

Report to the Council

Portfolio: Housing

Date: 26 April 2016

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Rule 21 (Special Urgency)

1. WAIVER OF CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS – TENANTS’ DECORATION VOUCHERS

Recommending:

To note that the Chairman of Council agreed that the following decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder (9 March 2016) be treated as a matter of urgency and not be subject to the call-in provisions in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Rule 21 (Call-In and Urgency):

- (a) That the Council enter into a 12-month supplies contract with Wicks Building Supplies Ltd for the purchase of Tenants’ decorating vouchers following the termination of the previous supply contract with Argos Business Solutions Ltd for a similar scheme through Homebase, based on a budget estimate of £45,000; and
- (b) That Contract Standing Order C5, Contracts exceeding £25,000 but not exceeding £50,000, be waived to allow the Council to enter into a contract without seeking competitive tenders, due to the urgency of being able to continue to provide a decorating voucher scheme for new tenants, until such time as a new supplies contract can be tendered.

- 1.1 The Council’s current tenants’ decorating voucher scheme, which offers tenants the opportunity to purchase decorating materials from any Homebase store for them to be able to decorate their home when taking up a new tenancy, ended with immediate effect on 26 February 2016, following the sale of Homebase by Argos Business Solutions, who previously owned the brand.
- 1.2 The Council had no prior knowledge of this sale, nor the intention of the new owner not to continue with the scheme. Following investigation of alternative options for the continuation of the scheme, it was established that Wicks Building Supplies Limited offered an almost identical scheme, which could be set up within ten days, thereby allowing new tenants to be issued with vouchers for decorating materials from any Wicks branch with immediate effect. It was proposed that a twelve month contract term be entered into with Wicks Building Supplies, to will allow time for the Director of Communities to identify any other similar schemes and conduct a competitive tender exercise.
- 1.3 The Chairman of the Council agreed to waive the call-in procedure set out in Overview and Scrutiny Rule 21 of the Constitution, as any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council’s interests, as new tenancies were being let on an almost daily basis and decorating vouchers needed to be issued at the point that a tenancy agreement was signed.