

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing items considered at Policy &amp; Resources on 10 October 2019</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2019</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Communities &amp; Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Diane Hughes/Ododo Dafe</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 293159</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>East Brighton; Queen's Park;</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE.****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

1.1 On 10 October 2019 Policy & Resources Committee considered three reports which sought approval for housing acquisitions to proceed. These were:

- Item 60: Home Purchase Policy opportunity – purchase of a portfolio of properties
- Item 62: Site purchase – Valley Social Centre
- Item 63: Lease surrender – Oakley Motor Units LTD, Oakley House, Edward Street, Brighton

1.2 Due to the timings of these offers and the work required to appraise the viability of any potential purchase, it was not possible to take a report to September Housing Committee. The constitution says that where it is impractical for timing or other reasons to go to the service committee first then the matter can go straight to Policy & Resources following consultation with the service committee chair. Following this, consultation briefings were also offered to opposition members of Housing Committee.

1.3 The decisions to proceed with these acquisitions are advantageous to the council. It provides further opportunities to provide additional council homes in the city and/or bring buildings back into council ownership. This supports the priority to deliver 800 additional council owned homes as outline in the Housing Committee Work Plan 2019-23 as agreed at Housing Committee in September 2019.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1 That the Committee note the decisions for items 60, 62 and 63 made at Policy & Resources Committee on 10 October 2019 (attached at appendix 1).

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3.1 The council has been considering a range of acquisition opportunities including the purchase of properties and lease surrenders. Three opportunities were assessed and brought forward for a decision.

#### **3.2 Purchase of a portfolio of a properties – 1 Rugby Place, Brighton**

The report sought approval for the purchase of three residential properties (2 x1 bed flats, 1 x 2 bed flat) at 1 Rugby Place, Brighton delivered through the Home Purchase Policy. The properties are part of a portfolio of properties that a private landlord in the city is seeking to dispose of and he approached the council regarding the potential purchase of these properties.

#### **3.3 Site Purchase – Valley Social Centre, Whitehawk Way, Whitehawk**

This report sought authority to purchase the Valley Social Centre site, Whitehawk Way, Whitehawk. The trustees had decided that the Valley Social Centre was no longer viable and would need to be sold. In July the trustees contacted the council as they were keen to explore the council purchasing the freehold interest in the building, in advance of marketing it for sale on the open market in October 2019.

3.4 The council already owns the car park which is located on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land. Purchasing the property will expand the land available to enable the potential for construction of approximately 28 new council homes. The acquisition of the site would support the council's key priority of providing additional council homes in the city. However, the council will consult the community on the incorporation of community space within any future development of the site and provide a suitable space where need can be proven. This acquisition was also discussed at Housing Supply Members Board on 25 October 2019.

#### **3.5 Lease Surrender – Oakley Motor Units Ltd, Oakley House, Edward Street, Brighton**

This report sought authorisation for the Executive Director Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing, and the Head of Legal Services to use their delegated powers to accept a surrender of a lease. The lease is for commercial premises situated beneath six HRA general needs council housing flats. Housing Supply Members Board considered the proposal prior to Policy & Resources Committee. The lease surrender enables the council to regain full possession of its land and property. Any proposals for the future use of the site will come to Housing Committee, and then go to Policy & Resources Committee for consideration; and officers are considering options for 'meanwhile use' of the vacated space – subject to suitability with regard to the residential dwellings above. The residents of Oakley House have been advised about the surrender of the lease.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 Each report outlined alternative options for consideration.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

5.1 There was no need for community engagement in relation to the the purchase of the three residential properties at 1 Rugby Place. Residents at Oakley House have been advised about the surrender of the lease.

5.2 As part of the options identification process for the Valley Social Centre, officers liaised with the council's Community Engagement Team to gain a better understanding of the Whitehawk area. Officers will now gather more information from the Centre Manager of the Valley Social Centre on the use of the building over the past one to two years. A wider consultation with other community organisations will be undertaken to establish the need for community facilities on this site.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 The decisions to proceed with these acquisitions are advantageous to the council. It provides further opportunities to provide additional council homes in the city and/or bring buildings back into council ownership.

#### **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

7.1 This report is for noting. Detailed financial implications for each of the items were reported to P&R on 10 October 2019 items 60, 62 and 63.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks*

*Date: 18/10/2019*

##### Legal Implications:

7.2 There are no legal implications attaching to this report which is for noting. The legal implications for each property transaction were included in the reports to Policy and Resources Committee.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Name Liz Woodley*

*Date: 21/10/19*

##### Equalities Implications:

7.3 There are no immediate equality implications arising from this report.

##### Sustainability Implications:

7.4 There are no immediate sustainability implications arising from this report. For any redevelopment of the Valley Social Centre, all new homes will be required to

meet sustainability standards, be energy efficient and encourage a sustainable lifestyle.

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.5 There are none.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Policy & Resources Committee 10 October 2019 Decisions for items 60, 62 and 63

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

1. Policy & Resources Committee 10 October 2019: Item 60: Home purchase policy opportunity – purchase of a portfolio of properties
2. Policy & Resources Committee 10 October 2019: Item 62: Site purchase – Valley Social Centre
3. Policy & Resources Committee 10 October 2019: Item 63: Lease Surrender – Oakley Motor Units Ltd, Oakley House, Edwards Street, Brighton