

Minutes of the Cabinet

1 September 2021

-: Present :-

Councillor Steve Darling (Chairman)

Councillors Carter, Law, Morey and Stockman

(Also in attendance: Councillors Chris Lewis and Loxton)

247. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cowell and Long.

248. Matters for Consideration

The Cabinet considered the following matter, full details of which (including the Cabinet's decision) are set out in the Record of Decision appended to these Minutes.

249. Contract Award for Keyworker and Temporary Accommodation

Chairman/woman

Record of Decisions

Award of Contract for Keyworker and Temporary Accommodation

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 01 September 2021.

Decision

That OYO, Richmond Hotel, Croft Road, Torquay be awarded a contract for a 6 month period, commencing on 14 September 2021, to provide Keyworker and family temporary accommodation mixed use.

Reason for the Decision

There were significant challenges in accessing both temporary and key worker accommodation due to the changes in the housing market and cost of the provision. This had resulted in families being offered emergency accommodation that is elsewhere in the country.

Security of supply at a cost effective rate was required for the local authority to meet its statutory duties. The proposed scheme provided the following benefits:

- Secured access to accommodation in Torbay at a fixed cost, both for keyworkers and families.
- Reduced rework by officers in having to source and move placements every few days, putting additional pressure on an already stretched service.
- Stability for families, whose mental health was being impacted by the constant moves.

Implementation

The decision in respect of the award for contract for keyworker and temporary accommodation will come into force immediately as the decision maker has decided that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would prejudice the Public' and Council's interest. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator was consulted on 27 August 2021.

Information

It was anticipated that the summer would be challenging in accessing temporary accommodation to meet the number of homelessness approaches to Housing Options. As a result, several properties had been leased and more were being identified to assist with demand. The market was such that this had become increasingly difficult. Hotels were fully booked, costs were escalating and hotels due to the elevated market, were choosing not to take our clients. Landlords were also choosing to leave the rental market as house prices had increased. Hence it was essential that the Council stabilise supply and cost.

Torbay Council was approached by OYO hotel chain to obtain sole use of the Richmond Hotel, Croft Road, Torquay, for a 6 month period for temporary accommodation (TA).

There is also a need for keyworker accommodation within Children's Services and other services. It was proposed that a blended model be used at the hotel to provide temporary

(66% occupancy) and keyworker accommodation (33% occupancy) for 6 months, and that the local authority block book all rooms. The contract would run from the 14 September 2021 – 14 March 2022.

The accommodation would be used as the initial placement for families. As soon as self-contained TA was available, the family would be moved to more suitable accommodation whilst either their case was reviewed, or a permanent home was sourced. Additional work was being completed on the procurement of TA and other leased accommodation that was coming online. There was succession planning being undertaken to ensure this was a temporary 6 month arrangement.

At the meeting Councillor Steve Darling proposed and Councillor Morey seconded a motion that agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

Several properties had been leased to facilitate access to accommodation during this challenging time. However, not enough properties could be accessed to meet the current demand, due to the challenges within the wider housing market.

A procurement process was also live to ensure sufficiency of supply from April 2022, negating the need for the hotel provision past this date.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

No

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

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2 September 2021

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet