

Decision Notice

Decision No:	LD05 22
Subject:	AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO AN EXTENSION OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH KENT HOMECHOICE
Notification Date:	28 July 2022
Implementation Date:	3 August 2022
Decision taken by:	Councillor Trevor Bartlett, Leader of the Council
Authority:	By virtue of Section 9(E) (2) (a) of the Local Government Act 2000
Decision Type:	Executive Key Decision
Call-In to Apply?	Yes (<i>the deadline for call-in will expire at noon on 3 August 2022</i>)
Classification:	UNRESTRICTED
Reason for the Decision:	Dover District Council is currently a member of the Kent Homechoice Partnership. On 4 July 2022 Cabinet agreed the award to Huume Ltd of a 4-year contract for a housing options system for the partnership following a procurement process. A deed of variation to extend the Partnership Agreement to cover the 4-year contract period is now required and Dover District Council will need to enter into the agreement.
Decision:	To authorise Dover District Council to enter into a deed of variation to extend the Kent Homechoice Partnership Agreement for a further 4-years

1. **Consideration and Alternatives (*if applicable*)**

- 1.1 Kent Homechoice (KHC) is a partnership of 13 Local Authorities, 28 Housing Associations and Kent County Council (KCC) set up to provide a Kent wide choice-based lettings system. Dover District Council (DDC) are the lead authority for the Partnership.
- 1.2 The KHC Partnership was formed in 2006 to provide a choice-based lettings system for all of Kent. DDC have been the lead authority since 2015. The day to day running of the partnership is managed by the KHC Partnership Manager whose post is hosted by DDC. Decisions regarding the management of KHC are taken by the Project Board which is made up of senior officers at each Local Authority, Kent County Council (KCC) and the larger Housing Associations.
- 1.3 Locata is the current system which provides Kent with a back-office system for the housing register and choice-based lettings as well as a website for customers to view properties and place bids. The software system also provides a back-office housing options/homelessness system, a referrals module, and additionally, some partners have a social lettings agency system.
- 1.4 The contract with the Locata ends on 28 July 2023 and on 4 July 2022 Cabinet agreed the award of a new contract to Huume Ltd following a competitive procurement

exercise. The contract is for a period of 4 years with an option to extend it for two further years, one year at a time.

- 1.5 Before making the award, the Kent Homechoice Partners will be asked to sign a deed of variation to extend the Partnership Agreement for a period of 4 years.
- 1.6 We seek authority for DDC to sign the extension to the Partnership Agreement to remain within the partnership for a further 4 years.

2. Identification of Options

- 2.1 Option A: To agree that Dover District Council enter into a deed of variation to extend the Partnership Agreement for a further 4 years
Option B: Not to enter into the agreement and Dover District Council leave the Partnership.

3. Evaluation of Options

- 3.1 Option A is the recommended option. The Kent Homechoice Partnership is one of the most successful partnerships in the Country and it is more cost effective to procure a software solution for the Councils housing options service collectively than as an individual authority.
- 3.2 Option B is not the recommended option

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The partnership is financed by contributions from the Kent Local Authority partners, Housing Associations with stock in Kent and KCC who each pay an annual partnership fee. In 2021/22 the partners paid a total of £267,014.96 in fees and recharges.
- 4.2 The fees are structured as follows:
 - Each Local Authority pays an equal percentage cost for the current Housing Options/Homelessness system - £2,850 per 13 LA partners totalling - £37,050
 - Each Kent Local Authority pays a strategic fee of £5,947.14
 - Medway Council pays 1.5 strategic fee of £8920.71
 - KCC pay half the strategic fee at £2973.57
 - Strategic fees total - £83,259.96
 - Stock holding Councils and Housing Associations are then charged a fee based on stock levels which are banded as below with the number in brackets being the number of housing associations with that level of stock in Kent:
 - The total fees for landlords for 2022/23 are £116,750
 - In addition, Local Authorities also pay support fees for enhanced services that Locata have developed for them totalling £18,960 in 2022/23.
- 4.3 There is currently c£280K in the Kent Homechoice reserves budget.

5. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 5.1 There should be no environmental or climate change implications because of this decision being taken.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Accountancy have been consulted in the writing of this report and have no further comment to add (AC)

- 6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Head of Governance & HR has been consulted during the preparation of this report and has no further comment to make.
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>
- 6.4 Other Officers (as appropriate): N/A
- 7. **Any Conflicts of Interest Declared?**
 - 7.1 None.
- 8. **Supporting Information** *(as applicable)*
 - 8.1 Cabinet report from 4th July 2022