

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group Update</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2022
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

**OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Effective delivery of top-quality affordable housing from both Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) own provision and from Registered Providers provides numerous benefits to our customers, including physical health and mental health benefits. Scrutiny of this service area provides the opportunity for a range of key stakeholders to be invited for discussions, and for positive recommendations to be submitted to the Executive prior to the renewal of the upcoming Preferred Registered Providers contract.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee consider the initial work of the Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group and provide comment.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report comprises of a brief extract of the work undertaken to date by the Task and Finish Group, alongside their agreed Terms of Reference (Appendix A). A further verbal update can be provided on the evening by the Chair and other members of the Task and Finish Group.

## Background

The Task and Finish Group was established at the meeting of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 May 2022. The Task and Finish Group met on 1 August 2022 to agree their Terms of Reference (Appendix A) including a list of potential witnesses to be invited to present evidence. At their subsequent meeting held on 15 August 2022, the Task and Finish Group received a presentation on the latest sector trends and best practice from Housemark, and had a subsequent discussion with WBC's senior housing officers with regards to WBC's current approach to monitoring registered housing providers and timescales for the implementation of the new contract for preferred registered providers.

## Analysis of Issues

The primary focus of the Task and Finish Group is to promote, through a series of recommendations, a parity of top-quality service regardless of whether customers were housed directly with WBC or with a registered housing provider. The Task and Finish Group have identified a differing level of service between WBC and registered housing providers, with customers experiencing delays, lack of communications, and a generally lower level of service being offered via some registered housing providers.

The Task and Finish Group are keen to ensure that WBC's own social housing offer is also improved via the recommendations made at the end of the Group's research. Whilst WBC's social housing offer is believed to be superior in some aspects when compared to some of the social housing offered by registered housing providers, it is incumbent on WBC to seek to continually improve our own offer whilst striving to be an example of best practice.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	R
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	R
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	R

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

### Cross-Council Implications

Effective provision of top-quality social housing provides a number of benefits to customers who may access a variety of Council services.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard has been given to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duties.

**Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030***

There are no identifiable impacts on the Borough's Carbon Neutral objectives.

**Reasons for considering the report in Part 2**

N/A

**List of Background Papers**

None

<b>Contact</b> Callum Wernham	<b>Service</b> Governance
<b>Telephone No</b> 0118 974 6000	<b>Email</b> callum.wernham@wokingham.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank