

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING – 3 OCTOBER 2016
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REVIEW OF THE WELWYN HATFIELD COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the considerable work undertaken since January of this year in relation to shared management arrangements following the review of the Community Housing Trust by Campbell Tickell in October 2015. This report updates Members on the current position and proposes some amendments to the Articles of Association of the Trust to enable the Trust to continue operating effectively for the time being.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 In order to enable the Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust to continue to operate effectively during the proposed further review, Council agrees to the Articles of Association of the Trust being amended as detailed in paragraph 10.5 of this report.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the proposals in this report

4. Link to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The proposals in this report meet the Council's key priorities to improve efficiency and value for money and to improve customer services.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Articles of Association of the Housing Trust provide the legal basis on which the Housing Trust operates.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no new climate change implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7. Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 None at this stage.

8. Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no security and Terrorism implications in relation to this report.

9. Equality and Diversity

- 9.1 There are no equality and diversity implications in relation to this report.

10. Explanation

- 10.1 Members will be aware that Campbell Tickell carried out a thorough review of the functions and services provided by the Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust (WHCHT) and the way that those services have been provided over the past five years.
- 10.2 In January 2016 the Cabinet gave full and detailed consideration of the proposals and options described in the report. In view of the serious financial difficulties facing the Council and the Trust, Members decided that the sharing of management and support services would be an appropriate way forward as this would enable the retention of the Trust Board and give the Trust the incentive and opportunity to put in place measures to make the savings and improve the ratings and performance required.
- 10.3 Since January there has been a lot of progress on the sharing agenda, with the integration of the Human Resources, Finance, Governance and Communications service areas, and work is progressing on the merging of the reception services as well. Additionally we have now appointed three new directors to the vacant posts.
- 10.4 However, there have been five resignations from the Trust Board over the past few weeks, which has made the functioning of the Board increasingly difficult. Also, there have been discussions between the Council and Housing Trust Board and Officers are making recommendations to the Cabinet to carry out a further review of the operation of the shared management arrangements.

10.5 Under these circumstances, The Housing Trust Board have requested the following amendments to their Articles of Association to enable them to continue operating effectively during this further review period:

- i) Amend Article 22 to reduce the number of Board Members from 15 to between 3 and 10 Members.
- ii) Amend Article 50 to reduce the quorum requirement for Board meetings from 6 Members from specified categories of membership to 3 Members from any category of membership.

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Date: October 2016

Background Papers:

Report from Campbell Tickell. *Business Appraisal for Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust* - October 2015

Cabinet Report. *Review of Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust* – January 2016

Council Report. *Review of Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust* – March 2016