



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING

TOPIC – SALE OF VACANT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT DWELLINGS

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Scrutiny Panel (individual Ward Members are consulted separately where appropriate). In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer:

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Committee Administrator:

Nancy Howarth, Tel: 01962 848 235, Email: nhowarth@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

The Council has authority (CAB1336 refers) to offer for sale up to a maximum of ten vacant properties a year. In 2007/08, 8 Council dwellings were disposed of generating £2.2 million for reinvestment in affordable housing. Two properties are currently being offered for sale (PHD164 refers). This Decision Notice covers one further property to be considered for sale in 2008/09.

8 Eastgate St, Winchester – This is a one bedroomed flat in central Winchester. The Eastgate St properties are of significant architectural value, but not ideal for use as social housing. Their listed status make them costly to maintain, although they are desirable properties, and the Council has now disposed of three properties in this street with a fourth currently being offered for sale.

In the current market conditions, it is recommended that the property be sold by private treaty and marketed on the basis of the valuations being the “guide price”. It will be marketed for a minimum period of four weeks before the successful bidder is accepted. It is also recommended that the Head of Estates, in consultation with the Head of Landlord Services and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, be authorised to accept the best offer for the property, provided it is not lower than 15% below the guide price in the exempt appendix.

The property is held in the HRA. The General Consents 2005 (Consent A) issued under the Housing Act 1985 Section 32 permit the disposal of the property at a price equal to its market value:

- a) to any individual who intends to use it as his only or principal home or
- b) to a builder/developer on their covenanting to carry out any substantial works of repair improvement or conversion required prior for onward sale into owner-occupation by an individual who intends to use it as his only or principal home.
- c) There is also provision under this Consent for the sale of a vacant dwelling to any person regardless of the use to which the purchaser intends to put it. (Paragraph A5.1.1). No more than one dwelling may be acquired by a Purchaser (alone or with others) from an authority under the consent in this paragraph in any financial year.

PROPOSED DECISION

1. That the Head of Estates arrange for the sale of 8 Eastgate St, Winchester by private treaty in line with the approved policy and that he be authorised, in consultation with the Head of Landlord Services and the Portfolio Holder for Housing to accept the best offer received, provided it is not lower than 15% below the guide price in the exempt appendix.
2. That details of the consideration obtained on sales be included in the monitoring reports submitted to Cabinet when the capital programme is reviewed.

REASON FOR THE PROPOSED DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Alternatives to sale would have been considered in the decision making process leading to the authority to sell 10 properties per year.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

No representations were received in respect of the proposal to dispose of 8 Eastgate Street. This was taken into account in the decision to proceed with the disposal, as set out above.

However, the draft Decision Notice also recommended sale of 34 Windsor Road, New Alresford. However, five Members of the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel requested that the sale of this property be referred to Cabinet on 17 September 2008 (as set out under Paragraph 22 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules). They made representations objecting to the principle of the sale. Representations were also made by Cllrs Cook and Jeffs to the effect that the property should not be sold when there was a significant waiting list for such accommodation in Alresford and

objected to the timing of the decision during the August holiday period. In addition, Councillor Mitchell objected to the proposed sale and considered improvements should be undertaken on the property instead. These representations will be considered by Cabinet before a decision is made.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

None

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/A

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Appendix One: The valuation prices provided by independent assessments. This is NOT FOR PUBLICATION – by virtue of Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 although a copy can be made available to Members by request. Please contact the Committee Administrator.