



## Notice of a meeting of Cabinet

**Tuesday, 9 June 2020  
6.00 pm**

**Virtual WEBEX video conference via YouTube -  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/cheltenhamborough>**

Membership	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Steve Jordan, Flo Clucas, Chris Coleman, Rowena Hay, Alex Hegenbarth, Peter Jeffries and Andrew McKinlay

## Agenda

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b> Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2020.	(Pages 3 - 10)
<b>4.</b>	<b>PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS</b> These must be received no later than 12 noon on Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June.	
	<b>SECTION 2 :THE COUNCIL</b> <i>There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Council on this occasion</i>	
	<b>SECTION 3 : OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> <i>There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this occasion</i>	
	<b>SECTION 4 : OTHER COMMITTEES</b> <i>There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by other Committees on this occasion</i>	
	<b>SECTION 5 : REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS AND/OR OFFICERS</b>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>ALLOCATION OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUNDING</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Housing	(Pages 11 - 24)

6.		<b>JOINT CORE STRATEGY AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP: REVIEW OF PREFERRED REGISTERED PROVIDERS</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Housing	(Pages 25 - 44)
7.		<b>DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS GRANTS FUND</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Finance TO FOLLOW	
		<b>SECTION 6 : BRIEFING SESSION</b> • Leader and Cabinet Members	
8.		<b>BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS</b>	
		<b>SECTION 7 : DECISIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS</b> Member decisions taken since the last Cabinet meeting	
		<b>SECTION 8 : ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE LEADER DETERMINES TO BE URGENT AND REQUIRES A DECISION</b>	

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## Cabinet

**Thursday, 14th May, 2020**

**6.00 - 7.15 pm**

Attendees	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment), Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Finance), Alex Hegenbarth (Cabinet Member Corporate Services), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing) and Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Development and Safety)
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	

## Minutes

**1. APOLOGIES**

There were none.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March were approved and signed as a correct record.

The Leader of the Council added some personal comments about the current crisis. He thanked everyone both nationally and locally who was helping the council get through this difficult time, and praised key workers, especially those in health and social care. He thanked everyone present and the wider council staff for their work, along with partner organisations, parishes, charities and volunteers.

**4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

There were none.

**5. COVID-19 RECOVERY STRATEGY**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report, and emphasised the importance of a local 'new deal' for Cheltenham to help create a clear framework setting out how the council could ensure that Cheltenham is an even better place to live, work and visit after Covid-19. Local and national partners would be consulted on this plan for their views and commitment. He thanked Darren Knight, Executive Director People and Change, for his contribution to the report on this topic, and praised the collective and sustained effort of organisations and individuals across Cheltenham at this time. He stressed the need to capture and maintain the good things happening now, such as community support, community spirit and significant increases in walking and

cycling. Conversely, he noted that public transport had naturally suffered due to government advice on social distancing, but would continue to be extremely important in the future.

The Leader added that CBC intended to continue working on its major projects, including Golden Valley, Cyber Central and Phase 2 of the High Street upgrade. He highlighted the importance of the council's affordable homes program, working alongside CBH. CBC must continue to work closely with its county council and district council colleagues. He praised the Cheltenham Development Task Force, which has been successful in recent years partly due to its flexible public-private approach. The task force now needs to be reformatted and refocused to aid the recovery effort.

He acknowledged that the uncertainty surrounding finance was unavoidable. A total of £1.2m has been received from central government, but when compared to the approximate loss of a million pounds a month due to loss of income and associated costs, it was clear that this did not solve the problem.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles added that discussions with colleagues in Europe indicated that Cheltenham was ahead of the game in terms of working proactively to ensure recovery. She added that the future of young people in the town was a key priority, and programs to support house building and youth employment would ensure that progress was maintained over time.

The Cabinet Member Finance stressed the need to work alongside central government to seize opportunities to rebuild and avoid a further period of austerity. She added that the strategy took into account the need for tailored responses to particular crises, such as the possibility of fast-tracking infrastructure projects to aid recovery and create jobs. The recovery environment could offer an opportunity to renew and reset services, and could lead to a reconsideration of how the council's investments were prioritised, in order to support innovation. It was worth being ambitious, but without the support of central government there would be hard choices to make.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services praised the strategy's consideration of the council's carbon neutral Cheltenham commitment, noting that it would be easy to treat it as a luxury when things were going well, rather than as a cornerstone of future development. He praised the use of smart-working capabilities to ensure the council remains effective and responsive.

The Cabinet Member Housing endorsed the strategy and noted how quickly the situation had changed enormously, but praised the proactive and positive steps towards recovery. The council's core priorities have not changed, but the environment in which they must approach them certainly has.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety emphasised that the strategy is a living document, with the Cyber Central section in particular referring to work that is currently taking place. Covid-19 remained a serious threat, but it also offered an opportunity to restart Cheltenham's economy in a different way, with different mindsets.

The Leader of the Council thanked Members for their contributions, and stressed the importance of climate change being a theme throughout the strategy.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. The extraordinary collective and sustained effort of organisations, communities and individuals across Cheltenham to respond to Covid-19 be recognised;**
- 2. The Covid-19 Recovery Strategy in Appendix A be noted;**
- 3. Any changes to the draft strategy be recommended;**
- 4. It be recommended that a consultation is undertaken with key local and national partners on the Draft Recovery Plan, and that a final strategy is brought back to a future Cabinet Meeting for formal agreement.**

**6. APPROVAL FOR AN EASEMENT AND DISPOSAL FOR AN ELECTRICITY CABLE TO BE CONTAINED UNDERGROUND IN IMPERIAL GARDENS**

The Cabinet Member Finance reminded members that full planning permission was approved for the refurbishment of Quadrangle in July 2019, as part of the council's goal to improve and revitalise the town centre for the benefit of local people. She explained that the current cables serving the Quad were under the footpath leading to the gardens, and needed to be raised and relocated.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment indicated his support for the report, and added that he had found it encouraging to see work continue in Imperial Gardens despite the difficult circumstances. The Leader of the Council added that this was an exciting and positive development.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. Authority be delegated to the Head of Property in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to dispose of the land required by Western Power upon such terms as he considers necessary or desirable to protect the Council's interests;**
- 2. The Borough Solicitor be authorised to conclude such documents reflecting the agreement reached by the Head of property as she considers appropriate.**

**7. APPROVAL OF THE INTERIM EVENTS STRATEGY FOR CHELTENHAM**

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles introduced the report, emphasising the 'interim' part of the strategy and acknowledging that it was likely to evolve over time. The key development at this point was a new process for booking events through the council.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment added that he thought the report illustrated what a strong position the council would be in after this crisis, citing the high number of events Cheltenham hosts and the wide variety of venues in which to hold them.

The Cabinet Member Finance welcomed the report's clarity and her optimism that the number of events per year was likely to return to a high mark after this crisis.

