

# Appointment of Member Panel for Project Enterprise

Report of the Corporate Portfolio Holder

## Recommended:

**That Councillors Cross, A Dowden, Flood, P North and Ward be appointed to the Member Panel to be consulted by the Head of Estates and Economic Development in respect of proposed property investments.**

### SUMMARY:

- In November 2015, Council approved a delegated authority to the Head of Estates, in consultation with a Member Panel, to undertake certain property investments.
- The Member Panel currently comprises five Members; Councillors A Dowden, Flood, P North, Rowles and Ward.
- It is recommended that the panel be re-appointed to in order to reflect the political balance of the Council.
- Accordingly, appointments are requested for the Member Panel for property investments.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Since 2015, the Council has operated a work stream known as Project Enterprise, to consider and enter into property investment opportunities from a pre-approved capital budget.
- 1.2 The Scheme of Delegation includes a delegation to the Head of Property and Asset Management , in consultation with a panel of Members (appointed by Council, consisting of five Members, with a quorum of three for each decision) to consider property investments and authorise expenditure from a pre-approved capital budget allocation.
- 1.3 This report invites Council to appoint five Members to the Member Panel reflecting the political proportionality of the Council for this purpose.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Since the delegation was introduced in 2015, several properties have been purchased under this authority. Reports are submitted to Council following each acquisition.
- 2.2 It is considered that a Panel of five Members is appropriate (given the provision that a quorum of three is needed for decision-making).

- 2.3 Council is kept aware of the investments being made, as each is reported to full Council after the approval decision has been taken.

### **3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities**

- 3.1 Project Enterprise has been established to support the objectives of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, by increasing the Council's income in order to reduce its reliance on government support.
- 3.2 Investments under Project Enterprise generate income, thereby contributing to this objective.

### **4 Options and Option Appraisal**

Option 1 – to not appoint to the Member Panel

- 4.1 If the Member Panel was not re-appointed to then the current Membership of the Panel would continue which would not reflect political proportionality.

Option 2 –to appoint to the Member Panel.

- 4.2 This is the recommended option.
- 4.3 Appointing Members to the Member Panel to reflect political proportionality of the Council, replicates the historic position of the Member Panel and follows the principles applied when making appointments to ordinary committees at Annual Council.

### **5 Resource Implications**

- 5.1 Investments considered by the Member Panel are limited to a pre-approved budget.

### **6 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 Property investment decisions should be taken in accordance with appropriate authority. Appointing a Member Panel would allow decisions made by the Head of Estates and Economic Development (in consultation with the Panel) to be properly made.
- 6.2 The Member Panel is not an ordinary committee for the purposes of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and therefore appointments do not have to comply with the rules on proportionality contained in that Act. It is therefore a matter for full Council to determine who should be appointed to the Panel, and in so doing it could appoint on similar principles which were applied when appointments were made to the Council's ordinary committees at Annual Council, but it would not be obliged to do so.

### **7 Equality Issues**

- 7.1 None.

## 8 Other Issues

- 8.1 Community Safety – no specific issues.
- 8.2 Environmental Health Issues – none.
- 8.3 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate – no specific issues.
- 8.4 Property Issues – this report facilitates the Council’s investment in suitable property opportunities.
- 8.5 Wards/Communities Affected – property investment opportunities may arise in any Ward.

## 9 Conclusion

- 9.1 Appointing five Members to the Member Panel to reflect political proportionality replicates the principles which were applied when appointments are made to the Council’s ordinary committees at Annual Council.
- 9.2 The Member Panel will facilitate property investment when suitable opportunities arise. The appointed Members will be able to consider relevant issues surrounding particular proposed purchases, and all Members will be kept informed of decisions taken by reports back to full Council following such decisions.
- 9.3 Property investments using the pre-approved budget provide income which assists in achieving the Council’s agreed Medium Term Financial Strategy.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u> Report to full Council 11 November 2015.			
<u>Confidentiality</u> It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	0	File Ref	N/A
(Portfolio: Corporate) Councillor T Tasker			
Officer	Karen Dunn	Ext	8401
Report to	Council	Date	10 June 2020