

Increasing Affordable Housing – Inspired Solutions

Comments of Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth)

- 1.1 The Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 8th July 2025.
- 1.2 The majority of Members of the Panel have expressed concerns about the proposal. The main concern is that Inspired Solutions (IS) have not to-date completed any developments and so have very limited experience in providing affordable housing. It is recognised that the Council's exposure will be limited until a formal agreement is entered into, but this is considered to be a risk to the Council.
- 1.3 It is acknowledged that IS have agreements in place with other local authorities for 750 homes; however, these are in urban areas that are different from Huntingdonshire.
- 1.4 The Panel is aware of the significant need for affordable housing in the District. Councillor Taylor has expressed support for the proposal and has questioned whether Huntingdonshire residents will have priority when the dwellings are allocated. Councillors Taylor and Chapman have stressed that the Council should analyse the implications of Local Government Reorganization for the proposal, particularly its timing given that it will take three years to deliver the dwellings. Furthermore, Councillor Martin has questioned whether the proposal should proceed while the Local Plan is being reviewed.
- 1.5 Before the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal, the Panel recommends that the following should be completed:
 - A business plan including a full breakdown of costs should be prepared;
 - The implications of the references in the report to pensions should be analysed;
 - A comprehensive risk analysis should be completed including items identified by the Panel such as voids and vandalism.
- 1.6 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for Cabinet to make a decision upon the recommendations within the report, and additionally, the Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report.
 - 1) The recommendation in paragraph 2.1 relating to the principle of establishing a partnership with IS has been accepted.
 - 2) However, for the reasons outlined above, the Panel has voted on and approved a formal proposal that **the Cabinet should be RECOMMENDED not to delegate authority to Officers as set out in paragraph 2.2.**