The Cabinet Member Housing praised the positive economic effects of Cheltenham's events program, which had generated around £162m since 2018,

and the importance of events as a key part of Cheltenham's appeal to visitors and identity.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles thanked Members for their contributions, and added that she hoped the report could act as a springboard for future success, and advised that dialogue continue with cultural and commercial partners.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. The Interim Events Strategy be endorsed, including the vision, principles and objectives of the Strategy;**
- 2. The Director of Planning be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Healthy Lifestyles, to deliver the implementation of a new event booking and management process;**
- 3. The Director of Planning be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to develop a business case for capital investment to aid the delivery of this events strategy in relation to events infrastructure;**
- 4. The Event Manager be authorised to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the land use planning strategy for events in Cheltenham, the findings of which will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.**

### **8. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS**

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles drew members' attention to the briefing note 'Food Distribution & Community Resilience Report', which illustrated how the town had come together during this crisis. She acknowledged that there are gaps in terms of what could be provided, but stressed that the council would continue to build and reinforce a mutually supportive network to fill these. She expressed her gratitude to all those who have given their time and energy to support others during this pandemic. The council continued to work closely with its partners.

She added that although the council was unable to carry out its full planned VE day celebration, it worked with primary schools to encourage primary school children to speak to their grandparents about their experiences, which would be gathered and displayed online in the near future. She suggested that this kind of innovative thinking formed part of how the council could ensure a cultural renaissance in the town when things eventually returned to normal.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment sought to explain the current situation with waste and recycling in particular. The council had worked closely with Ubico to ensure personal safety for workers, and had managed to maintain kerbside service almost entirely, thanks to strong decision-making by CBC officers, Ubico, and the hard work of crews themselves. The public had been very understanding about the need to keep workers safe while also keeping essential services resilient. In terms of parks and gardens, the relevant teams have worked hard to ensure that all parks were still open and well-maintained even in this crisis. The continuing maintenance of Cheltenham's parks was a deliberate strategy, seeking to support people doing their essential exercise.

He added that perhaps the most important part of his portfolio was the cemetery and crematorium, and it was vital that people were able to visit memorials and gravesides during this extremely difficult time. He acknowledged that difficult decisions had to be made regarding the size of gatherings allowed, and stressed that although he regretted how many friends and family members have been unable to attend funerals and memorial services, this decision was made with public safety and service resilience in mind.

The Cabinet Member Finance thanked staff members for their hard work, specifically citing the efforts of the revenues & benefits team. Cheltenham was the first town in the county, and one of the first in the country, to distribute funding for business grants. 230 businesses were supported at a cost of £3.9m before the government funding was even received. As of 13<sup>th</sup> May, of the £24m that the council has received, £20.2m has been paid out to some 1,615 qualifying businesses. This equated to 91% of the businesses initially identified as vulnerable. CBC acted proactively and was now leading the next phase of the discretionary grants scheme.

She praised the council's commercial strategy, with its diversity of investments paying off in a time of uncertainty and instability. CBC was also the first council to make a submission to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding the real financial impact of this crisis. She clarified that this submission was not a plea for a bailout, but rather a clear message about the council's ambitions, and a way to work together with central government to support local solutions. She added that despite the Covid-19 crisis, life goes on, and so does the work of the council. For example, the new industrial units at Enterprise Way are nearly ready, as are the refurbishment works at the Municipal Offices. She also reported that the council continued to remain in touch with its commercial and cultural partners, with more to come in the coming weeks.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services echoed the praise for council staff for their willingness to adapt to unusual circumstances. He particularly praised the redeployment of many staff members to the Gloucestershire Community Help Hub, which had reached out to around 900 residents and delivered over 700 food parcels to date.

The Cabinet Member Housing noted that the measure of a society was how it treats its poorest members, and expressed his pride at how officers had helped to protect and house homeless people in the town, putting themselves at risk to aid those more vulnerable. He thanked Cheltenham Borough Homes for their willingness to go virtual in order to maintain their supporting role.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety outlined some of the ways in which the council had responded to Covid-19 under his portfolio, such as making car parks safe for key workers, and the way that the Planning and Licensing departments have worked to maintain a high level of service. The situation regarding Cyber Central and Golden Valley continued to develop, and remained of considerable importance. He emphasised that Cheltenham has not been paralysed, and work continued in order to deliver for residents.

The Leader of the Council added his praise for the programs supporting vulnerable local people, which included the resilience fund allocation of

£100,000, which was shared equally between the borough council and county council. He emphasised the importance of regular county-wide briefings and work between councils, and reiterated the need to 'capture' and maintain the positive consequences of the crisis, as well as the lessons that can be taken forward. He also stressed that much of the council's role had been to interpret what the government was saying, and how best to apply that locally.

He noted that the Local Plan and the West Cheltenham Supplementary Planning Document were due to be considered at an Extraordinary Council meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April. These items remained of significant importance, and were now scheduled to be discussed by Council in June instead.

## 9. CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING

Decision	Cabinet Member	Date	Link
To approve the joining of Stroud District Council's legal services with One Legal; to note the delegation of Stroud District Council's legal service functions and the transfer of staff to Tewkesbury Borough Council as host authority	Rowena Hay (Finance)	12 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	<a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1342">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1342</a>
To authorise the use of approximately 6 Cheltenham Borough Council properties to assist the council in rehousing in the region of 24 refugees during 2020/21.	Peter Jeffries (Housing)	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	<a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1341">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1341</a>
Land Adjoining 456 High Street	Rowena Hay (Finance)	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020 (effective from 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2020)	<a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1348">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1348</a>



Approval of the Publica Group Ltd Business Plan 2020-22	Steve Jordan (Leader)	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	<a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1351">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1351</a>
Ubico Shareholder Decision 2020/21 Business Plan	Steve Jordan (Leader)	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	<a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1356">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1356</a>
Commercial Gas Contract	Rowena Hay (Finance)	29 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	<a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1354">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1354</a>

**Chairman**

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## Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Peter Jeffries, Cabinet Member – Housing</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner – Housing Services</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>Last year the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) provided the council with a one-off, windfall funding allocation of £107,284, ring-fenced for homelessness prevention. This report sets out how this windfall payment will be allocated, which is principally to increase capacity within Cheltenham Borough Homes' (CBH) Housing Options Service so that there can be greater focus on early intervention measures to prevent homelessness, particularly in terms of supporting young people and vulnerable people with complex needs to remain in their homes. There will also be a focus on strengthening the Housing Options Service's role in supporting rough sleepers (including all households currently accommodated in emergency housing following the COVID-19 pandemic). This focus will complement proposals to increase our funding allocation to support the recommissioning of the county-wide Assertive Outreach Service for rough sleepers, as detailed in the recommendations below and within the main body of this report.</p> <p>In addition, Cheltenham Borough Council was successful in its funding bid to secure £44,000 from MHCLG to support victims of domestic abuse with complex needs to help navigate them through the pathways to suitable housing. This will be a county-wide service, led by Cheltenham, and it is proposed this funding is also transferred to CBH's Housing Options Service in order to best support its delivery.</p> <p>It should be noted that if these recommendations are approved, there may be some delays to implementation as a result of COVID-19. There will, nevertheless, continue to be an immediate focus on providing solutions for rough sleepers, particularly in light of this outbreak.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. To approve the transfer to Cheltenham Borough Homes' Housing Options Service the sum of £107,284; this being a windfall MHCLG homelessness prevention funding allocation made to the council during 2019.</b></li> <li><b>2. To approve the transfer to Cheltenham Borough Homes' Housing Options Service the sum of £44,000, subject to the council receiving this funding allocation from MHCLG during 2020; this being MHCLG's funding allocation to support survivors of domestic abuse.</b></li> <li><b>3. To approve the allocation of an additional £14,000 funding (to</b></li> </ol>

