

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

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Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Housing – Renewal of Advantage South West Subscription

Report summary:

Members to note the benefits of membership of Advantage South West and to support the continuing membership of the organisation.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

To continue paying the annual subscription to maintain the membership to Advantage South West

Reason for recommendation:

To maintain properties to a good standard whilst achieving good value for money.

To assist in achieving continuity of components and services across the Property & Asset service.

To assist in the ongoing training and upskilling of staff through regular product review workshops and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) events.

To provide a platform for networking with other Authorities and Housing providers across the South West

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; .

Links to background information .

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
 - Outstanding Homes and Communities
 - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
 - Outstanding Council and Council Services
-

Report in full

1. Advantage South West is a limited liability partnership owned by LiveWest, North Devon Homes, Ocean Housing Group and Yarlinton Housing Group. Created in 2004, Advantage South West exists to improve homes and lives through collaboration and innovation.

1.1 Advantage South West carries out a range of activities including:

New Build:

- they have a range of standard house type designs
- they are working with Altair to develop an offsite new build solution for the South West

Procurement consortium:

- Has been active since 2008,
- Improves value for money for its Members in the products used in new build, planned and responsive maintenance.
- Saves its members in cashable savings and RPI avoidance.
- Arranges training sessions on technical and legal topics, usually free of charge

Credit Union Sustainability Partnership:

- Launched in 2018
- Partnership with Westcountry Savings and Loans
- To provide residents with an alternative to high cost loans

Advantage South West has two permanent full time employees, Neil Biddiscombe (Procurement Manager) and Mark Dobner (Contracts Manager).

Martyn Gimber, Chief Executive of North Devon Homes, is the chairman of Advantage South West.

2. Membership:

- Coastline Housing
- Cornwall Housing
- Cornwall Rural Housing Association
- East Devon District Council
- Exeter City Council
- Homes in Sedgemoor
- Magna Housing Group
- North Devon Homes
- LiveWest
- Ocean Housing
- Plymouth Community Homes
- Somerset West & Taunton Council
- Teign Housing
- Westward Housing
- Yarlinton Housing

Other organisations continue to and are always welcome to join.

3. Frameworks:

3.1 Frameworks are awarded on the recommendation of product groups. These product groups work on a participative basis. Product Groups are chaired by a senior manager from a Member organisation. Each Member has a representative who is responsible for bringing that Member's requirements to the project, contributing to key stages in the process such as creating the specification, deciding how tenders will be assessed and assessing the tenders.

3.2 Tenants also have played an important part in the process. It is essential to emphasise that without the input of the Member representatives and tenants the projects could not have been a success.

3.3 The Procurement Consortium Group directs and oversees the work of the Procurement Consortium. East Devon District Council on the Procurement Consortium Group.

3.4 Of the most recent Frameworks procured East Devon District Council's Michelle Davidson sat on the working Group that prepared the Tender Documentation, reviewed the submissions and assisted in preparation of the awards for both Asbestos Surveying and Fire Door Inspections

4. Areas of Activity:

4.1 ASW have many areas of activity that members have involvement in and can benefit from, typical examples are:

- Off-site manufacture of new homes:
Deliver a new build solution through a Framework model that will mitigate the expected reduction in construction industry capacity and predicted resultant cost increases whilst improving the quality, asset value, specification and lead-time to sustain delivery across the South West.
- Financial inclusion:
Continued development and expansion of the Credit Union Sustainability Partnership with Westcountry Savings & Loans.
 - Deliver KPI targets and household debt interest
 - Deliver online services – web and app
 - Deliver accounts targeted at social housing eg to help with universal credit

4.2 Develop SW Mutual Model to eventually provide Shared Ownership Mortgages and work closely with our communities to deliver the products that are needed on a not for profit basis.

- Procurement Consortium:
Continue to deliver collaborative procurement of frameworks and supply chain management to help members deliver VFM and ensure continuity of quality and availability
 - Provide procurement advice and support for members
 - Facilitate expertise development through CPD and Legal Services updates
 - Facilitate expertise sharing through working groups, good practice groups and forum
 - Continually develop website access and resources available to members
 - Procurement of identified property compliance frameworks
- Energy efficiency and asset management strategy development:

Continued development of a more co-ordinated strategic approach to energy efficiency and planned maintenance in terms of compliance and regulatory requirements going forward to help us procure the labour and materials needed in a more co-ordinated way across ASW partners.

Continued working together as partners to understand the impact of compliance works required and start to position our strategic asset management to help deliver this and secure efficiency and manage risk

Continued development of the Energiesprong and wrap around technology to help look at how we can improve the energy efficiency of existing stock and the materials or solutions that are viable

Health, safety, energy and compliance standards we need to be aiming for within our stock

Procurement of some the additional works that will need to be planned for into the future

➤ **Recruitment and skills:**

Develop an approach to help the south west housing sector improve recruitment results more effectively and promote the sector

- Increase visibility of the housing sector to attract and retain skills
- Improve engagement with education establishments and sector trade bodies to help us recruit more effectively
- Develop options for using the apprenticeship levy more effectively across the sector
- Improve VFM in recruitment
- Deliver savings and efficiency on joint training and development.

5. Benefits for East Devon District Council:

5.1 Whilst delivering savings through a range of frameworks is at the heart of our relationship with Advantage SW, we must not underestimate the benefits that our membership has brought in terms of access to the formal network of Members that provides valuable advice and guidance, as well as the specific procurement expertise that Advantage SW itself has.

6. ASW Projects over the past year:

6.1 Over the past year ASW have re-tendered the following frameworks which are now available to and already being used by EDDC:

- Air source heat pump supply
- Asbestos surveys and works
- Fire risk assessments
- Fire prevention & protection
- Legionella risk assessments
- Legionella services
- Electrical testing & inspection
- Drainage clearance
- Tree surveys
- Cavity wall insulation extraction

In addition ASW have also created Frameworks for:

- Fire Door inspection
- Internal fire door supply and installation

6.2 With the impending introduction of the Building Safety Act EDDC will be exploring the options of utilising these new Frameworks

6.3 As well as the procurement Frameworks ASW have also explored a new Dynamic Purchasing Systems for:

- Flat and pitched roofing repair and replacement

7. Summary:

7.1 Membership of Advantage South West continues to be beneficial for East Devon District Council. Through the efforts of all involved, Advantage South West delivers

- sharing of information and good practice
- access to procurement knowledge and technology
- value for money
- good products
- an increasing range of multi-supplier frameworks
- opportunities for resident involvement
- access to the wider strategic priorities of Advantage South West

7.2 As can be seen there are many services provided by Advantage South West and these could be used by Housing as whole rather than predominantly by Property & Asset which is currently the case.

7.3 EDDC already get great value for their annual subscription but with more collaboration across the Housing team there more services available that could be tapped into and ultimately achieve even more benefit/value for our annual subscription.

8. Recommendation:

8.1 It is recommended that membership of the group continues for 2021/2022 at a cost of £12,283.70 ex VAT.

Financial implications:

The financial benefits of ASW membership are contained within the body of the report and is considered good value for money.

Legal implications:

It is understood that this payment is to be made from a pre-approved Housing budget. It is believed that there are no comments of a legal nature arising from the contents of this report.”