



NORWICH City Council

Committee name: Council

Committee date: 14/03/2023

Report title: Adjustment to the HRA capital programme

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources

Report from: Interim head of finance, audit and risk (Section 151 Officer)

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

KEY DECISION

Purpose

This report seeks approval to changes in the Council's HRA capital programme to acquire 24 dwellings and to provide homes for refugees.

Recommendation:

It is recommended to approve the following adjustments to the HRA capital programme:

1. An increase to the HRA capital programme of £3.916m in 2022/23, £3.282m in 2023/24 and £0.963m in 2024/25 to provide the necessary funding to acquire 24 dwellings
2. An increase to the HRA capital programme of £0.090m in 2022/23 and £0.210m in 2023/24 to undertake major works to properties to provide accommodation for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report meets the 'Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a

successful city' corporate priority

This report addresses the following priority or action in the Corporate Plan

- Provide and encourage others to provide new homes, open spaces and infrastructure for residents
- Secure and manage funds from a range of sources to invest in the city

This report helps to meet the housing strategy, adopted policy of the Council

This report helps to meet housing, regeneration and development objective of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan

Report details

1. At its meeting of 8 February, cabinet considered a report, entitled Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funding opportunities for housing.
2. Cabinet resolved to:
 - a. Delegate authority to the executive director of communities, in consultation with the council's Section 151 officer, and the cabinet member for social housing, to acquire 24 properties for the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
 - b. Delegate authority to the executive director of communities, in consultation with the council's Section 151 officer, and the cabinet member for social housing, to determine the appropriate rent level subject to any approval required by the Secretary of State or the Regulator of Social Housing.
 - c. Delegate authority to the executive director of communities, subject to business case and in consultation with the council's Section 151 officer and the cabinet member for social housing, to approve the acceptance of funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
 - d. Recommend to Council, the adjustment of the 2022-25 HRA capital programme, to fund the acquisition of the dwellings as set out in the report.
3. Following the cabinet decision officers have continued to negotiate the acquisition of 24 dwellings and have agreed in principle the terms of a purchase.
4. Further work to build the business case for the homes for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees will be undertaken in co-production with DLUHC.
5. DLUHC have indicated acceptance of our bid for the two projects with final details and grant agreements to be confirmed over the coming month.

Consultation

6. Officers have consulted with cabinet and labour group councillors on the proposals to acquire the 24 dwellings, with broad approval to accept the funding on offer subject to confirmation by DLUHC.

Implications

Financial and resources

7. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget.
8. The financial implications of the council approving the recommendations are an increase to the HRA capital programme of £4.006m in 2022/23, £3.492 in 2023/24 and £0.963m in 2024/25

Legal

9. Full details of the legal implications are included in the report to cabinet (Cabinet, 8 February 2023) "Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding opportunities for housing and the associated exempt appendix.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	<p>If successful with the LAHF funding the council will consider its duties to prospective residents under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as 'someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.</p>
Health, social and economic impact	<p>The acquisition of 24 new affordable homes will provide much needed accommodation for residents on the waiting list.</p> <p>The provision of sufficient and high-quality housing is essential to health and well-being of residents.</p> <p>The provision of homes designed to high environmental standards and let at affordable rents will advance financial inclusion by helping to improve affordability for residents.</p> <p>This development has provided employment opportunities, with the construction being undertaken by local contractors, supported by local suppliers, and has generated local spending for the benefit of the wider economy. Providing more housing is important in supporting sustainable economic growth and prosperity</p>
Crime and disorder	<p>The properties are designed along secure by design principles</p>
Children and adults safeguarding	<p>Providing homes for refugee families will positively impact upon their safeguarding.</p>

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Environmental impact	<p>The 24 properties being acquired meet a high environmental standard that will help to address fuel poverty for the tenants.</p> <p>Consideration has also been given to amenity space and biodiversity on the development.</p>

Risk Management

10. Full details of risk management implications are included in the report to cabinet (Cabinet, 8 February 2023) "Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding opportunities for housing and the associated exempt appendix.

Other options considered

11. Full details of all options considered are included in the report to cabinet (Cabinet, 8 February 2023) "Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding opportunities for housing and the associated exempt appendix.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

12. To provide the financial budget to take forward the two projects identified with Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding.

Background papers:

None


Appendices: None

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