be spread over 3 years) to support the recommissioning of our county-wide, jointly commissioned Assertive Outreach service for rough sleepers; and to note that this funding represents the remaining unallocated element of the MHCLG's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding allocation to the council for 2019/20.

4. To delegate authority to the Lead Commissioner – Housing Services, in consultation with Cabinet Member – Housing, to make any changes to these spending plans, if required; noting that the indicative expenditures detailed within Appendix 2 of the report may need to be flexible, depending upon demands of the service, and particularly in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.
5. To delegate authority to Lead Commissioner – Housing Services, in consultation with Cabinet Member – Housing and Executive Director – Finance & Assets, any future allocations of MHCLG homelessness prevention funding (including the MHCLG funding allocation for 2020/21).

## Financial implications

As detailed within the body of this report and at Appendix 2. All the funding detailed within this report comes from allocations provided by MHCLG. This funding is ring-fenced to support homelessness prevention activities. It should be noted that a significant proportion of this funding relates to the recruitment of additional, fixed-term posts within the Housing Options Service. In view of the likely timescales involved in recruiting officers to these posts, it can be expected that a proportion of this funding will be carried forward into 2021/22.

With regards to the £44,000 to support victims of domestic abuse, whilst MHCLG have confirmed publicly (i.e. on their website) that Cheltenham Borough Council will receive this funding, we are currently awaiting receipt of the grant determination letter. As noted in the recommendation to cabinet, the transfer of this funding to Cheltenham Borough Homes will be subject to the council receiving it from MHCLG.

Finally, the £14,000 additional funding allocation to support the county-wide Assertive Outreach Service for rough sleepers will be spread over 3 years. This will be on top of the current £15,000/year commitment under the existing Assertive Outreach contract which is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

**Contact officer: Martin Burke, Accountant**  
**martin.burke@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01594 812544**

<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>Homelessness support and prevention initiatives and schemes developed and funded through the Department for Communities and Local Government Grant assists the Council in meeting its statutory duties to those threatened with homelessness and homeless applicants, including those placed in Temporary Accommodation under the Homeless provisions of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). The new resources are expected to be used to strengthen homelessness prevention in the District.</p> <p>Any officer decision taken following the implementation of any of the recommendations in this report will need to be, where necessary, taken, recorded and published in accordance with the Council's constitution and decision making rules.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Sarah Farooqi,</b>  <b>sarah.farooqi@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272012</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>There are no HR implications arising from this report for Cheltenham Borough Council, however, if the proposed activities impact any employees of the Housing Options Service, then these will be managed and supported by Cheltenham Borough Homes' Human Resources Team.</p>
<b>Key risks</b>	<b>Please see risk register at Appendix 1</b>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	<p>One of the key priorities within our corporate plan is to increase the provision of affordable housing and create more resilient communities. This priority includes tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.</p>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	<p>None as a direct consequence of this report.</p>
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<p>None as a direct consequence of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</b></p>

## **1. Background**

- 1.1** In April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act was implemented across England. This Act significantly increased the statutory duties on councils to prevent and relieve homelessness. To support the implementation of the Act, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) provided councils with New Burdens Funding (approximately £30,000/year for this council over the three year period from 2017 to 2020).
- 1.2** Over the same period, additional funding, known as the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, was also allocated to the council by MHCLG to support the delivery of more homelessness prevention activities. This funding (approximately £65,000/year for the years 2017/18 to 2018/19) was increased to approximately £220,000 for 2019/20. In February 2019, Cabinet agreed to transfer most of this funding (i.e. £164,000) to CBH's Housing Options Service, to be spent over a 2 year period to end March 2021. The remainder of the MHCLG funding allocation (c.£56,000) remained with the council. £42k is being used to part fund a new Housing Strategy & Enabling post over two years (to March 2021), with a residual sum of £14,000 now to be allocated to support the recommissioning of the county-wide Assertive Outreach Service as detailed at section 2.1 below.
- 1.3** In addition to the New Burdens Funding and Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, a further windfall allocation was made to the council last year by MHCLG. This sum totals £107,284, and it is proposed that this allocation is transferred to CBH's Housing Options Service to support a range of activities as detailed in section 2.2 below.
- 1.4** The council has also been successful in securing a funding bid from MHCLG to the value of approximately £44,000 to support victims of domestic abuse across the county. This funding will enable the creation of a 12 month fixed term post, with a remit to:
- better understand the support and accommodation needs of victims of domestic abuse across the county, and their children; and
  - provide housing options support to victims of domestic abuse, and their children, who may have experienced chaotic lifestyles and have multiple and complex support needs.

This will be a county-wide resource managed by Cheltenham Borough Homes and overseen by the council.

## **2. Reasons for recommendations**

### **2.1 Allocation of funding of £14,000 to support future commissioning of Assertive Outreach Services for rough sleepers**

- 2.1.1** The council currently commits £15,000/year to support the provision of a county-wide, partnership approach to delivering Assertive Outreach Service for rough sleepers. Since the commissioning of this service, the partnership has been successful in a number of funding bids to MHCLG to support a range of services aimed at reducing rough sleeping – the most recent one being a £1m successful bid for the continuation of Somewhere Safe to Stay Hubs and Navigators, both of which support pathways for rough sleepers to independent living. A proportion of the £1m is also being used to enhance the provision of our existing Assertive Outreach Service.
- 2.1.2** Going forward, it is understood that councils will be expected to fund Assertive Outreach services from their Flexible Homelessness Support Grants, rather than relying on opportunistic funding bids to bolster their provision. In view of this, and the fact that the partnership is reviewing its model/specification for Assertive Outreach services ahead of its recommissioning of this service in January 2021, it is appropriate for the council to allocate further funding to support this provision ahead of the recommissioning of this service. The proposed £14,000 will be spread over the period of the contract (up to 3 years). It is anticipated that the council will increase its funding commitment further, once costs for the new Assertive Outreach contract have been finalised

across the partnership. If this is the case, then more approvals will be sought to increase our budget allocation further, utilising the council's 2020/21 Flexible Homelessness Prevention Support Grant funding allocation.

