

Decision Number: 08 - 2023/24

Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

Subject: Use of DIYSO refund monies to direct fund additional hours for a post within the District Council's Housing Policy Team

Details of Decision taken: To approve the use of DIYSO refund monies to direct fund extra hours to the substantive post of Housing Enabling Officer within the District Council's Housing team. The extra hours will be dedicated to delivering the permitted uses set out in the Affordable Housing SPD 2011 (SPD).

Any monies remaining unspent at the end of the period will be returned to the DIYSO refunds pot.

Reason for Decision:

As background, Portfolio Holder approval was obtained in 2012 to use S106 affordable housing monies to fund a "Do It Yourself Shared Ownership Scheme" (DIYSO), in partnership with Moat Housing. In total, 19 families were assisted into low cost home ownership under the scheme. DIYSO purchasers are able to "staircase" (increase) their level of ownership. At each point of stair-casing, monies originally contributed are refunded to the District Council. As at 24 November 2022, DIYSO stair-casing refunds totalling £423,324 had been received, of which, to date, £211,540 has been committed to other projects [Decisions 12 (2022/23) and 3 (2023/24)].

The Housing Strategy 2022/2027 contains 4 key themes the Council's housing service will deliver over the 5 year period of the strategy - developing Sevenoaks District's housing offer: building new affordable homes; promoting quality and optimising range and suitability of new and existing homes; reducing homelessness and improving routes into permanent accommodation; and, healthy people, homes and places. The post of Housing Enabling Officer is instrumental in the delivery of all four themes.

The post of Housing Enabling Officer is a permanent position based on a substantive 26 hours per week. Since April 2022, salary savings have allowed the post to be extended to 34 hours per week. This has allowed the post-holder to assist in the delivery of key policy work, including the adoption of both the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 and the Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Scheme 2022-2027. The benefits of continuing the


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<p>extension of the post-holder's hours will provide important support to enable monitoring of the Housing Strategy and its sub-strategies whilst allowing the post-holder to both continue her enabling role and provide vital input to ongoing and new projects, such as the Local Authority Housing Fund and significant changes in affordable housing policy.</p> <p>The post-holder is fully employed over their substantive 26 hours post, in carrying out the enabling role for the Council. The continuation of the extra hours for the lifetime of the Council's Housing Strategy, i.e. until March 2027, will help to ensure implementation, monitoring and reporting of the strategy and its sub-strategies, as well as the post-holder assisting in the development of related housing policy in the Local Plan 2040.</p> <p>Unlike S106 affordable housing monies, DIYSO refund monies can be used by the District Council to fund posts and therefore allows the District Council to employ direct. However such use is dependent on posts being time limited and dedicated to delivering the aims set out in the SPD. Approval is sought to use up to £42,000 DIYSO refund monies to fund 8 extra hours per week for the post of Housing Enabling Officer, for the fixed term period of 1 August 2023 to 31 March 2027. Should any monies remain unspent at the end of the period, these will be returned to the DIYSO refunds pot.</p> <p>Planning Policy have confirmed the use of DIYSO refund monies in the way described in this report, falls within the permitted uses set out in the SPD.</p>
<p>All Documents considered: Housing Strategy 2022-2027 Affordable Housing SPD 2011 Local Plan 2040</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Member when making the Decision:</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>Financial implications:</p> <p>The proposal can be fully funded through the use of Diyso refund monies.</p>
<p>Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty):</p>



(For Democratic Services use)

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The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.	
Local Member (s), other Portfolio Holders and Chief Officer/Head of Service Consulted Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer People and Places Alison Simmons, Head of Housing	
Details of any conflicts of interest a) declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taker b) and any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict	
Decision taken by:	Cllr. Perry Cole Portfolio Holder for Housing and Hea
Signed by Portfolio Holder	
Date of Decision	18 th AUG '23
Record made by:	ABinnie
Date of record:	18/08/23

When completed a copy of this record must be sent to the Democratic Services Section by e-mail and a signed copy by internal mail

All Documents considered:

[Housing Strategy 2022-2027](#)

[Affordable Housing SPD 2011](#)

[Local Plan 2040](#)