

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR, PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES**



DECISION NO: P&C25

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF USE OF FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT BRISTOL ROAD LOWER, WESTON-SUPER-MARE.

REPLACEMENT OF DIRECTOR'S DECISION (P&C23 2014/15 SCHEME).

DECISION

That the Council enter into a formal contract to provide Curo Group with £33,466 of Local Authority (LA) grant funding to support the delivery of 23 units of affordable housing at Bristol Road Lower, WsM.

This Director Decision replaces the previous Decision (P&C23) regarding this site.

BACKGROUND AND REASONS

A formal Director's Decision was taken in July 2014 for the provision of £33,466 of LA grant funding to support the delivery of 22 units of affordable housing by Curo Group, a member of the Council's HomesWest Partnership. The development, at Bristol Road Lower, WsM, consists of a mix of shared ownership and affordable rented housing.

As part of the development at this time Chapter One, a Registered Provider, had planned to lease from Curo one of the restored Victorian villas to provide 9 units (4x2 bedroom flats and 5x1 bedroom flats) for rented, supported accommodation. However following a regulatory review by the Homes and Communities Agency, Chapter One could no longer proceed with these units.

A viable arrangement to retain and deliver these units as supported housing could not be achieved. Following consultation, Curo Group propose to deliver these units as general needs affordable rented accommodation which would be available for households on the Council's HomeChoice register. Furthermore, the office suite within the original Chapter One proposal is now redundant and Curo are converting this to an additional 1 bedroom affordable rented property.

No amendments to the existing planning consent are required and Curo Group are not seeking to alter the amount of LA grant requested.

A new Director's Decision is required however to provide for the additional affordable unit being provided (23 in total rather than 22) and as provision of general needs rather than supported accommodation. Thirteen of these affordable units have already completed with the final 10 units due for completion in early Autumn 2016.

The Council now needs to enter into a formal contract with Curo Group to enable the grant payment to be made.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Options to retain the units as supported accommodation were investigated, however a viable replacement could not be achieved.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding requirement will be met from commuted sums received from developers which are ring-fenced to be used towards the provision of affordable housing. This proposal provides improved value for money for the Council (in terms of capital contribution) compared to the original scheme as an additional unit is being provided with no increase in total LA funding.

With this additional affordable unit, Curo Group have provided updated scheme costs, which have been verified by the Council and which demonstrates that the amount of LA funding recommended is still required to deliver these affordable homes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE YEARS

There are no financial implications for future years. Supporting the delivery of these much needed units for general needs affordable rent will secure them as affordable housing in perpetuity, contributing to the Council's target to provide at least 150 affordable homes per year.

Reviewed: 

Mark Hughes
Head of Housing and Directorate Governance

Dated: 19/9/16

Signed: 

Sheila Smith
Director, People and Communities

Dated: 19.9.16