### **2.2 Allocation of MHCLG's windfall grant of £107,284 to CBH's Housing Options Service to support the provision of a range of services, as follows:**

#### **2.2.1 More early intervention homelessness prevention**

**2.2.1.1** Since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018, demand on the Housing Options Service has increased significantly. As outlined in section 1.1 above, funding has already been received from MHCLG to help support this increase in demand on the Housing Options Service. The result is that successful homelessness preventions have increased significantly in recent years (from 140 in 2017/18 to an estimated 350 during 2019/20; whilst the number of households who have been accepted as statutorily homeless (because homelessness prevention wasn't possible) have decreased from 106 in 2017/18 to an estimated 60 over 2019/20.

#### **2.2.1.2 Challenges**

However, a number of challenges remain. These can be summarised as follows:

- There has been a much higher volume of presentations from vulnerable individuals with complex needs. These individuals often present to the Housing Options Service at the point of crisis, with the result that there is usually not enough time to prevent their homelessness. This includes individuals being evicted from supported housing, some of whom have a history of rough sleeping.
- Current demand on the Housing Options Service means that there is insufficient scope to direct resources towards more proactive casework by implementing earlier intervention measures. The service receives many approaches from households who, whilst not homeless or threatened with homelessness currently, could be homeless in the future. Increasing capacity within the Housing Options Service will enable greater focus on these households.
- Demand for housing via the council's Homeseeker Plus Allocations Scheme remains high. On average there are approximately 120 new applications/month, with a similar number of online changes in circumstances which need to be reviewed by the team. Approximately a third of these new applications are from households who are either homeless or facing homelessness. Households' first interaction with the Housing Options Service is often via our Homeseeker Plus Allocations Scheme. At present it takes the team on average 18 days to process and review an application. Whilst this is within the 28 days specified within Homeseeker Plus Policy, earlier identification of the housing needs of these households would support the team's ability to prevent some of them from becoming homeless.
- It is also worth noting that a significant amount of time is spent by Housing Options Officers providing advice to households on Homeseeker Plus enquires that do not relate to homelessness (approximately 35-45 hours/week) in addition to a further 1-3 hours/week/Officer spent on administrative duties. By allocating resources a little differently, and more efficiently, Officers will be able to place greater focus on their homelessness prevention activities.

#### **2.2.1.3 Solutions**

To help overcome these challenges, it is proposed that two additional, fixed-term posts are created (both for an initial period of 12 months): a Housing Options Officer and a Senior Homeseeker Plus Officer. Together, these new posts will enable the Housing Options Service to:

- Undertake early intervention prevention work around negotiation and mediation. This would involve assessments being carried out within the clients' homes (subject to any future MHCLG

guidance in light of COVID-19) and would also involve more intensive negotiations with parents/family members, private rented landlords, supported housing providers and social housing landlords. This approach will support households with complex needs, who might otherwise be evicted from supported housing, through to young people at risk of becoming homeless because of a breakdown in their relationships with parents/other family members. One of the biggest causes of homelessness in Cheltenham is as a result of family/parental breakdown, and we believe there is potential to make significant in-roads into helping families remain together for longer.

- In addition, it is anticipated that these new posts will create more capacity within the team to target resources into better supporting the rough sleeper pathways - in particular, the Assertive Outreach Service and the Somewhere Safe to Stay hub (currently based at the YMCA in Cheltenham). This approach will ensure that the Housing Options Service remain across the needs of rough sleepers in Cheltenham so that the team can add value to the range of services and pathways by identifying potential gaps in service delivery and using the personalisation pot (detailed in section 2.2.2 below) to come up with innovative solutions to resolve outstanding issues.

### **2.2.2 Personalisation pot to support rough sleepers off the streets**

In February 2020, the council was successful in securing cold weather funding (up to £8,000) to support the provision of emergency accommodation for rough sleepers until March 2020. We propose to take this to the next level by putting aside a provisional discretionary fund of £19,155 to be used by the Housing Options Service for a wide range of solutions to support rough sleepers (including those placed in emergency accommodation following the COVID-19 outbreak) into suitable accommodation. . We are committed to ensuring there is no reason for anyone to sleep rough, ever; and we will work hard to ensure that this personalisation fund can support this.

### **2.2.3 Alternatives to Bed & Breakfast provision**

**2.2.3.1** Since April 2018, between 9 and 17 single, vulnerable people have been placed into Bed and Breakfast emergency accommodation every quarter. Whilst these placements are on average relatively short term (for example, the average length of stay in Bed & Breakfast for a single person during the period from September to December 2019 was 19 days), the majority of these placements are made outside of the town, due to the lack of emergency accommodation provision locally.

**2.2.3.2** It is likely there will be a continued need for emergency accommodation as households can, and do, present to the Housing Options Service as homeless with little or no notice. It is our intention however to allocate funding (provisionally c. £15,000) to explore alternatives to Bed & Breakfast provision within Cheltenham (in addition to improving the furnishing of temporary accommodation that we use for homeless households within our council-owned stock). This could include setting up and managing shared accommodation from within our own council housing – subject to any necessary approvals and any future government guidelines, following the COVID-19 outbreak . Clearly, any solutions we adopt to reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast ,and in particular its use outside of the Borough, is likely to significantly improve the health and wellbeing of the individuals affected, and also reflects best practice.

## **2.3 Allocation of funding of £44,000 to CBH's Housing Options Service, to support victims of domestic abuse across the county.**

**2.3.1** Cheltenham Borough Council has recently been successful in its county-wide funding bid to MHCLG to support victims of domestic abuse and their children. This funding will enable the creation of a 12 month fixed-term post that will provide short-term housing options support to households with complex needs who have experienced domestic abuse, whilst also mapping out the support and accommodation needs of victims of domestic abuse (and their children) more generally, with a view to better informing the future commissioning of these services. In view of its operational nature, the post will sit within CBH's Housing Options Service and will complement



the existing team – in particular the Interventions Officer (as this post also has an emphasis on helping households with complex needs successfully navigate pathways to independent living).

### **3. Alternative options considered**

- 3.1** None. The funding proposals detailed above are either very specific in nature or simply the most appropriate in order for the Housing Options Service to direct its resources into areas where it is currently most needed. Some flexibility has been built into the recommendations, however, so that delegated authority is given to the Lead Commissioner – Housing Services to review the indicative expenditures as detailed at Appendix 2 (in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Housing) should the need arise, particularly in light of the Covid-19 outbreak.
- 3.2** It is worth restating that all of the funding detailed within this report is provided by MHCLG, and ring-fenced either for services to support housing options provision for victims of domestic abuse, or more generally for homelessness prevention services.

### **4. How this initiative contributes to the corporate plan**

- 4.1** One of the key priorities within our corporate plan is to increase the provision of affordable housing and create more resilient communities. This priority includes tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

### **5. Consultation and feedback**

- 5.1** Consultation has been carried out with the Housing Options Team to understand where indicative resources should be placed in order to maximize outcomes in reducing homelessness and support the provision of housing options advice for victims of domestic abuse.
- 5.2** Consultation has also been undertaken with districts across the county, including the county council, to inform the requirements of our funding bid to MHCLG to bolster support provision (by way of housing options advice) for victims of domestic abuse. Our subsequently successful bid was supported by our partners across the county.
- 5.3** In addition, discussions have been underway with partners across the county in preparation for the recommissioning of the Assertive Outreach Service for rough sleepers. It is widely recognised that districts will be required to invest further in this service. Whilst actual funding requirements are yet to be finalised, the allocation of an additional £14,000 by Cheltenham Borough Council over the period of the next contract (3 years) is likely to be the minimum additional contribution required by this council. If a further allocation of funding is indeed required once the new service model is finalised ahead of recommissioning, then further relevant approvals will be sought at that time.

### **6. Performance management –monitoring and review**

- 6.1** Regular performance monitoring meetings are already in place between the council and the Housing Options Service. Outcomes, and expenditure against these outcomes, will be monitored; and where necessary, the indicative proposals detailed within this report may be changed if this is in the best interests of reducing homelessness and providing value for money. Any such changes will be agreed with the Lead Commissioner – Housing Services, in consultation with Cabinet Member – Housing.
- 6.2** For the avoidance of doubt, there will also be close monitoring between the council and the Housing Options Service of the outcomes relating to the domestic abuse support service. These outcomes will be shared with the districts across the county on a regular basis.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer: Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner – Housing Services</b> <b>martin.stacy@cheltenham.gov.uk,</b> <b>01242 264171</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk Assessment</li> <li>2. Summary of indicative costings</li> </ol>
<b>Background information</b>	

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If staffing levels within the Housing Options Team are not supported through the utilisation of MHCLG funding as detailed within this report, then the team will be less equipped to deal with the increase in the number of households approaching the service, and the time expected to manage each individual case as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act.	Martin Stacy	9.3.20	2	3	6	Reduce	Cabinet to accept the recommendation within this report	June 2020	Paul Tuckey (CBH)	
	If alternatives to B&B accommodation are not managed effectively, then this could lead to anti-social behaviour in the immediate neighbourhood.	Martin Stacy	9.3.20	3	4	12	Reduce	Further work will be undertaken to scope out the options and to manage associated risks before final approvals are given.	Autumn/winter 2020	Paul Tuckey (CBH)	
	If funding for Assertive Outreach Services to support rough sleepers is not increased, then the resulting service will	Martin Stacy	9.3.20	3	4	12	Reduce	Cabinet to accept the relevant commendation within this report	June 2020	Martin Stacy	

	have insufficient resources to cope with the required demands.										
	If the domestic abuse post is not sufficiently specific in its remit, then the postholder is likely to be overwhelmed in case work and the overall effectiveness of the post will be reduced.	Martin Stacy	9.3.20	3	4	12	Reduce	The council will liaise closely with the Housing Options Service to ensure this risk is not underestimated and that the role of the post is made as specific as possible and that this is communicated effectively to all relevant agencies across the county.	Summer/Autumn 2020	Paul Tuckey (CBH)	
	If Cabinet makes a commitment to allocate funding to the Housing Options Service to enable the creation of a domestic abuse post, and MHCLG's funding offer is then subsequently withdrawn, the council may be required to find this funding from other sources.	Martin Stacy	9.3.20	2	1	2	Reduce	Cabinet to accept the recommendation that the transfer of funding to the Housing Options Service will be on the proviso that the council has received the relevant funding from MHCLG.	June 2020	Martin Stacy	
	If this homelessness prevention funding is allocated by cabinet, then the council may be less placed to tackle subsequent emerging homelessness	Martin Stacy	19.5.20	4	3	12	Reduce	Flexibility has been built into the recommendations to enable changes to the indicative expenditures to be made if necessary.  The current allocation			

	priorities arising as a result of covid-19.							<p>enables greater focus on early intervention and supporting those with complex needs, as well as reducing rough sleeping – all of which will contribute towards supporting the council in tackling current priorities arising as a result of the covid pandemic.</p> <p>There is likely to be a delay in implementation (again, because of covid) and this will provide further opportunities to review how the funding is allocated, should this be necessary.</p> <p>The 2020/21 Homelessness Prevention Grant Funding will be allocated later in the year (c.£280k). This will provide the council with the opportunity to focus on any other emerging priorities, should they arise and require solutions beyond the scope of the allocation of funding as detailed within this report.</p>			
<b>Explanatory notes</b>											

**Impact** – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)  
**Likelihood** – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6  
(1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)  
**Control** - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close

Summary of proposed expenditure of MHCLG's various grant funding allocations are as detailed in the table below:

<b>Use of MHCLG windfall grant allocation of £107,284 – to be transferred to CBH's Housing Options Team:</b>	<b>Estimated Costs</b>
Senior Homeseekerplus Officer (including on-costs – 12 month fixed term post)	£35,227
Housing Options Officer (including on-costs – 12 month fixed term post)	£37,902
Alternatives to Bed & Breakfast Emergency Accommodation Provision	£15,000
Rough Sleeper Personalisation Pot. (This will include support to rehouse those who are provided with emergency accommodation because they were considered to be at risk of rough sleeping following the COVID-19 outbreak.)	£19,155
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£107,284</b>
<b>Use of MHCLG grant allocation of £44,000 to support victims of domestic abuse – to be transferred to CBH's Housing Options Team:</b>	
County Domestic Abuse Officer (including on-costs – 12 month fixed term post)	<b>£44,000</b>
<b>Use of remaining grant allocation of MHCLG's 2019/20 Flexible Housing Support Grant – to remain within the council's budget:</b>	
Assertive Outreach Services for rough sleepers – additional funding over 3 years from 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2020	<b>£14,000</b>
<b>Total funding allocation:</b>	<b>£165,284</b>

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## Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### Joint Core Strategy Affordable Housing Partnership:

### Review of Preferred Registered Providers

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Peter Jeffries, Cabinet Member – Housing</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner – Housing Services</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>Hesters Way, Springbank, Swindon Village</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>In preparation for the adoption of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS), Cabinet agreed (in June 2015) to set up an Affordable Housing Partnership made up of the three Local Housing Authorities across the JCS area. This Partnership, led by Cheltenham Borough Council, was formed to oversee the delivery, allocation and future management of affordable housing on the Strategic Allocations (as detailed in Part 6 of the JCS).</p> <p>Cabinet also agreed to the Partnership's selection of Preferred Registered Providers – i.e. Registered Housing Providers who were able to demonstrate to the Partnership's satisfaction that they could support the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To maximise the delivery of new affordable housing and to ensure the unmet affordable housing needs of Cheltenham and Gloucester are supported by the Strategic Allocations.</li> <li>➤ To create a framework that enables new communities to become and remain cohesive and sustainable.</li> </ul> <p>Cabinet agreed to these Preferred Provider arrangements for an initial period of up to 5 years. We are now approaching the 5 years since these Preferred Providers were selected (November 2015). It is therefore time to review our arrangements, and to ensure that our Preferred Providers (along with any new Registered Providers that wish to join the Affordable Housing Partnership) remain aligned to these outcomes and more generally to our strategic housing priorities.</p> <p>In view of this, Cabinet are asked to note and approve the following recommendations:</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Cabinet:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Notes that the Affordable Housing Partnership with Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council, which was set up to oversee the delivery of affordable homes across the Strategic Allocation Sites within the Joint Core Strategy area, will continue for the duration of the JCS Plan Period (currently</b></li> </ol>

31<sup>st</sup> December 2031).

2. Approves the Authority's review of the current list of Preferred Providers of affordable housing, which will include inviting existing Preferred Providers and other Registered Providers to bid to become a Preferred Provider across the Strategic Allocation Sites within the Joint Core Strategy area, jointly with Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council.
3. Delegates authority to the Lead Commissioner, Housing Services to:
  - 3.1 evaluate and select Preferred Providers for the delivery and/or management of new affordable housing on the Strategic Allocation Sites, noting that the selection will be carried out jointly with Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough Councils,
  - 3.2 agree changes to the Terms of Reference of the partnership and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Councils and Preferred Providers (which shall take effect from November 2020) and to note that these documents shall be updated annually,
  - 3.3 Undertake any future reviews of the Preferred Provider arrangements within the triggers as detailed in sections 3.3 to 3.5 of this report; whilst noting that these triggers may be updated from time to time as part of the annual review of the Memorandum of Understanding.

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>None as a direct consequence of this report. The Affordable Housing Partnership is currently supported by the housing consultancy Ark, which is financed from Capacity Funding provided by Homes England. This arrangement is managed by Cheltenham Borough Council, which holds the funding on behalf of the three districts. In view of expenditure to date, it is anticipated that this funding will be more than sufficient to cover at least the next 5 years of the Preferred Provider arrangements, after which, the Local Housing Authorities may call upon the Preferred Providers to pay a membership fee to help contribute towards any ongoing running costs, or otherwise manage the partnership within existing resources.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Martin Burke, Accountant</b>  <b><a href="mailto:martin.burke@cheltenham.gov.uk">martin.burke@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>, 01594 812544</b></p>
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<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>The establishment of a list of preferred housing providers is not a procurement that is covered by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, but the councils may wish to consider carrying out a selection process following their respective contract procedure rules.</p> <p>The councils will enter into an agreement with the chosen registered providers that will set out the objectives and roles of the registered providers. As the registered providers are not providing a service to the council, a formal legally binding agreement will not be prepared; instead the existing memorandum of understanding between Councils and Registered Providers shall be updated. In addition to this, the current Partnership Agreement between the three local authorities will also be updated. The term of the agreement will be until 31st December 2031. It will not be a partnership in law and it will not be a legal entity in its own right.</p> <p>The council cannot insist that developers work with preferred providers to deliver their affordable housing obligations; developers are able to put forward alternative providers to the council. The model S106 agreement, similarly against which a developer may put forward alternative provisions, requires developer/Owners to use reasonable endeavours to contract with Preferred Providers.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Donna Ruck, Senior Lawyer donna.ruck@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272696</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>None as a direct result of this report</p>
<b>Key risks</b>	<p><b>Please refer to Appendix 1 of this report</b></p>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	<p>A key priority within the Authority's corporate plan is to increase the supply of housing and to invest in building resilient communities. The Affordable Housing Partnership, and our approach to selecting Preferred Providers, will support this priority for the reasons provided within the body of this report.</p>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	<p>This review of the Preferred Provider arrangements is likely to have a neutral impact on the environment - however, it is anticipated that good Registered Providers are more likely to engage with their community to take part in activities that support the environment (e.g. arranging community litter picking events, etc.) and this is likely to be reflected in our evaluation of those Registered Providers which apply to become/remain Preferred Providers.</p>

<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<p>As Cheltenham Borough Homes are contracted to deliver and manage Cheltenham Borough Council homes on the Council's behalf, if Cheltenham Borough Homes does not become a Preferred Provider, then the Council may be unable to acquire and manage new affordable homes sold by developers as part of their s.106 affordable housing obligations on the Strategic Allocations.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Dominic Stead, Head of Property Services</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk">Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Tel 01242 263151</b></p>
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## **1. Background**

- 1.1** In November 2017 the Joint Core Strategy (the JCS) was adopted, with a plan to deliver approximately 35,000 new homes across the JCS areas of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury by 2031. This plan includes provision to support the otherwise unmet housing needs of Cheltenham and Gloucester. Specifically, the plan includes a number of Strategic Allocations (as detailed in Part 6 of the Joint Core Strategy) which will contribute towards meeting the housing needs (including the affordable housing needs) of the two urban authorities.
- 1.2** In preparation for the adoption of the JCS, Cabinet agreed (in June 2015) to set up an Affordable Housing Partnership made up of the three Local Housing Authorities across the JCS area. This Partnership, led by Cheltenham Borough Council, was formed to oversee the delivery, allocation and future management of affordable housing on the Strategic Allocations. The formation of such a partnership was supported by the Joint Core Strategy at paragraph 4.12.16 (p 70 of the Adopted Policy).
- 1.3** Two high-level outcomes were agreed for the Affordable Housing Partnership, as follows:
- To maximise the delivery of new affordable housing.
  - To create a framework that enables new communities to become and remain cohesive and sustainable.
- 1.4** These outcomes are captured within the Affordable Housing Partnership's Terms of Reference (please see Appendix 2), as update by the Partnership in May 2020. In addition, a third outcome is now included as follows:
- To support the Local Housing Authorities' aims in reducing homelessness

This outcome is particularly important, and relevant, in light of the increase in pressures on the three local housing authorities following the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 1.5** In June 2015, Cabinet also agreed to the Partnership's selection of Preferred Registered Providers – i.e. Registered Housing Providers who were able to demonstrate to the Partnership's satisfaction that they could support our key outcomes. Cabinet agreed to these Preferred Provider arrangements for an initial period of up to 5 years.
- 1.6** We are now approaching the 5 years since these Preferred Providers were selected (November 2015). It is therefore time to review our arrangements, and to ensure that our Preferred Providers (along with any new Registered Providers that wish to join the Affordable Housing Partnership) remain aligned to our outcomes and strategic housing priorities.

## **2. Proposed arrangements for the re-evaluation and selection of Preferred Providers**

- 2.1** Registered Providers with an interest in providing and/or managing new affordable housing within the Strategic Allocations will, once more, be invited to bid for Preferred Provider status, and will be selected according to updated evaluation criteria, as outlined in Appendix 3 of this report. This is likely to include, but is not limited to the following:
- Their capacity to deliver new affordable housing across relevant sites;
  - Their lettings policies, and their alignment to the Authority's strategic housing functions - particularly in terms of reducing homelessness;
  - The strength of their housing management capabilities, with a focus on activities that empower tenants to succeed in their tenancies;

- Their ability to engage and involve local communities so that they can become and remain cohesive and sustainable;

**2.2** Registered Providers selected as Preferred Providers for the Strategic Allocations will be invited to work with the Affordable Housing Partnership, and together with the Local Housing Authorities they will work towards achieving the Partnership's outcomes.

### **3. Reasons for recommendations**

**3.1** Affordable housing delivery is yet to commence on the Strategic Allocations. It therefore follows that the rationale for having a Partnership of Preferred Providers to deliver and manage the homes and communities within the Strategic Allocations is the same now as it was when Cabinet originally agreed to the Preferred Provider arrangements in 2015. In summary, the rationale for selecting Preferred Providers is to 'raise the bar' and prevent a 'free for all' from Registered Providers of any standard competing for the delivery of affordable housing in these areas. Capacity to deliver new affordable housing competitively is important – but equally important is the ability of Registered Providers to invest in developing and sustaining strong and resilient communities, both during and after development is complete. Those Registered Providers who are selected as having Preferred Provider status will have demonstrated to the Local Authorities' satisfaction that they can deliver and manage affordable homes and their communities to a good standard. This will in turn provide the Authorities with confidence that the Partnership's outcomes are more likely to be met.

**3.2** Finally, given that the affordable housing landscape has changed significantly over the last 5 years, it is recommended that a full scale review of the Preferred Provider arrangements takes place. Universal Credit is now being rolled out, and the government's rent reduction policy from 2016-2020 have impacted significantly on business plans. In order to respond to these challenges, and to keep their businesses financially stable, Registered Providers have taken different approaches to managing risks. In a few cases this has led to some Registered Providers becoming less aligned to local authorities' strategic housing functions.

**3.3** It is proposed that once this current review has been undertaken, any subsequent full scale review of the Preferred Provider arrangements will only take place in the event of significant changes to the housing landscape at a national level, and that in any event such a review will not take place within the first 5 years of the new Preferred Provider arrangements. This will provide greater stability for the Preferred Providers within the Affordable Housing Partnership, as well as increase certainty within the developer/landowner market over which Registered Providers are likely to continue to have Preferred Provider status.

**3.4** The Local Housing Authorities will, however, expect our Preferred Providers to confirm annually their commitment to Partnership's Memorandum of Understanding, and that they continue to remain compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Standards. Furthermore, if during the partnership there are material changes to a Preferred Provider's service delivery, and there is evidence to show these changes are now running contrary to outcomes previously supported by the Provider, then the Local Housing Authorities will reserve the right to conduct a re-evaluation of the Registered Provider's status as Preferred Provider in light of these changes.

**3.5** Finally should a Registered Provider who is not currently within the Affordable Housing Partnership wish to apply for Preferred Provider status, then the Local Housing Authorities will provide them with an opportunity to join the Partnership within 12 months of the Registered Provider's request.

**3.6** The triggers for review, as detailed in sections 3.3 to 3.5 above, will be captured in the updated Memorandum of Understanding, subject to agreement from the Preferred Providers. The Affordable Housing Partnership will review and if necessary amend the above triggers as part of its annual review of the Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **4. Alternative options considered**

##### **4.1 To not review the Preferred Provider arrangements.**

- 4.1.1** This is not considered to be an option in view of the fact that in June 2015, Cabinet agreed to establish a list of preferred providers of affordable housing for an initial period of up to 5 years.

##### **4.2 Carry out a small scale review/re-evaluation of the existing Preferred Providers.**

- 4.2.1** This option has been rejected for the reasons given in section 3.2 of this report. There have been significant changes to the affordable housing landscape in recent years, resulting in different approaches by Registered Providers in managing their risks. It is therefore appropriate for a full review/re-evaluation to take place in order to ensure that our key outcomes will be adequately supported.

##### **4.3 Select just one Registered Provider/Consortium for the whole JCS area**

- 4.3.1** This approach may have some advantages in that by having a smaller number of Registered Providers to work with, it would be easier for the Partnership to agree on some or all of its priorities. This would however also bring greater risks in that developers are less likely to work with the Registered Provider/Consortium if there is no other competition within the Partnership.

##### **4.4 Disband the Preferred Provider arrangement altogether and leave the allocation of s106 affordable housing entirely to the open market**

- 4.4.1** This option has been rejected on the basis that it would enable Housing Providers, regardless of their track record in housing management and community involvement, to make bids to developers on the Strategic Allocations. The result is that the opportunity for strategic alignment with the Local Housing Authorities could be lost.

#### **5. How this initiative contributes to the corporate plan**

- 5.1** A key priority within the corporate plan is to increase the supply of housing and to invest in building resilient communities. Our Affordable Housing Partnership, and our approach to selecting Preferred Providers, will support this priority for the reasons already given within this report.

#### **6. Consultation and feedback**

- 6.1** The initial formation of the Affordable Housing Partnership and the proposed selection of Preferred Providers was supported by the JCS Cross Boundary Programme Board, which is made up of Chief Executive Officers from the three Local Authorities. The rationale for forming the Affordable Housing Partnership and selecting Preferred Providers remains the same now as it was then.

- 6.2** Consultation was also undertaken with developers and their agents prior to setting up the Preferred Provider arrangements. A range of views were expressed from a feeling that the approach fettered developers discretion to contract with whomever they wished (a view not supported by the Consultants advising the Councils), to a view that a Preferred Provider approach can support the long term sustainability of an area and that this can also support the saleability of their market housing in later phases. Taking these views into account, our approach is to ensure that we maintain a competitive element within the Partnership. This will help to ensure that developers/land owners remain confident that they will continue to have genuine choice over which Registered Provider(s) to work with.

- 6.3** Consultation has also been undertaken with the existing Preferred Providers, and all those who have fed back are broadly supportive of our approach. There is an appetite to reduce the amount of work involved in applying to become Preferred Providers, and the Authorities will seek to accommodate this as far as possible. Going forward, we intend to eliminate the need for any unnecessary reviews by adopting the approach as detailed at sections 3.3 to 3.5 of this report.

## 7. Performance management –monitoring and review

**7.1** The Partnership will meet on a regular basis to agree and oversee the delivery of our priorities as we await the provision of the first tranches of affordable housing on these Strategic Allocations. The Partnership will undertake an annual review of progress against its priorities. We will also carry out an annual review of the Memorandum of Understanding, which will include confirmation from the Preferred Providers that they remain aligned to our key outcomes and priorities.

**7.2** For a list of our current Preferred Providers, please see Appendix 4.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer:</b>  <b>Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner – Housing Services</b>  <b>Martin.stacy@cheltenham.gov.uk,</b>  <b>01242 264171</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk Assessment</li> <li>2. Affordable Housing Partnership's updated Terms of Reference</li> <li>3. Outline of Preferred Provider Evaluation Criteria</li> <li>4. List of current Preferred Providers</li> </ol>
<b>Background information</b>	



The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If the Local Authority evaluates and selects Preferred Providers, then one or more Registered Providers with a strong strategic interest in delivering new affordable housing on the Strategic Allocations may not be selected	Martin Stacy	24.4.15	3	3	9	Reduce	<p>The existing Preferred Providers and other RPs who own or manage housing stock within the JCS area have previously been consulted the Affordable Housing Partnership arrangements and its approach to selecting its preferred providers, and are broadly supportive of our approach.</p> <p>An external consultant appointed by Cheltenham Borough Council on behalf of the three Local Authorities continues to advise and assist in the selection of Preferred Providers and to ensure that these decisions can be defended robustly.</p>	Nov 2020	Martin Stacy	
	If the Local Authority selects Preferred Providers, then developers may decide not to engage with them and instead award contracts to other	Martin Stacy	24.4.15	3	4	12	Reduce	Developers and their agents with an interest in the Strategic Allocations have previously been consulted on our	Nov 2020	Martin Stacy	

	Registered Providers							<p>approach to selecting preferred providers. Our proposed approach continues to take into account the priorities of the developers and seeks to find a common ground that ensures a competitive arrangement is maintained, whilst also ensuring that the key strategic outcomes of the Authority are supported.</p> <p>A requirement for developers to use reasonable endeavours to work with the preferred providers will be sought as part of the s106 affordable housing negotiations.</p>			
	If Registered Providers do not bid to become Preferred Providers then the Local Authority's ability to achieve its strategic outcomes will be compromised	Martin Stacy	24.4.15	3	2	6	Reduce	<p>The Council's approach to selecting Preferred Providers has previously been soft market tested with Registered Providers, and they are broadly supportive of our approach.</p> <p>The competitive elements that we will continue to</p>	Nov 2020	Martin Stacy	

								build within our Preferred Provider arrangements mean that developers/landowners are more likely to agree to provisions within a 106 agreement that require them to work with Preferred Providers. This in turn will incentivise Registered Providers to apply.			
<b>Explanatory notes</b> <b>Impact</b> – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical) <b>Likelihood</b> – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability) <b>Control</b> - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close											

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## **Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Affordable Housing Partnership Terms of Reference**

### **The Partnership Aims**

- To work collaboratively to deliver affordable housing across the Strategic Allocation Sites as detailed in the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy
- To work with partners, stakeholders and local communities to ensure that the affordable housing delivered reflect the needs of the districts, that provide choice of affordable housing options and helps to create inclusive, mixed communities.
- To be a consultative body for the future development of local Housing Strategies and Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents with regards to affordable housing.
- To be a sounding board for the sharing of good practice in respect of housing management and development practices.

### **Outcomes**

- To maximise the delivery of new affordable housing for each local authority.
- To create a framework that enables new communities to become and remain cohesive and sustainable.
- To support the Local Housing Authorities' aims in reducing homelessness.

### **Membership**

The Partnership will be made up of representatives from the following organisations:

- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
- Gloucester City Council

The Partnership will invite other stakeholders to attend partnership meetings as required, including Preferred Affordable Housing Providers and the Homes and Communities Agency.

### **Our Priorities**

The Partnership's focus will be on achieving the following objectives:

1. To agree and keep under review cross-boundary lettings arrangements for new affordable homes.
2. To identify and maximise funding opportunities to aid the delivery of new affordable housing where appropriate.
3. To deliver new affordable housing according to assessed needs, including agreement on tenure split, dwelling types and size.
4. To ensure as far as possible the standardisation of affordable housing clauses within Section 106 Agreements, and that the accompanying guidance notes remain up to date
5. To deliver new affordable housing in a timely and coordinated manner across the build programme of each development.
6. To ensure new affordable housing is allocated, reviewed and monitored in accordance with agreed cross-boundary lettings arrangements and the local lettings plan.
7. To ensure that robust approaches are in place to enable future community needs, including the housing needs of specific groups, to be identified and addressed.
8. To ensure the arrangements of the Preferred Housing Providers are regularly monitored and reviewed.
9. To promote housing from an equalities perspective, seeking social inclusion and routes away from welfare dependency.

### **Operational Matters**

The Partnership will meet bimonthly (unless otherwise agreed).

The Partnership will agree a Chair and Secretariat from Membership on an annual basis.

It is expected that appropriately authorised officers will attend meetings of the Partnership. Decisions which cannot be made by the representative present at the meeting must be made clear at the time and the Partnership will agree a timescale for when the decision will be made.

Decisions made by the Local Housing Authorities will be by consensus. Where this cannot be achieved the matter will be referred to senior management of each organisation who will confer to reach an agreement on the course of action to be taken.

The Partnership does not constitute a legal body in its own right and all decisions made must be fully delegated from the represented organisation, voted for or deferred back accordingly. The members attend as representatives of their own organisation to agree a consensus, working on behalf of their own organisation to achieve the strategic outcomes and priorities identified for the Partnership.

### **Review**

Terms of Reference of the Partnership will be reviewed annually, or as required.

There will be a formal outcomes review every 12 months to show how the Partnership is meeting its objectives and amend them when required by consensus to continue to achieve the above aims.

The Preferred Housing Providers arrangements will be reviewed on the terms as detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding.

**Dated: May 2020**

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### **Preferred Provider Evaluation Criteria**

Preferred Providers are likely to be evaluated on questions relating to the following areas:

1. Regulatory Compliance
2. Partnerships
3. Development of new affordable housing
4. Lettings Arrangements
5. Neighbourhood management
6. Community services and tenant involvement
7. Performance information and customer satisfaction

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## **Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Affordable Housing Partnership**

### **Preferred Providers**

#### **Bromford**

1 Cirencester Office Park  
Tetbury Road  
Cirencester  
GL7 6JJ

#### **Cheltenham Borough Homes Ltd**

Cheltenham House  
Clarence Street  
Cheltenham  
GL50 3JR

#### **Fortis Living**

Festival House, Grovewood Road  
Malvern  
Worcestershire  
WR14 1GD

#### **Gloucester City Homes Ltd**

Railway House  
Bruton Way  
Gloucester  
GL1 1DG

#### **Greensquare Group Ltd**

Barbury House  
Stonehill Green  
Swindon  
SN5 7HB

#### **Merlin Housing Society**

Riverside Court  
Bowling Hill  
Chipping Sodbury, Bristol  
BS37 6JX

#### **Rooftop Housing Association Ltd**

70 High Street  
Evesham  
WR11 4YD

#### **Severn Vale Housing Society Ltd**

Shannon Way  
Ashchurch  
Tewkesbury  
GL20 8ND

#### **Sovereign Housing Society Ltd**

90 Bartholomew Street  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG14 5EE

#### **Two Rivers Housing**

Rivers Meet  
Cleeve Mill Lane  
Newent, Gloucestershire  
GL18 1DS

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