

**HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

19 January 2021

5.00 - 9.50 pm

**Present:** Councillors Todd-Jones (Chair), Bird (Vice-Chair), Hadley, McGerty, Martinelli, Porrer, Robertson and Sheil

Executive Councillors: Johnson (Executive Councillor for Housing),

Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives: Agate (Tenant Representative), Amiteye (Tenant Representative), Best (Leaseholder Representative), Powell-Hardy (Tenant Representative), Minns (Tenant Representative) and Stevens (Tenant Representative)

**Officers:**

Strategic Director: Fiona Bryant

Strategic Director: Suzanne Hemingway

Assistant Head of Finance and Business Manager: Julia Hovells

Head of Housing: David Greening

Head of Housing Maintenance and Assets: Lynn Thomas

Head of Housing Development Agency: Claire Flowers

Asset Manager: Will Barfield

Home Improvement Agency Manager: Frances Swann

Housing Services Manager: James McWilliams

Residential Team Manager, Environmental Services: Claire Adelizzi

Senior Development Manager: Ben Binns

Senior Housing Development Manager: Jim Pollard

Policy and Performance Officer: Sally Norman

Committee Manager: James Goddard

**Others Present:**

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**21/1/HSC Apologies**

Mandy Powell-Hardy sent apologies as she would join the meeting late (joined for 21/6/HSC).

Christabelle Amiteye sent apologies as she would not be able to join the meeting for part 2 (from 21/9/HSC).

Diane Best would leave the meeting during part 2 (from 21/12/HSC).

### **21/2/HSC Declarations of Interest**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Councillor Robertson	21/6/HSC and 21/8/HSC	Personal: His daughter has a flat in Davey Road.
Mrs Minns	21/6/HSC	Personal: Resident who lived in flats being discussed in this item.
Councillor Bird	21/9/HSC	Personal: Was a service user.
Councillor Bird	21/10/HSC	Personal: Was Chair of the Licensing Committee that considered the issue of selective licensing.
Mrs Minns	21/11HSC	Personal: Convener of a voluntary group to support homeless women.
Councillor Bird	21/12/HSC	Personal: Tenant of Cambridge Housing Society.
Councillor Robertson	21/12/HSC	Personal: Trustee of Cambridge Cyrenians

### **21/3/HSC Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

The Committee formally co-opted the Tenant and Leaseholder representatives.

### **21/4/HSC Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

### **21/5/HSC Housing Ombudsman Self Assessment**

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair)

### **Matter for Decision**

The report presented the findings of a self-assessment undertaken in response to the publication of the Housing Ombudsman's (HO) Complaint Handling Code and Self-Assessment Tool.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

Approved the report and associated action plan included in Appendix A of the Officer's report.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Policy and Performance Officer.

The Head of Housing and Policy and Performance Officer said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Officers had compared the City Council with several other councils, we were doing well in comparison to others.
- ii. The City Council had similar levels of complaint escalation to other councils.
- iii. The City Council performed better in responding faster to stage 1 and 2 complaints compared to other councils.

The Committee resolved by 13 votes to 0 (unanimous of all present) to endorse the recommendation.

Mandy Powell-Hardy joined the meeting after the vote.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **21/6/HSC Structural Repairs and Associated Works to Council-Owned Blocks of Flats**

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair)

**Matter for Decision**

The Council owns a number of blocks of flats built in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of these flats have structural concrete elements. Further to a report submitted to Housing Scrutiny Committee in January 2020, Estates and Facilities have been surveying blocks of flats that have three stories or more and a further list of properties where structural repair work is required has been identified. Detail designs were underway, and the work needed to be tendered in order to award a contract(s) to a building contractor.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

Approved the issue of tenders and, following evaluation of tenders, authorised the Strategic Director (following consultation with Executive Councillor, Chair, Vice 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.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Asset Manager.

The Asset Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. There would be no climate change impact from the repair work, it was making good what was already in place.
- ii. Other programs of work in the housing capital program may have a more positive impact in reducing climate change.  
Councillor Todd-Jones said work would lead to more energy efficient buildings.
- iii. Stakeholders were being consulted about repairs, the council would listen to resident's wishes about whether they would like repairs to be undertaken or not. Officers would be mindful of the impact of repairs (eg noise) as people stayed at home due to covid lockdown.
- iv. The budget provision for work was already set out in the Council's 30 year plan. If committee members wished to scrutinise progress of the contract process then a report could be brought back to Housing Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Robertson said processes were in place for officers to oversee the contract process if/once delegation was given.

