

# **Report to the Cabinet**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Report reference: C/108/2005-06.  
Date of meeting: 6 February 2006.**

**Portfolio: Housing.**

**Subject: Virement of under utilised DDF and appointment of PPS to undertake works on private sector housing policies / strategies.**

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## **Recommendations:**

**(1) That £28,000 of the £75,000 DDF money allocated for the private sector house condition survey be re-allocated to private sector housing policy / strategy to enable the appointment of consultants to assist officers in the production of the Housing Assistance Policy, the Private Sector Strategy and the Empty Homes Strategy; and**

**(2) That given the fact PPS have successfully undertaken the recently completed private sector house condition survey, they be appointed to undertake further work in support of officers in the production of the Housing Assistance Policy, the Private Sector Housing Strategy and the Empty Homes Strategy and that Contract Standing Orders C5 and C9 be set aside accordingly.**

## **Report:**

1. £75,000 of DDF has been allocated to enable the undertaking of a private sector house condition survey, which will then be used to underpin the Council's revised private sector housing strategy. This work has been completed and will be reported to members shortly.
2. The cost of the survey is £47,000 leaving £28,000 of DDF available to support more work in this area. It is important that the outcomes of the survey are rapidly assessed and then assimilated into the revised strategy. The survey was undertaken by PPS following a competitive tendering exercise. Their work has been excellent and it is therefore suggested that they should be requested to support officers within Environmental Services in the production of the three policies / strategies for which the survey provides the underpinning data. Contract Standing Order C9 will need to be set aside to enable this appointment to be made.

## **Statement in support of recommended action:**

3. It is critical that the Council updates its private sector housing policies and strategies in the light of new and amended legislation and the recently completed private sector house condition survey. Furthermore, the Standing Scrutiny Panel on Housing is tasked with the oversight and development of an empty homes strategy for the Council, in respect of which cabinet has decided that the council should seek to attain top quartile performance. Given existing workloads and the availability of professional officers within the Council, this work can only be completed within a reasonable time frame if external support is applied.
4. PPS have demonstrated through their work on the survey their professional capabilities and their appointment would also ensure continuity between the survey

work and the resulting policies and strategies.

**Options for action:**

5. The alternative options are:

- (a) to not vire the moneys to enable the additional work to be undertaken; and
- (b) to not set aside contract standing orders and to seek tenders for the strategy support work.

**Consultation undertaken:**

6. No external consultation undertaken.

**Resource implications:**

**Budget provision:** Virement of £28,000 from house condition survey to private sector policy / strategy.

**Personnel:** Nil.

**Land:** Nil.

**Community Plan/BVPP reference:** N/A.

**Relevant statutory powers:** The Housing Acts.

**Background papers:** Existing private sector housing strategy and reports to Housing Scrutiny Panel.

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** N/A.

**Key Decision reference (if required):** N/A.