



## Housing Scrutiny Committee 20 January 2021 Decisions

5. Housing Ombudsman Self Assessment.
  - The Executive Councillor approved the report and associated action plan included in Appendix A of the Officer's report.
6. Structural Repairs and Associated Works to Council-Owned Block of Flats.
  - The Executive Councillor approved the issue of tenders and, following evaluation of tenders, authorised the Strategic Director (following consultation with Executive Councillor, Chair and Spokes of the Committee) to award a contract(s) to a contractor(s) to carry out structural repairs and associated repair works to Council housing flats.
7. Estates and Facilities Service Review and Compliance Update
  - The Executive Councillor noted the progress of the service review and compliance related work detailed within the Officer's report.
8. HRA Budget-Setting Report (BSR) 2021/22
  - There were two [agreed] amendments to the 2021/22 Housing Revenue Budget:

- i. A proposal to include a revenue bid for £50,000 to fund a project to explore over two years water conservation options for the existing housing stock, recognising that the findings from the project, once fully explored and quantified, are likely to result in a future capital bid to facilitate the desired investment in the housing stock.
  - ii. The Resident Representative Amendment to the 2021/22 Housing Revenue Budget.
- The Executive Councillor approved:  
Review of Rents and Charges
  - a) Approve that council dwellings rents for all social rented properties be increased by inflation of 0.5%, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2020, plus 1%, resulting in rent increases of 1.5%, with effect from 5 April 2021. This equates to an average rent increase at the time of writing this report of £1.52 per week.
  - b) Approve that affordable rents (inclusive of service charge) are reviewed in line with rent legislation, to ensure that the rents charged are no more than 80% of market rent, with rents for existing tenants increased by no more than inflation of 0.5%, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2020, plus 1%, resulting in rent increases of up to 1.5%. Local policy is to cap affordable rents (inclusive of all service charges) at the Local Housing Allowance level, which would usually result in rent variations in line with any changes notified to the authority in this level if these result in a lower than 1.5% increase. As the Local Housing Allowance was increased

significantly in late March 2020, affordable rent increases will be capped at 1.5% from April 2021.

- c) Approve that rents for shared ownership properties are reviewed and amended from April 2021, in line with the specific requirements within the lease for each property.
- d) Approve that garage and parking space charges for 2021/22, are increased by inflation at 0.9% in line with the level of inflation incorporated into the HRA as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy process, and that charges for parking permits are reviewed, with resulting charges as summarised in Section 3 of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- e) Approve the proposed service charges for Housing Revenue Account services and facilities, as shown in Appendix B of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- f) Approve the proposed leasehold administration charges for 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix B of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- g) Approve that caretaking, building cleaning, window cleaning, estate services, grounds maintenance, temporary housing premises and utilities, sheltered scheme premises and utilities, digital television aerial, gas maintenance, door entry systems, lifts, electrical and mechanical maintenance, flat cleaning, third party management, specialist equipment and catering charges continue to be recovered at full cost, as detailed in Appendix B of the HRA

Budget Setting Report, recognising that local authorities should endeavour to limit increases to inflation as measured by CPI at September 2020 (0.5%) plus 1%, wherever possible.

### **Revenue – HRA**

Revised Budget 2020/21:

- h) Approve with any amendments, the Revised Budget identified in Section 4 and Appendix D (1) of the HRA Budget Setting Report, which reflects a net increase in the use of HRA reserves for 2020/21 of £550.

Budget 2021/22:

i) Approve with any amendments, any Non-Cash Limit items identified in Section 4 of the HRA Budget Setting Report or shown in Appendix D (2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

j) Approve with any amendments, any Savings, Increased Income, Unavoidable Revenue Bids, Reduced Income Proposals and Bids, as shown in Appendix D (2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

k) Approve the resulting Housing Revenue Account revenue budget as summarised in the Housing Revenue Account Summary Forecast 2020/21 to 2025/26 shown in Appendix J of the HRA Budget Setting Report

The Executive Councillor recommended Council to:

### **Treasury Management**

l) Approve the need to borrow over the 30-year life of the business plan, with the first instance of this anticipated to be in 2022/23, to sustain the proposed level of investment, which includes ear-marking of funding for delivery of a net 1,000 new homes over a 10 year timeframe.

m) Recognise that any decision to borrow further will impact the authority's ability to set-aside resource to redeem 25% of the value of the housing debt by the point at which the loan portfolio matures, with the approach to this to be reviewed before further borrowing commences.

### **Housing Capital**

n) Approval of the latest Decent Homes Programme, to include updated decent homes expenditure for new build dwellings to recognise the increased ongoing costs of maintaining homes at Passivhaus standards, as detailed in Appendix E of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

o) Approval of the latest budget sums, profiling and associated financing for all new build schemes, including revised scheme budgets for Tedder Way, Kendal Way, Clerk Maxwell, Campkin Road, Colville Road and Kingsway, based upon the latest cost information from the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) or direct procurements, as detailed in Appendices E and H, and summarised in Appendix K, of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

p) Approval of allocation of funds from the budget ear-marked for the delivery of 1,000 net new homes to the five schemes at Fen

Road, Ditton Walk, Aragon Close, Sackville Close, and Borrowdale in line with the scheme specific reports presented to Housing Scrutiny Committee in the committee cycle.

q) Recognition of removal of the budget and associated MHCLG grant income for the acquisition of property to accommodate rough sleepers, following confirmation that the authority was unsuccessful in the 2020/21 round of the Next Steps Grant bid process.

r) Approval of the revised Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown in Appendix K of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