The Strategic Director said a general capital program delivery report could be brought to committee, but not one for individual projects.

Diane Best requested a change to the recommendation in the Officer's report (amendment shown as bold text):

Approved the issue of tenders and, following evaluation of tenders, authorised the Strategic Director (following consultation with Executive Councillor, Chair, **Vice 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.

The Committee unanimously approved this amended recommendation.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation as amended.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **21/7/HSC Estates & Facilities Service Review and Compliance Update**

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair)

#### **Matter for Decision**

The report provides an update on the Estates & Facilities Service Review and information on compliance related work within the service, including a summary on gas servicing, electrical testing and fire safety work.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

Noted the progress of the service review and compliance related work detailed within the Officer's report.

#### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Housing Maintenance and Assets.

The Head of Housing Maintenance and Assets said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Officers were writing to leaseholders inviting them to use the same contract as tenants to install fire doors in flats. Some leaseholders had taken up this offer. A report would come back to committee in future after Fire Safety Bill information had been received.
- ii. Options around payment for fire doors for Leaseholders would be set out in the report.
- iii. Currently, it was not always possible for officers to undertake fire door work as people did not always want work personnel in their homes due to home working/schooling in lockdown. Officers were working with contractors and residents to find a compromise. Officers would wait until the end of lockdown to undertake work if residents did not want work undertaken at present. A waiver to seek written confirmation to delay work would not be sought from residents. Officers could seek advice to ascertain the impact on home insurance if fire doors were not installed.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**21/8/HSC HRA Budget-Setting Report (BSR) 2021/22**

Recommendations (part 1) a to k were chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair /Tenant Representative) and recommendations (part 2) l to w were chaired by Councillor Todd-Jones

**Matter for Decision**

As part of the 2021/22 budget process, the range of assumptions upon which the HRA Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy were based,

have been reviewed in light of the latest information available, culminating in the preparation of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

The HRA Budget-Setting Report provides an overview of the review of the key assumptions. It sets out the key parameters for the detailed recommendations and final budget proposals and is the basis for the finalisation of the 2021/22 budgets.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing Review of Rents and Charges**

- a) Approved 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) Approved 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) Approved 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) Approved 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) Approved the proposed service charges for Housing Revenue Account services and facilities, as shown in Appendix B of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- f) Approved the proposed leasehold administration charges for 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix B of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

- g) Approved 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.
- h) Approved 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.
- i) Approved 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) Approved 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) Approved 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:

- 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.
- n) Approve 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) Approve 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) Approve 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) Approve the revised Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown in Appendix K of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- s) Approve the 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) Approve 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) Approve 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) Approve 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) Approve 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.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Head of Finance and Business Manager.

The Assistant Head of Finance and Business Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. There was an initial increase in rent arrears for tenanted properties in the first lockdown, this stabilised in May 2020 so the broad trend was that closing cash offices did not increase rent arrears as people moved onto other payment methods e.g. online.
- ii. There was sufficient provision for bad debt in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This also set out interest rates for loans.
- iii. There were no proposals to reduce the number of Open Door (magazine) issues from three to two. Funding for this had not been removed, there was historic underspend in the resident grant budget over a period of years so the budget had been reduced.
- iv. The Community Alarm Charge of £5.32 should include an enhanced response time by the County Council. As this service would not be provided, the figure was expected to change to £3.42 for a response within sixty minutes (as opposed to thirty under the £5.32 figure). This was subject to written confirmation from the County Council, which would then be agreed by Housing Scrutiny Committee and at Full Council.

The Executive Councillor said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Council had a 30 year business plan to build and maintain housing stock.
- ii. The above inflation rent increase was fair and in line with other local authorities. Cambridge City Council had measures in place to assist people who had difficulties paying rent.
- iii. Reiterated that rent arrears were stable over a period of several months. Sufficient resources were in place to support tenants who experienced financial difficulties. No-one would be evicted during the pandemic. The council was trying to balance income with investment and service provision. Rents would be kept under review.

Councillor Martinelli introduced the Liberal Democrat Amendment to the 2021/22 Housing Revenue Budget.

Councillor Robertson requested a change to the recommendation in the Officer's report (amendment shown as bold text):

1.3ii 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.

The Committee unanimously approved this amended recommendation.

The following vote was chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair / Tenant Representative).

The Chair decided that the recommendations highlighted in the Liberal Democrats Group alternative budget should be voted on and recorded separately:

1.3i A proposal to include a revenue bid of £30,000 to fund a project to review responsive and void repairs service standards, with the aim to improve service levels for council property maintenance, to manage tenant expectations and reduce complaints.

3 votes in favour to 11 against. The amendment was lost.

1.3ii 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.

Committee unanimously in favour. The amendment was accepted.

1.3iii A proposal to extend the funding for the Energy Assessor post, from the current two year fixed term funding, for a further three years (at a cost of £47,200 per annum), to ensure that energy improvements can be considered for a greater number of existing council homes, recognising that the work of the Energy assessor is likely to result in future capital bids to facilitate the required investment in the housing stock.

3 votes in favour to 11 against. The amendment was lost.

Diane Best introduced the Resident Representative Amendment to the 2021/22 Housing Revenue Budget.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Fly tipping was an issue to address.
- ii. Councillors expressed concern that enforcement action could be taken against a whole block of flats if an individual perpetrator could not be identified.
- iii. Extra personnel could be needed in lockdown to assist tackling fly tipping in lockdown. Clean up days could be re-instated after lockdown. Council enforcement teams liaised with other officers, so if the enforcement team could not take action, other officers would.

The Resident Representative alternative budget: 11 votes in favour to 0 against with 3 abstentions. The amendment was accepted.

Unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations a to k of the budget proposal, as amended above.

*The following vote was chaired by Councillor Todd-Jones.*

Resolved (5 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions) to endorse the original recommendations l to v of the budget proposal.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**21/9/HSC Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency – Works Contract Procurement**

This item was chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

**Matter for Decision**

Cambridge City Council are the lead authority with overall management responsibility for the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency (CHIA) shared service. In accordance with the City Council's corporate governance, the Officer's report sought approval for the CHIA Board's decision to procure new contractors for delivery of adaptations work managed by the Agency.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

- i. Approved the CHIA's board decision to proceed with a procurement exercise for up to four years for the provision of three contracts for adaptations and repairs related work
- ii. Authorised CHIA to invite, evaluate tenders and to award contracts to suitable bidders following a competitive tender evaluation process.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Home Improvement Agency Manager.

In response to Members' questions the Home Improvement Agency Manager said that the contract retendering process would encourage local contractors as those based further away may not be able to fulfil the project brief.

The Committee unanimously\* resolved to endorse the recommendations. (\*Only councillors were able to vote on part 2 items.)

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **21/10/HSC Feasibility Study for the Implementation of Selective Licensing in the City of Cambridge - Publication and Actioning the Recommendations**

This item was chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

#### **Matter for Decision**

An independent feasibility study was conducted into the need for selective licensing of private rented properties within Cambridge City. The study was for the purpose of identifying if it was appropriate for the Council to implement a scheme.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

- i. Agreed that the Feasibility Study Report, contained in Appendix A of the Officer's report could be released into the public domain.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Agreed that an annual report be brought back assessing progress on the work in time for any new bids to be submitted for work in the budget for the following year.

#### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

#### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

#### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Residential Team Manager, Environmental Services.

The Executive Councillor said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The report raised several possibilities where the council could take action against private sector landlords where they did not respond to issues raised by tenants.
- ii. The report had a wider scope than just housing (acknowledged there was a high demand for this). The report looked at socio-economic issues (eg crime) and how actions could be taken to address these.

The Residential Team Manager said that work was underway to set up an enforcement group to share intelligence across regulatory services within the council as well as with external stakeholders including the Fire Service.

Councillor Robertson requested a change to the recommendation in the Officer's report:

Add third recommendation: 2.3 Agree 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."

The Committee unanimously approved this additional recommendation.

The Chair decided that the recommendations highlighted in the Officer's report should be voted on and recorded separately:

The Committee unanimously endorsed recommendation 2.1.

The Committee endorsed recommendation 2.2 by 5 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions.

The Committee approved (new) recommendation 2.3 unanimously.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations as amended.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **21/11/HSC Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2021 – 2026**

This item was chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

### **Public Questions**

A member of the public (representing 'It Takes a City (Cambridge)') asked a question as set out below.

- i. Supported the strategy as it would help rough sleepers.
- ii. Asked the council to consider some additions to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy:
  - a. Reduce rough sleeping target to zero.
  - b. Collaborate with the public, private and third sectors.
  - c. Could all partners jointly own the Strategy and share actions.

The Executive Councillor said he would be happy to follow up with officers on how to develop the Strategy going forward.

