

AUDIT COMMITTEE

17 MARCH 2022

HOMES ENGLAND AUDIT REPORT

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive
Author: Mark Breathwick, Head of Housing; Chris Giles, Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager

Summary

This report forms part of the Homes England Audit process for a relevant board/committee to have sight of the outcome and any recommendations.

1. Budget and policy framework

1.1. This is a matter for consideration by the Audit Committee

2. Background

2.1. This report follows an update to the Corporate Management Team regarding the status of a recent independent audit carried out as mandated by Homes England This update was brought to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) who recommended that this is passed for sign off at Audit Committee and confirmation returned to Homes England.

2.2. The grant was a capital sum of £5,000 to allow for refurbishment of a property owned by the Housing Revenue Account, so that it could be brought back into use for people with a history of rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. The grant was awarded and works carried out as specified in the application with the project starting for Q2 of 2021-2022. This was within agreed timescales.

2.3. In June 2021 officers were notified that a mandatory independent audit needed to be carried out on the project as it had been randomly selected for audit by Homes England. The Council did make representation that the value of the grant received did not warrant such an in-depth procedure but were told that this was non-negotiable. The Council was given a deadline of the 15 September to supply all relevant records and information and to have a submission signed off by an independent auditor. This was completed within the deadline and submitted with the understanding that the Council would receive the result of the Homes England finding early in 2022.

3. Options

- 3.1. There is not a range of options available, Medway Council is required to have the audit findings confirmed as acknowledged at the appropriate committee and then feed this back to Homes England within three months of receipt of the report.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1. Medway Council's records and processes were audited by Lindeyer Francis Ferguson Limited and the final grade awarded is; Green - Meets requirements.
- 4.2. The Judgement Summary for Medway Council is; On review of the evidence provided, the outcome of the audit has shown the provider has complied with all the programme requirements and guidance. A GREEN grade has been assigned and no breaches were identified.
- 4.3. Home England's email of 17 January 2022 requires:
Your Compliance Audit lead, (Chris Giles), will need to log into the IMS Compliance Audit system to download the report and will need to bring the outcome of the audit, any breaches, and recommendations to your board/committee's attention at the earliest opportunity. Once the report has been brought to the attention of your board/committee, your Compliance Audit lead will need to log back into the IMS Compliance Audit system to confirm your board/committee's acknowledgement of the report and board/committee's acknowledgement of any actions being undertaken to address the breaches and recommendations. This needs to be completed within three calendar months of receipt of the report.
- 4.4. As there are no breaches or recommendations an acknowledgement submitted before the 17th of April will meet the deadlines set by Homes England.

5. Risk management

- 5.1. There are no risks in acknowledging the report. There may be contractual and legal risks if the report findings are not acknowledged within the timeframe specified.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. Not applicable to this scheme.

7. Climate change implications

- 7.1. No implications.

8. Financial implications

8.1. No financial implications.

9. Legal implications

9.1. Following award of the NSAP grant, Medway Council has entered into a contract with Homes England and under the terms of the contract need to confirm that funding received has been utilised following the terms of the grant. The acknowledgement of this report is consistent with meeting the terms of the contract. This has been agreed by legal services.

10. Recommendations

10.1. The recommendation is that the Audit Committee acknowledge the findings of the report and that this is then entered onto the Homes England IMS system.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Compliance Audit Report