

**REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES**

**TO: EXECUTIVE**

**DATE: 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2025**

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## **LEASE RENEWAL – WOMEN’S REFUGE PROPERTY.**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek approval to renew the lease of a Council owned property to Calico Homes Ltd., for the continued operation of the Women’s Refuge Service in Pendle.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the Executive approve the lease renewal on similar terms to the previous lease at nil passing rent.
- (2) That the Executive delegates authority to the Director of Resources to negotiate the lease terms.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To secure the continuation of a Women’s Refuge service in Pendle.
- (2) To ensure that the terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Resources do not negatively impact upon the value of the building as an asset.

### **ISSUE**

1. Members are aware that a 5 year lease of the Women’s Refuge building was granted to Calico in September 2019, following the Council’s decision not to submit a bid to Lancashire County Council (LCC) for funding to continue operating the service from its existing base in Nelson (address withheld for safety/security reasons).
2. Calico successfully bid for funding to operate a number of Refuge’s within Lancashire, which potentially could have resulted in the Pendle service being relocated outside the Borough. In 2019 Members agreed that Calico could make use of the Council’s existing Refuge property at nil rental, to secure the continued operation of the service within the Borough.
3. The nearest alternative Refuges were reported to be between 15 and 20 miles away from the current location, which would have negatively impacted upon the lives of the women

and children who make use of the service and their families. Many of the client's are employed locally or their children attend local schools in Pendle. Members were also keen to avoid the situation where families of clients using the service would have the expense and time taken to travel from Pendle to alternative locations within the County to meet loved ones.

4. Accordingly Members of the Policy and Resources Committee resolved that the property be offered to Calico at nominal rent, however with the proviso that Calico would maintain the building to the Council's satisfaction during use and yield it up at the end of the lease in good order, to protect the condition and value of the property asset. The property has benefitted from several improvements carried out by Calico in the last 5 years and has been well maintained.
5. The lease has now expired, and Calico are currently running the service under a Licence Agreement granted by the Borough Council, for the interim period until a new lease can be agreed.
6. The Refuge service is fully funded by LCC and Calico were asked to give priority to Pendle residents in terms of support and accommodation, however Calico may offer occupation to women and children in urgent need who come from outside the Borough. This is the case especially where relocation away from the client's home address is required on safety grounds, to minimise potential contact with an aggressive or violent partner or other family member.
7. Calico have secured funding to continue the service from the property and have asked the Council if it will allow them to continue in occupation by way of a new lease on the same terms as previously agreed.
8. Members are asked to approve the continued use of the property for the service operated therein and delegate authority to the Director of Finance to agree the lease terms and conditions.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** There are no known policy issues arising from this report.

**Financial:** The Council, in foregoing any rental income for the letting, will secure the ongoing service operation for residents within the Borough. Calico will be responsible for all outgoings and maintenance costs during the lease period.

**Legal:** There are no known legal implications arising from this report.

**Risk Management:** There are no known risk management issues arising from this report.

**Health and Safety:** There are no known health & safety implication

**Sustainability:** There are no known sustainability issues arising from this report.

**Community Safety:** There are no known community safety issues arising from this report. However, should there be loss of a women's refuge service in Pendle, this may prove detrimental to the Council's community safety provision.

**Equality and Diversity:** There are no known equality and diversity issues arising from this report

**APPENDICES**

None attached.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None