

Task and Finish Group - Building Contracts
14 MARCH 2024

Present: Councillors: Belinda Walters (Chairman), Len Ellis-Brown,
Tony Hogben (Vice-Chairman), Alex Jeffery and Richard Landeryou

Apologies: Councillor: Tony Bevis

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Walters was appointed as Chairman of the Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Hogben agreed to act as Vice-Chairman of the Group.

2 **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **APPROVAL OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference, as circulated with the agenda, were approved, subject to changing the term 'building contracts' to 'lease contracts'. It was agreed that the name of the Task and Finish Group would be changed accordingly.

4 **NEXT STEPS**

The Group heard from the Head of Property and Facilities in relation to leased properties that sat within the Property and Facilities service area, as identified in the Council's budget papers.

The Head of Property and Facilities agreed to provide additional information on each of the properties that sat within her service area, namely:

- The address
- The lease start and finish dates
- Whether the property was for investment or community use
- The rental income
- The review dates

This additional information would help Members to select a sample of properties to review. It was requested that a further meeting take place with the Head of Property and Facilities in six weeks' time to consider the additional information.

The Head of Property and Facilities had also been asked to provide a justification for any properties being let for less than market rent. She explained that some rents were being increased incrementally, as part of the usual review

process. She also explained that where properties were being let for below market rent, that was a subsidy and should be approved by Members.

Members identified five or six properties that they wished to consider initially (the ownership of one of the properties needed to be confirmed). The Head of Property and Facilities would provide Members with the additional information and a copy of the lease for each of these properties. Members would review that information whilst the Head of Property and Facilities was compiling the additional information for the remainder of the properties that sat within her service area.

It was agreed that the Head of Leisure and Culture and the Head of Housing and Communities would be asked to attend a future meeting of the Group in order to provide details on leased properties that sat within their service areas. It was requested that this meeting take place in two weeks' time.

It was noted that the Council's properties included car parks that the Council did not charge for and had a community use. These would not be considered by the Group.

The Head of Property and Facilities reported that a sample valuation of the Council's properties was undertaken each year. The next valuation was expected to be received around the end of May 2024. A copy of that valuation was requested.

A copy of the Council's standard lease contract was also requested.

Interest was also expressed in relation to observing an ongoing negotiation on one of the Council's assets.

The meeting closed at 6.36 pm having commenced at 5.32 pm

CHAIRMAN