Procedure for assessing potential property purchases for use as Temporary Accommodation

1. A property may be identified through a number of routes, including but not limited to;
   - A notification through One Public Estate from another public sector organisation
   - Contact from an agent or developer who is aware of the Council's interest in purchasing TA
   - A publicly advertised property sale
2. When a potential property is identified, the first action undertaken will be a site visit by Housing and Property officers. This visit will be to ascertain whether the property is potentially suitable for TA use (in terms of location, layout and size), what a likely value of the property is and whether there are any works required to the property to bring it into use as TA. The criteria that will be utilised to assess whether a property might be suitable for a site visit are as follows;
   - Location; currently, TA properties are required across the borough. Properties that have good public transport links or are close to amenities are preferable and without these factors, a site visit would not be prioritised. Sets of co-located properties should be prioritised as this has management benefits.
   - Size; the main need for properties is 2 and 3 bed properties.
   - Parking provision; many of our TA households have employment or caring responsibilities that require them to have private transportation. This means that having access to parking is often useful, although not essential. This does not need to be a private parking space but could be on street provision where permits can be sought.
3. Following this site visit, officers will report back to a group of officers including;
   - Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health
   - Director of Finance & Transformation
   - Director of Central Services
   - Head of Housing
   - Head of Administrative and Property Services
   - Chief Financial Services Officer
   - Housing Strategy & Enabling Manager
   - Senior Accountancy Assistant
4. This group will then apply the following considerations to the potential purchase;
   a. How many households can be accommodated.
   b. What would the overall purchase and works cost be and how long they would take after purchase (for example, would planning permission be required)
   c. What pre-purchase survey work might be required and what the cost of this would be.
   d. Whether there is s106 funding available to make the purchase; in this instance, the saving generated would be the total net cost to the Council of providing an alternative unit in nightly paid accommodation.
   e. If there is no s106 funding available, whether there are Council funds available to make the purchase; in this instance, the saving generated would be considered as above, with the additional requirement that the lost investment income (that would have been received by the Council should this money have been invested – this is set at a 4% return for the purposes of comparison)
   f. The timing of the next cycle of FIP and Council meetings
5. Should the group agree that the purchase is worth pursuing and that funding can be identified, the relevant Directors will consult with the Cabinet Members for Finance,

Innovation & Property and Housing to gain their approval for a bid to be made at an agreed price, subject to Cabinet and Council approval. This will be on the basis that, where possible, a report will be brought to the Finance, Innovation & Property Advisory Board ahead of Council approval, but where this is not possible due to timescales, a briefing will be organised for the Chair and Vice Chair of that Board.

6. If the Cabinet Members are in agreement, the offer would be made by Property Services
7. If the bid is accepted, due diligence on the purchase could commence, with the final approval for funds to be released coming via Council at the next available opportunity.

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