

12 September 2013

This record relates to Agenda Item 47

## **RECORD OF SPECIAL POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE DECISION**

**SUBJECT:** BUSINESS RATES EMPTY PROPERTY  
RE-OCCUPATION INCENTIVE

**AUTHOR:** PAUL ROSS-DALE

### **THE DECISION**

1. That the business rates Empty Property Occupation Discount scheme described in the report and specified in full at paragraphs 3.1 – 3.13 and Appendix 1 to the report be approved;
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director for Finance & Resources:-
  - (i) to implement, manage and operate the scheme from 1 October 2013 or as soon as practicable thereafter, until 31 March 2015; and
  - (ii) to take such measures in connection with the scheme as are needed to comply with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.
3. That the Executive Director for Finance & Resources be instructed to review the effectiveness of the Discount Scheme after six months of operation and to report the findings to the Policy & Resources Committee, together with any recommended amendments.

### **REASON FOR THE DECISION**

The recommendation should be approved so that a) businesses can be supported in a new way and b) the re-occupation of empty properties can be encouraged.

### **DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

We considered the following possible alternative schemes:

- The same scheme as this one, but with three months of support, which enabled properties up to RV of £100,000 to be supported, albeit at a low discount.
- The same scheme as this one, but with a flat three month 50% discount for all properties up to RV of £100,000. This was within budget but we lost the advantage of choosing a tapered discount and giving smaller and medium-sized businesses proportionately more help.
- Extend Small Business Rate Relief so that properties with higher Rateable Values can qualify – this would have been too expensive to achieve
- Have the empty property discount as outlined in this report, but limit it to geographical zones – too exclusive, could become driven by local factors
- Incentive for new business – too difficult to define when this would apply and

who would qualify.

**Proper Officer:**

Date: 13/09/13

Mark Wall, Head of Democratic Services

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Wall', written over a horizontal line.

**CALL-IN FOR SCRUTINY**

Note: This decision will come into force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of the meeting at which the decision was taken subject to:

- (i) any requirement for earlier implementation of the decision or,
- (ii) the decision being called in for review by 5 Members from two or more Groups represented on the Council.

12 September 2013

This record relates to Agenda Item 48

## **RECORD OF SPECIAL POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE DECISION**

**SUBJECT:** MODERNISING THE COUNCIL -  
WORKSTYLES PHASE THREE

**AUTHOR:** ANGELA DYMOTT

### **THE DECISION**

1. That the findings of the updated business case and options appraisal for the two previously shortlisted options for implementing Workstyles Phase Three (Option A and B) as detailed in the report be noted;
2. That the risks and financial liabilities associated with the “no change” Option C as detailed in the report be noted;
3. That the implementation of Workstyles Phase Three through Option A which incorporates the refurbishment of Hove Town Hall to modern environmental and technological standards and the re-location of the remaining services and staff from Kings House be approved;
4. That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director for Finance & Resources to commence appropriate engagement and communications and to implement the works associated with Option A in full;
5. That the following be agreed:
  - i) the disposal of the freehold of Kings House;
  - ii) the grant of long leases in respect of 76-79 and 80 Buckingham Road;  
and
  - iii) lease areas of Hove Town Hall associated with Option A, on terms to be negotiated by the Valuer and Head of Law.
6. That the Executive Director for Finance & Resources be authorised to use her delegated authority to approve the detailed terms of the disposals referred to in recommendation (5) above, provided that they are certified to be the best consideration obtainable by the Valuer and that the Head of Law be authorised to complete all necessary documentation required in connection with such disposals.

### **REASON FOR THE DECISION**

By implementing the recommended Option A the organisation will be contributing to its corporate priorities, significantly improve its working environments for staff, provide technology which better supports service delivery, achieve substantial financial savings and benefits and reduce its carbon footprint. The wider benefits for City regeneration would be achieved through the redevelopment of the Kings House site for a mixture of high end flats and affordable housing generating council tax income as well as benefitting from new homes bonus. Hove Town Hall would have commercial opportunities for catering, retail and/or offices generating business rates.

It is proposed that Brighton Town Hall would become the council's "civic house" with more potential for community and public space such as catering, art and leisure and tourist opportunities subject to further feasibility studies. See **Appendix 5** for Impact on Key Stakeholders.

## **DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

Option A through the disposal of surplus property and significant investment in Hove Town Hall offers improved service delivery opportunities supported by flexible technology and working choices. The learning & development package to manage change will be delivered to the entire scope of 1,400 staff and the offer associated with this change programme has been modified and improved by learning gathered from the previous phases 1 and 2. The main learning points incorporated into this option will define staff as flexible workers with no fixed workers apart from those with specific equalities needs assessed on a case by case basis. We have also identified that a basic transfer of paper files to electronic is not effective unless there is a degree of integration with workflow and business processes. Cellular offices are to be removed with plentiful provision of meeting space and quiet rooms of various sizes with appropriate technology and informal staff break out areas. All facilities will be flexible and multi-use.

Option B would dispose of Kings House and the majority of Hove Town Hall leaving a small amount of office space (about 40%) and the customer service centre. The option is high risk, financially expensive and could prove difficult to deliver as it requires the acquisition of another office building 'X' yet to be identified in the City that would also need to accommodate all democratic council functions potentially shifting the focus away from Hove.

Option C "no change" would leave half the organisation working flexibly supported by modern technology and environments and half as status quo therefore creating incomplete, inefficient working conditions and business processes and inequalities amongst staff. This could impede service and productivity improvement opportunities whilst also leaving the council with significant liabilities for under-used buildings, unnecessary running costs and future maintenance liabilities as large parts of these buildings have reached the end of their useful life.

Timeline – see **Appendix 6**

The Hove Town Hall building works programme is estimated at approx 18 months and aims to start at the beginning of 2015. The overall change programme implementation will be about 3 years taking into account planning, engagement, technology deployment and adjustments to relevant buildings.

**Proper Officer:**

Date: 13/09/13

Mark Wall, Head of Democratic Services

**Signed:**



## **CALL-IN FOR SCRUTINY**

Note: This decision will come into force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of the meeting at which the decision was taken subject to:

- (i) any requirement for earlier implementation of the decision or,
- (ii) the decision being called in for review by 5 Members from two or more

Groups represented on the Council.

