



## Housing Scrutiny Committee 23 January 2024

### Decisions

#### 5. Compliance Report

The Executive Councillor:

- i. Noted the progress of the compliance related work detailed within the Officer's report.

#### 6. HRA Budget-Setting Report (BSR) 2024/25

The Executive Councillor:

- i. Approved that council dwellings rents for all social rented and social shared ownership properties be increased in line with government guidelines, with an increase of 7.7%, being inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2023 of 6.7%, plus 1%. Rent increases will take effect from 1 April 2024. This equates to an average rent increase of £8.69 per week.
- ii. Approved that affordable rents, inclusive of service charge, are also increased by 7.7% in line with the increase for social rents. This equates to an average rent increase of £13.05 per week.

- iii. Approved that rents for affordable shared ownership properties are increased by RPI as at January 2024, plus 0.5%, as allowed for in the lease requirements for these properties.
- iv. Approved that garage and parking space charges for 2024/25, are increased by inflation at 7.7%, in line with dwelling rents, recognising the proposal to increase garage rents at a higher rate for 2024/25 as rents were increased by lower than inflation in 2023/24. Approve any changes in charges for parking permits, with any resulting charges summarised in Section 6 of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- v. Approved the proposed service charges for Housing Revenue Account services and facilities, as shown in Appendix D of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vi. Approved the proposed leasehold administration charges for 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix D of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vii. Approved that service charges continue to be recovered at full estimated cost, as detailed in Appendix D of the HRA Budget Setting Report, recognising that local authorities should endeavour to limit increases to inflation as measured by CPI at September 2023 (6.7%) plus 1%, wherever possible.
- viii. Approved with any amendments, the Revised Budget identified in Section 7 and Appendix E (1) of the HRA Budget Setting Report, which reflects a net reduction in the use of HRA reserves for 2023/24 of £571,010

- ix. Approved with any amendments, any Non-Cash Limit items identified in Section 7 of the HRA Budget Setting Report or shown in Appendix E (2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- x. Approved with any amendments, any Savings, Increased Income, Unavoidable Revenue Bids, Reduced Income Proposals and Bids, as shown in Appendix E (2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- xi. Approved the resulting Housing Revenue Account revenue budget as summarised in the Housing Revenue Account Summary Forecast 2023/24 to 2028/29 shown in Appendix G of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- xii. Delegated to the Director of Communities the setting of Affordable Rents affected by historic errors, where these had to be reduced and recalculated individually.

The Executive Councillor recommended Council:

- i. Approve the revised need to borrow over the 30-year life of the business plan, with the first instance of this anticipated to be in 2023/24, to sustain the proposed level of investment, which includes ear-marking funding for delivery of the 10 Year New Homes Programme.
- ii. Recognise that the constitution delegates Treasury Management to the Chief Finance Officer (Part 3, para 5.11), with Part 4F, C16 stating; 'All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing shall be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.
- iii. Recognise that the decision to borrow significantly to build new homes impacts the authority's ability to set-aside resource to

redeem the HRA Self-Financing debt at the point at which the loan portfolio matures, with the need to re-finance debt in the latter stages of the business plan.

- iv. Approval of capital bids, as detailed in Appendix E (3) and Appendix F of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- v. Approval of the latest Decent Homes and Other HRA Stock Investment Programme, to include re-phasing of elements of the programme between capital and revenue, as detailed in Appendix F of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vi. Approval of the latest budget sums, profiling and associated financing for all new build schemes, as detailed in Appendix F, and summarised in Appendix H, of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vii. Approval of allocation of £15,285,000 of funds from the budget ear-marked for the delivery of new homes into a scheme specific budget for Newbury Farm, in line with the scheme specific report presented as part of the committee cycle.
- viii. Approval of the revised Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown in Appendix H of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- ix. Approval of inclusion of Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure and associated grant income from 2024/25 onwards, based upon 2023/24 net grant awarded, with approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, 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.
- x. Approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to determine the most appropriate use of any additional

Disabled Facilities Grant funding, for the wider benefit of the Shared Home Improvement Agency.

- xi. Approval of delegation to the Director of Communities 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 recommendations made by the Shared Home Improvement Agency Board.
- xii. Approval of delegation to the relevant Director, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to draw down resource from the ear-marked revenue reserve or capital 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 deadlines for the use of retained right to buy receipts or to facilitate future site redevelopment.
- xiii. Approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to make any necessary technical amendments to detailed budgets in respect of recharges between the General Fund and the HRA, with any change in impact for the HRA to be reported and incorporated as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy in September or November 2024.

## 7. Homelessness Prevention Grants to Agencies 2024-25

The Executive Councillor:

- i. Approved the award of homelessness prevention grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 of the officer's report.

## 8. Update on New Build Council Housing Delivery

The Executive Councillor:

- i. Noted the continued progress on the delivery of the approved housing programme.
- ii. Approved the inclusion of 2-28 Davy Road, 1-8a Bracklyn Road, and Davy Road Garages 1-32 into the 10yr programme, as an estate under redevelopment consideration. Members would be consulted prior to the commencement of survey work and prior to the commencement of consultation with residents.

9. Purchase of new affordable housing - Newbury Farm, Wort's Causeway

The Executive Councillor:

- i. Approved the purchase of 60 new Council homes at Newbury Farm, Worts' Causeway and delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Development (Place Group) to approve contract terms with CIP in respect of this transaction.
- ii. Delegated Authority to the Assistant Director of Development (Place Group) to agree rental tenures in line with Council Policy and planning consents for the Newbury Farm Affordable Housing.
- iii. Approved a total budget of £15,285,000 to enable the development of 60 homes at Newbury Farm, Worts' Causeway.

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