### **General**

s) Approval of inclusion of Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure and associated grant income from 2021/22 onwards, based upon 2020/21 original grant levels, with approval of delegation to the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to approve an in year increase or decrease in the budget for disabled facilities grants in any year, in direct relation to any increase or decrease in the capital grant funding for this purpose, as received from the County Council through the Better Care Fund. Approval of delegation to the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to determine the most appropriate use of any additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding announced in year, for the wider benefit of the Shared Home Improvement Agency.

t) Approval of delegation to the Strategic Director to review and amend the level of fees charged by the Shared Home

Improvement Agency for disabled facilities grants and repair assistance grants, in line with any decisions made by the Shared Home Improvement Agency Board.

u) Approval of delegation to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to draw down resource from the ear-marked reserve for potential debt redemption or re-investment, for the purpose of open market land or property acquisition or new build housing development, should the need arise, in order to meet quarterly deadlines for the use of retained right to buy receipts or to facilitate future site redevelopment.

v) Approval of delegation to the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to include both expenditure and income budgets in respect of any grant bid made to MHCLG as part of the Next Steps Grant Programme, recognising that any net impact for the HRA will need to be retrospectively incorporated as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy in 2021/22.

w) Approval of delegation to the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to make the necessary technical amendments to detailed budgets in respect of the outcome of the review of recharges between the General Fund and the HRA, with any change in impact for the HRA to be incorporated as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy in September 2021.

## 9. Cambridge Home Improvement Agency – Works Contract Procurement

- The Executive Councillor approve the CHIA board’s decision to proceed with a procurement exercise for up to four years for the provision of three contracts for adaptation and repairs related work.
  - The Executive Councillor authorised CHIA to invite, evaluate tenders and to award contracts to suitable bidders following a competitive tender evaluation process.
10. Feasibility Study the Implementation of Selective Licensing in the City of Cambridge – Publication and actioning the recommendations
- The Executive Councillor agreed that the Feasibility Study Report, Appendix A, can be released into the public domain.
  - The Executive Councillor agreed the actions outlined within the Committee Report to address recommendations of the Feasibility Study Report throughout 2021/22, continuing the Council’s focus of improving and sustaining the quality of the private rented sector within the City.
  - The Executive Councillor agreed that an annual report be brought back assessing progress on the work in time for any new bids be submitted for work in the budget for the following year.
11. Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2021-2026
- The Executive Councillor approved the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2021-26) and the year one and two action plan as appended to this report.
  - The Executive Councillor delegated authority to the Head of Housing to approve annual reiterations of the strategy action



plans at years 3,4 and 5 of the strategy in consultation with the Executive Councillor.

- The Executive Councillor agreed that an update on progress made in delivering objectives outlined in this strategy is brought to Housing Scrutiny Committee on a yearly basis

#### 12. Homelessness Prevention Grants to Agencies

- The Executive Councillor approved the Homelessness Prevention Grants to voluntary, community and statutory organisations for 2021-22, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, subject to the budget approval in February 2021 and any further satisfactory information required of applicant organisations.

#### 13. Update on the work towards a new Council Housing Programme

- The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations from the Buro Happold Report, and agreed these should be included in the Updated Sustainable Housing Design Guide so that all council developments will be required to:

- Target Net Zero Carbon from 2030.
- Target Passivhaus certification from 2021.
- Attain Sustainability targets for water, overheating, post-occupancy evaluation (POE), Electric vehicle charging, car parking and biodiversity.

To attain this will require the adoption of:

- the Sustainability Roadmap to Net Zero Carbon.
  - the decision-making process for sustainability standards.
  - the seven principles of sustainability.
- The Executive Councillor approved the following delivery strategy:

- Pursue a mix of delivery strategies to deliver the 10-year programme.
- The majority of the programme to be delivered through CIP.
- A programme of smaller schemes to be delivered through design and build contracts.
- Purchase of affordable units from developers delivered as a result of S106 agreements.
- Consideration of other opportunities which may arise for joint ventures or development agreements with other partners.

#### 14. Proposed new build Passivhaus Housing Schemes

- The Executive Councillor approved:
  - a new build housing scheme at Ditton Walk.
  - a new build housing scheme at 71-73 Fen Road.
  - a new build housing scheme at Aragon Close.
  - a new build housing scheme at Sackville Close.
  - new build housing scheme at Borrowdale.
- The Executive Councillor approved the capital budget as set out in the Officer's report for the package of Passivhaus schemes noting that this will be reduced should any of the five sites not proceed.
- The Executive Councillor authorised the Strategic Director in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Housing to approve variations to the schemes, including the number of units and mix of property types and sizes outlined in the Officer's report.
- Subject to Council approval of the budget, the Executive Councillor approved the development to be carried out through the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) subject

to a value for money assessment to be carried out on behalf of the Council.

15. Update on the Programme to build new council homes funded through the Combined Authority

- The Executive Councillor for Housing noted the continued progress on the delivery of the Combined Authority programme.
- The Executive Councillor for Housing noted the revised budget related to the Kingsway refurbishment scheme as detailed in paragraph 7.4.2 of the Officer's report approval of which was sought under the HRA Budget Setting Report (HSC Item 8, Section 5).
- The Executive Councillor for Housing noted the revised budget related to the Tedder Way and Kendal Way schemes as detailed in in paragraph 7.4.2 of the Officer's report, approval of which was sought under the HRA Budget Setting Report (HSC Item 8, Section 5).
- The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the revisions to the proposed Scheme at Tedder Way as outlined in paragraph 7.4.2 and Appendix 3 of the Officer's report.
- The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the revisions to the proposed Scheme at Kendal Way as outlined in paragraph 7.4.2 and Appendix 3 of the Officer's report.

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