
Subject: PURCHASE OF 23 HIRST CLOSE, DOVER

Date: 9 January 2018

Decision to be taken by: Mike Davis, Director of Finance, Housing and Community

Report of: Rebecca Champion, Valuation Officer

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Michael Conolly, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance

Decision Type: Executive Non-Key Decision

Call-in to be suspended: No (*Call-in does not apply to Non-Key Officer Decisions*)

Classification: Unrestricted

Delegated Authority: Authority delegated by Cabinet at its meeting held on 1 March 2017 (CAB 155(iii) (C) to: 'Delegate to the Director of Finance, Housing and Community, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance, approval of offers, tenders or bids for the purchase of properties on the open market or at auction, in order to respond to market opportunities'.

Purpose of the report: A former Council flat at 23 Hirst Close, Dover recently came onto the market. A decision is necessary in order to take advantage of the opportunity to purchase the property which will add to the Council's social housing stock.

Recommendation: To purchase 23 Hirst Close, Dover

1. Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 1 March 2017, Cabinet agreed that the Director of Finance, Housing and Community should be authorised to purchase properties on the open market or at auction, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance, providing they represent good value for money.
- 1.2 The former Council property, 23 Hirst Close, has become available on the market and it is considered that the Council should attempt to purchase it.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Council (and Cabinet) approved a recommendation within the Budget 2015/16 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2015/16–2017/18 to purchase properties through normal sale/negotiation, submission of bids or bids at auction as and when they arise, subject to them representing good value for money or otherwise improving the housing stock. On the basis that market opportunities to purchase these properties are likely to arise at short notice, Cabinet also agreed in March 2017 to delegate to the Director of Finance, Housing and Community, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance, the approval of offers, tenders or bids for the purchase of properties on the open market or at auction.

- 2.2 23 Hirst Close is a 2-bedroom flat that was purchased from the Council under the 'Right to Buy' (RTB) scheme. The property recently came onto the market and an officer from the Council's Property Services Team carried out a survey of the property and confirmed it would meet the Council's requirements. Following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance, an offer of £100,000 was made and subsequently accepted by the vendor. The Estate Valuation Manager considers the price offered represents good value for money. Once purchased the intention is to let the property.
- 2.3 The cost of purchasing the property will be met from a combination of Housing Initiative Reserve (HIR) funds (within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)) and excess RTB receipts which are ring-fenced for 'one for one' affordable housing replacement. This will help to ensure that the Council maximises the expenditure of RTB receipts before their 'use by' date. The rental income from the property will be credited to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 2.4 It is expected that the properties will generate a gross rent income of £4,078.36 per annum and on this basis the investment should be repaid within 25 years.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1: To purchase 23 Hirst Close, Dover
- 3.2 Option 2: Not purchase 23 Hirst Close, Dover

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Option 1 is the recommended option. The purchase price represents good value for money compared to the cost of a new build property and will increase the Council's Housing stock to meet housing need.
- 4.2 Option 2 is not recommended as it fails to take advantage of a good opportunity to increase the housing stock to help meet housing need.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The cost of purchasing the property will be met from a combination of HIR funds and the excess Right to Buy receipts which are ring-fenced for 'one for one' affordable housing replacement. This will help to ensure that the Council maximises the expenditure of RTB receipts before their 'use by' date. The rent income from the property will be credited to the HRA.
- 5.2 It is expected that the properties will generate a gross rent income of £4,078.36 per annum and on this basis the investment should be repaid within 25 years.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Accountancy have been consulted during the writing of this report and have no further comments to make. (BW)
- 6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equalities implications, however in discharging their responsibilities members are required to comply with the public sector duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>.

6.4 Other Officers (as appropriate): None received.

7. Appendices

None.

8. Background Papers

Relevant papers on file

Contact Officer: Rebecca Champion, Valuation Officer