

## POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

12 FEBRUARY 2014

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### CORPORATE ISSUES

##### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the progress of certain key corporate issues and to seek authority for the formalisation of the Rural Affordable Housing Partnership by way of a Partnership Agreement.

##### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

**It is recommended that:**

- 2.1 **The contents of the report be noted.**
- 2.2 **Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and Head of Regulatory Services to enter into the Countywide Rural Affordable Housing Partnership.**

##### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The following information is given to Members as updates on significant corporate projects and matters.

###### 3.1.1 European Social Fund Bid

As Members will be aware the Council was successful in its European Social Fund Bid (ESF Bid) with this notification being supplied on Friday 31 January, as the timetable indicated. The Bid was supported by DWP as a National “test” to see if other Councils could launch support to move those most furthest away from work, and the longer term unemployed, into a situation where they will have opportunities for seeking employment. By being awarded ESF Status the Council has met the DWP’s requirements in this matter and its Bid will be published in due course as an “exemplar” for other authorities.

Work has now commenced in delivery of the Bid with works to the premises as previously approved by Members, being carried out after 1 April 2014 when the current tenant leaves the property.

As this is a cross-cutting approach reports will be made to relevant Policy Committees however update information will be passed to this Committee.

###### 3.1.2 City Deal

The City and Countywide Partners are currently awaiting the City Deal announcement for the sub-regions. Partners closely involved in this matter advise that this should be public shortly. The Council is participating fully in the established governance arrangements for this initiative.

###### 3.1.3 Local Government Information Unit Awards (LGIU Awards)

Following a joint nomination sponsored by this Council and supported by colleagues at the County Council, the Leader of Melton Borough Council has been nominated for the LGIU Finance Member of the Year. The Awards will be presented at a LGIU Ceremony on 25 February 2014.

### 3.2 Rural Affordable Housing Partnership

As Members will recall the Council has been a member of the Countywide Rural Affordable Partnership for some time. The Partnership is sponsored by the Leicestershire Partnership. During the past year the Partnership has revitalised and reorganised its rural approach to the management of the provision of Rural Affordable Housing. In particular, it has reorganised the approach to developing a rolling five year programme of housing surveys which will assist with a “pipeline” of potential rural affordable sites and housing. The Partnership has agreed to a different form of delivery of the service by contracting with a particular provider, to increase resilience of service delivery and to enable the promotion of the good work in Leicestershire. This can then be made known more widely, together with links being made to National bodies, to ensure that the East Midlands and Leicestershire position is known and understood. Additional training and awareness raising is also included in the package as the understanding of District Council Members and Parishes is critical in the delivery of Rural Affordable Housing.

- 3.3 Members are requested to approve the principle of the Partnership and delegate settlement of the terms of the simple Partnership Agreement to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and Head of Regulatory Services, who with the Planning Policy Role has an intricate interest in the development of a pipeline for Rural Affordable Housing. A copy of the Agreement has been placed in the Members Room.

## 4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The provision of decent affordable housing is a policy priority for the Council. Such provision in rural areas is difficult to achieve as result of many contributing factors. Being part of the Leicestershire Partnership and engaged in the Rural Housing Enabling activity will assist the Council in better delivery of Rural Affordable Housing provision.

## 5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An annual partnership contribution for a period of three years of £4,200 can be allocated from existing budgets. The six Rural Housing Authorities of Leicestershire are each contributing a similar sum with other partners including Leicestershire County Council continuing contributions.

## 6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 The proposed Partnership Agreement has been considered by the Solicitor to the Council together with other legal representatives of District Councils in Leicestershire and the document is considered suitable for purpose and it is proposed that Members approve in principle entering into this Agreement. It will be finally approved by the Chief Executive and the Solicitor to the Council supported by the Head of Regulatory Services.

## 7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

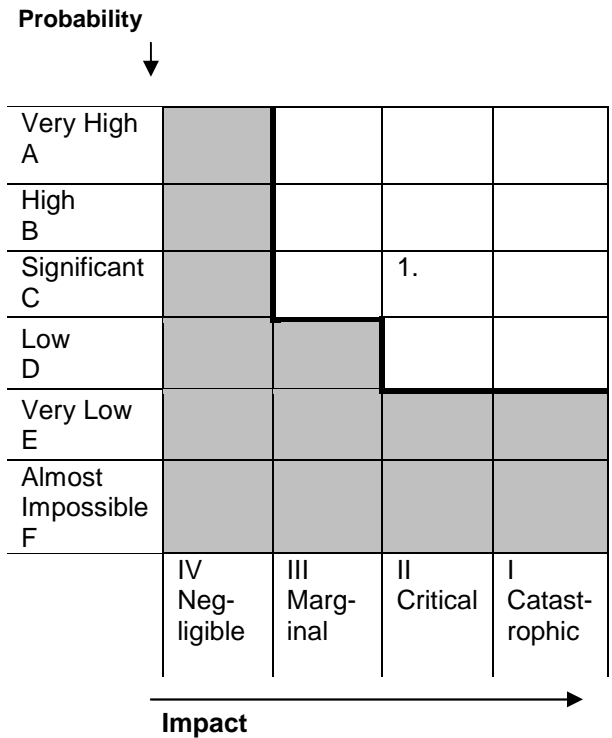
- 7.1 There are no particular implications arising from this report.

**8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 Leicestershire County Council as the Lead Partner for the Partnership Agreement has dealt with these matters in accordance with their requirements.

**9.0 RISKS**

9.1 The main risk is detailed below.



Risk No.	Description
1.	Failure to adequately provide Rural Affordable Housing.

**10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 The provision of new Rural Affordable Housing will be examined in the context of necessary energy efficiency measures and the sustainability of provision in relevant villages.

**11.0 CONSULTATION**

11.1 Consultation has been carried out across the full partnership in relation to the Partnership Agreement and approach.

**12.0 WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All.

Contact Officer: Lynn Aisbett, Chief Executive  
Date: 3 February 2014

Background Papers: 1. Relevant notes of the Rural Housing Enablers Steering Group  
2. Relevant notes of the Rural Housing Project Group

Reference : X : Committees\PFA\Feb 2014\Item 15 LA Corporate Issues