



OFFICIAL EXECUTIVE DECISION NOTICE PUBLISHED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Notice is hereby given that the following decision(s) have been made today by Cabinet Members at the London Borough of Hillingdon:

Title of decision	EMPTY PROPERTY REVIEW AND ONE YEAR CONTRACT REVENUES MAXIMISATION SUPPLIERS
Reference No.	759
Date of decision	Wednesday 26 April 2023
Call-in expiry date	Thursday 04 May 2023
Relevant Select Committee	Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee
Relevant Wards	All Wards

Decision made

Cabinet Members making the decision	Councillor Martin Goddard – Cabinet Member for Finance
	<p>Approved</p> <p>That the Cabinet Member for Finance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agreed to a direct award contract with Analyse Local for a one-year period from 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 for revenue maximisation activity on a no win no fee basis with fees set at 6.5%;2. Agreed to vary the Revenue & Benefits main contract with Liberata to include revenue maximisation activity for a one-year period from 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 on a no win no fee basis with fees set at 6.5%; and3. Agreed to the contract variation for Liberata to perform a one-off empty property review from 01 June 2023 to 30 September 2023 to reduce the number of empty properties to increase the New Homes Bonus Grant. At a 15% fee of the income generated by the reduction in empty properties from the New Homes Bonus Scheme at the cost of c£26,000 for the period.
Reason for decision	<p>Decision One and Two (Revenues Maximisation)</p> <p>During 2022/23 Analyse Local and Liberata conducted their year-one Revenues Maximisation project. Both suppliers used data sets to identify businesses that either were not listed for ratings or were undervalued. The cases identified by the</p>

	<p>suppliers led to a rateable value increase within the ratings list of c3.1m with Hillingdon Council retaining 15% under the business rates retention model, which equates to c£238k with in-year costs of £98k.</p> <p>Officers perceive limited risk to a one-year contract and are satisfied with supplier performance, cost effectiveness and service received. An approved contract direct award of one-year for Analyse Local and a contract variation for Liberata for 2023/24 would lead to further generation of income through business rates.</p> <p>Decision Three (Empty Property Review)</p> <p>Historically the empty properties review has been carried out each year by the Counter Fraud Team. This has been successful, with the team achieving actual New Homes Bonus Grant funding above financial forecasting set in the consultation budget. However, with a significant increase in the risk of fraud due to the cost-of-living crisis, the service needs to prioritise its resourcing into high-risk areas of fraud and loss. This means contracting the empty properties review to Liberata will provide additional capacity in Counter Fraud to conduct activity in other areas of Revenues which are deemed high risk.</p>
<p>Alternative options considered and rejected</p>	<p>Decision One and Two (Revenues Maximisation)</p> <p>Listed below are alternative options that were considered by officers and subsequently dismissed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To cease the Revenues Maximisation work with suppliers in its entirety. This would lead to a lost opportunity to increase retained Business Rate income for the Council. 2. To consider working with alternative suppliers. The market is limited in terms of suppliers that can undertake this work making Analyse Local and Liberata the only viable options. 3. To undertake Revenues Maximisation work in-house in its entirety. Though the team have been and will continue to undertake proactive revenue maximisation work, the service does not have the resources or access to the external data that suppliers offer. <p>Decision Three (Empty property Review)</p> <p>Listed below are alternative options that were considered by officers and subsequently dismissed:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To cease the Empty property review in 2023/24. This would lead to a significant decrease in funding received from the New Home Bonus Scheme. 2. To continue the Empty property review in-house, however, this would reduce the counter fraud capacity in high-risk areas of fraud and would not provide value for money for the Council.
Classification	Part II – Members’ Only and Not For Publication
Link to associated report	That this report be declared as exempt from publication as it involves the disclosure of information in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), in that the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.
Relevant Officer contact & Directorate	Alex Brown – Resources Directorate
Any interest declared by the Cabinet Member(s) / dispensation granted	N/A

Implementation of decision & scrutiny call-in

[Internal Use only]	
When can this decision be implemented by officers?	<p>Officers can implement Cabinet Member decision in this notice only from the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period which is:</p> <p>5pm on Thursday 04 May 2023</p> <p>However, this is subject to the decision not being called in by Councillors on the relevant Select Committee. Upon receipt of a valid call-in request, Democratic Services will immediately advise the relevant officer(s) and the decision must then be put on hold.</p>
Councillor scrutiny call-in of this decision	<p>Councillors on the relevant Select Committee shown in this notice may request to call-in this decision. The request must be before the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period above.</p> <p>Councillors should use the Scrutiny Call-in App (link below) on their devices to initiate any call-in request. Further advice can be sought from Democratic Services if required:</p> <p>Scrutiny Call-In - Power Apps (secure)</p>
Further information	These decisions, where applicable, have been taken under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

This is the formal notice by the Council of the above executive decision, including links to the reports where applicable.

If you would like more information on this decision, please contact Democratic Services on 01895 250636 or email: democratic@hillington.gov.uk.

Circulation of this decision notice is to a variety of people including Members of the Council, Corporate Directors, Officers, Group Secretariats and the Public. Copies are also placed on the Council's website.

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