

ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL: OFFICER DECISION RECORD

Please use this form to record those executive decisions which are taken by officers and are not designated as 'Key Decisions' – or in other words those decisions which are not included in the Forward Plan. There is a separate form for recording Key Decisions.

You should also use this form to record decisions about those functions which are reserved to the Council or to its committees. The Constitution explains what these reserved functions are and who is responsible for them.

1. Self Service Through Pre-Built Electronic Forms In Private Sector Enforcement - Resourcing

Approval is sought for required resourcing to facilitate successful implementation of recent investment in an e-Forms solution which will enable digital transformation of licensing applications in Private Sector Housing.

The solution will also enable us to digitise our private sector housing licensing applications in order to successfully meet the requirements of recent MHCLG funding which was recently granted to us. Conditions of the funding are to implement a digital form by the end of March 2020.

2. Decision Reference No:

Each Directorate maintains its own decision records/reference system to number its decisions. Please make sure that you use this system

3. Decision Taken:

- a) To approve the one-off procurement of required connectors and supplier support to enable integration of the new e-forms solution with our current environmental services case management solution.
- b) To approve the commissioning of up to 10 days interim business analyst support
- c) To note the use of £16,280 MHCLG funding required for a) and b) above.

4. Reasons for the Decision:

The proposal is to implement a digital solution to reduce administration through self-serve digital feature development and process automation, both for resident reporting of issues of disrepair and also for landlords to apply for a licence for their

PRS property, including selective licensing and HMO licensing. During the last 12 months 941 disrepair cases were reported with inspections being conducted on 740 properties. There are a further 800 licensable properties in the district.

Realising these benefits will lead to a better and speedier service for residents and landlords. It will also enable officers to re-direct their time and energies towards more positive, pro-active work including improved intelligence gathering and a more targeted approach to enforcement action. The Council is aware of a small number of landlords who consistently fail in their obligations, our aim is to be able to develop a task force that proactively targets these landlords and their portfolio of properties.

The investment in the 'pre-built' e-form solution is intended as a tactical approach, quick win, to delivering digital transformation in a timely manner in a functional area where current processes require significant administration, whilst also maximising the opportunity of using government funding which has been made available but which must be spent by 31st March 2020. It is acknowledged that this transformation is also part of a bigger roadmap to connect up services for residents through the development of a corporate customer portal utilising design and build of our recently procured corporate solution.

Our proposal to MHCLG was to fund the one-off costs associated with investigating and implementing this digital solution, following this, it will become business as usual and with further developments considered in the medium term as part of our ongoing digital transformation programme.

This proposal recognises the urgency by which we will need to deliver the implementation of intelligent e-forms for Private Sector Housing and the associated risk in regards to sufficient capacity to deliver in a timely manner. Our intention is therefore to utilise the MHCLG funding for short term interim Business Analyst support. The further costs associated with consultancy from the supplier of our current back office solution is also intended to upskill our internal IT resources with regards to maintaining the required connectors between the e-form solution and our back office solution.

The required e-form solution was recently procured, utilising £19,360 of MHCLG funding which has been allocated to the authority for the purposes of digitising private sector licensing applications. The total MHCLG funding available is £35,640. Conditions are to utilise the funding associated with the costs to implement a digital form by the end of March 2020.

5. Alternative Options Considered / Rejected:

Redesign either benefits or private sector enforcement processes using the new low code Digital Transformation E-form Solution. Due to the complexity of the applications and calculations involved this could take between 12-18 months to develop in house.

6. Implications

Legal

The council's contract procedure rules will be followed in respect of the procurement and selection of the required expertise through relevant recruitment agencies. Procurement of the required connectors and consultancy support will be made directly with our current line of business supplier, as required through our contractual arrangement.

Procurement of the required connectors and supplier support is restricted to our current supplier of the environmental services case management solution.

Finance

The total MHCLG funding available is £35,640

The required e-form solution was recently procured, utilising £19,360 of this funding.

Therefore, £16,280 MHCLG funding is available for funding the required resources identified:-

Connector costs and services (includes first year annual fees for connectors)	£6,000
Supplier technical support (7.5 days @ £1,000 per day plus 1 day offsite expenses @ £150)	£7,650
Interim Business Analyst support for up to a maximum of 10 days	£4,750
Total	£18,400
Available MHCLG funding	£16,280
Funding gap to be met from agreed digital transformation funding envelope if required	£2,120

HR

We recognise that the digital and service transformation programme will result in new ways of working and the development of new skills for our employees. The change required will be organic as we change the way we do things, our focus will be on making sure we have 'the right tools for the right people at the right time', both in respect of electronic devices but also timely and accurate information to enable people to work effectively.

We also recognise the urgency by which we will need to deliver the implementation of intelligent e-forms for Private Sector Housing and the associated risk in regards to sufficient capacity to deliver in a timely manner. Our intention is therefore to utilise the MHCLG funding for short term interim Business Analyst support. The

intention is also to upskill our internal IT resources with regards to maintaining the required connectors between the e-form solution and our back office civica solution.

It will be important that we support our employees through the change, providing opportunity for upskilling, as we recognise that not all employees will find it an easy process. We will be focussed on supporting and growing our people through a digital competency framework, supported by our current 'Switch' project with Citizens Online.

The digital and service transformation programme also considers wider impact on all employees in respect of current and future digital skills requirements and support. An ongoing/permanent impact on employees would be reviewed and relevant HR policies would be adhered to.

IR35 will be reviewed to ensure compliance.

Name / Title of the officer taking the Decision

Use your own name or the name of the officer who has asked you to take the decision

Date:

14/2/20

Name / Title of the relevant Lead Cabinet Member consulted (if appropriate)

Councillor Samantha Deakin – Portfolio Holder for Customer Services and IT

(This decision is not subject to call-in and is circulated for information only). If a Cabinet Member has a conflict of interest relating to this decision, then this should be declared and a request for dispensation will be considered.

Date:

Name / Title of the relevant Committee Chairman consulted (if appropriate)

(for non Executive/Council side function decisions)

Date:

The completed form should be emailed to the Democratic Services Team:

democratic.services@ashfield.gov.uk

They will arrange for it to be published on the Council's web site.

EXEMPT OR CONFIDENTIAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF THE DECISION

Use this section to share any confidential information that would not be published or placed on the Council's web site. The information will only be shared within the Authority, as appropriate.

For further support or guidance please contact Ruth Dennis, Director of Legal and Governance (and Monitoring Officer) r.dennis@ashfield.gov.uk or any member of the Democratic Services Team.