for evaluating the housing options provided to people including moving home. In 2017 a more flexible grant was introduced with the current provider, Mears. The mandatory grant was targeted at reducing accidents in the home and the current contract expires in March 2020. The Housing Development Manager confirmed that Mears had performed well and that there were three options in the future – the first to do nothing, the second - to keep this in house and the third to outsource the service. It was confirmed that the Disabled Facilities Grant was integrated into health & social services and that the allocation had been increased by 80% in recognition of the preventative work that the grant covered such as funding the bathroom, access and food preparation areas. Nationally, hospital admissions were reduced and a reduction in reliance on care packages were two advantages. She confirmed that there had been a significant increase in demand with more complex needs at home. With an increased budget and mandatory housing grant, there was now a duty to make the grant available. She confirmed that the Board's opinion was being sought on the different options available, with the next steps being, taking the report to the Housing Committee and Policy & Resources Committee. She stated that there was core funding of around £70K transferred from Social Care, which currently generates income by charging a fee for the grant.
- 66.2 The Chair stated that she was in favour of the in house and asked about the risks related to support funding, which could also happen if this was outsourced. The Housing Development Manager replied that this should be provided in the next year's budget from 2021 and it was a risk either way. The Chair added that TUPE would be applied and Brighton & Hove would be responsible for those staff
- 66.3 Councillor Pissaridou stated that she had received positive feedback on the service, which had completed some work for a 92 year old resident within a very short deadline. The Housing Development Manager stated that the partnership had worked well, although there were also some delays sometimes and an investment in officers' time was required for this. She confirmed that there were monthly case review meetings where exceptions were reported and that she also conducted contract review meetings to discuss any issues arising.
- 66.4 The Head of Procurement Cliff Youngman quoted comments emailed from Councillor Miller who stated that, since a lot of work was already brought in-house there was now a danger in overloading in-house staff.

66.5 The Head of Procurement stated that they needed to vote on this and would put forward Councillor Miller's vote. Councillor Druitt was not able to vote.

RESOLVED: That the service should be brought in house.

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