Councillor Bick, speaking as a Ward Councillor raised the following points:

- i. Welcomed the report and Strategy.
- ii. Was seeking a joined up approach to address issues.
- iii. The adoption of the street to home approach would be of particular help to entrenched rough sleepers through support for individuals by a link worker.
- iv. There was concern that the County Council would close hostels, but they had stepped back from this. The County Council were looking to work with the City Council to ensure a strategy was in place before funding was withdrawn.
- v. The ambition was to reduce rough sleeping numbers, but this would involve dealing with people with complicated issues who were sometimes hard to engage.
- vi. The city was a magnet that attracted people to get money for substance addictions, which stopped them getting homes and jobs. This needed to be addressed to get to zero rough sleepers.
- vii. Members of the public wanted to help the homeless community, but did not always know how to. Queried how to educate them and show links to voluntary groups.

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Signposted priorities in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy to address rough sleeping and the complicated issues associated with it such as begging.
- ii. The Strategy was looking at advice, support and enforcement actions that could be undertaken with partner organisations such as the Police.
- iii. The public made enquiries about how to help people seen begging:



- a. Ways to give education information (eg webpages) were being reviewed.
- b. A future Communication Strategy was being considered (with partner organisations) on how to do this.

The Committee gave a formal vote of thanks from to the Housing Services Manager and colleagues for their work to tackle homelessness.

### **Matter for Decision**

The Council is required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This requirement is provided for in the Homelessness Act 2002 (as amended).

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

- i. Approved the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2021-26) and the year one and two action plan as appended to the officer's report
- ii. 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
- iii. Agreed than an update on progress made in delivering objectives outlined in this strategy was brought to Housing Scrutiny Committee on a yearly basis.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Housing Services Manager.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Many homeless women were 'hidden' as they sofa surfed instead of living on the streets.
- ii. 80% of rough sleepers were men and 20% were women, so services were geared towards men.
- iii. Women were often homeless due to domestic abuse, so were a vulnerable group, which should be reflected in the Strategy.

- iv. Separate male and female accommodation should be provided in homeless accommodation.
- v. Queried how the LGBT community were affected by homelessness.
- vi. There were people who resisted coming off the street. Different solutions were needed to get people off the street and address anti-social behaviour such as campfires and drug abuse.
- vii. The pods were a good idea. Queried if they could be set up in all city wards. Asked Ward Councillors to recommend areas where pods could be built.

The Head of Housing said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. There were many reasons why homeless figures fluctuated such as inward migration. A target to achieve zero homeless people could be set, but it would be hard to achieve.
- ii. Jimmy's Homeless Shelter would provide an exceptions report to show the rate of homelessness to the County Council who were responsible for monitoring it.
- iii. The City Council would support people moving from hostels to private rented or local authority housing.
- iv. One pod will be allocated specifically for a LGBT person's use. Officers would look at LGBT needs separately, this did not require a change to the Officer's recommendation.
- v. Homelessness was a wider issue than just rough sleeping.

Councillor Martinelli requested a change to the recommendation in the Officer's report :

2.3 Agree that an update on progress with this strategy is brought to Housing Scrutiny Committee on a yearly basis.

This was amended by Councillor Sheil (with Councillor Martinelli agreement) to:

2.3 Agree that an update on progress **made in delivering objectives outlined in** this strategy is brought to Housing Scrutiny Committee on a yearly basis.

The Committee unanimously approved this additional recommendation.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the recommendations as amended.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations as amended.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**21/12/HSC Homelessness Prevention Grants to Agencies**

This item was chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

**Matter for Decision**

This report outlined grant funding to organisations providing homelessness prevention services. It provided an overview of the process, eligibility criteria and budget in Section 3 of the Officer's report and Appendix 1 detailed the applications received with recommendations for 2021-22 awards.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

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

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Housing Services Manager.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. The City Council were doing a lot with a fixed amount of money.
- ii. The same amount of grant funding was available this year as last year, but the cost of services was increasing. Expressed concern that grant funding was increasing by 1% but inflation was increasing by 2%.

The Housing Services Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Organisations would have to source funding from other sources to cover their costs.

- ii. There had been an increase in domestic tension in the last nine to ten months due to covid. Officers were monitoring the situation. There had not been an increase in the number of people approaching the housing advice service.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **21/13/HSC Update on the Work Towards a new Council Housing Programme**

This item was chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

#### **Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report provided an update on the new build housing programme for 2022-2032.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

- i. 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:
  - a. Target Net Zero Carbon from 2030.
  - b. Target Passivhaus certification from 2021.
  - c. 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:

- d. the Sustainability Roadmap to Net Zero Carbon.
  - e. the decision-making process for sustainability standards.
  - f. the seven principles of sustainability.
- ii. Approved the following delivery strategy:

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

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Housing Development Agency.

The Strategic Director and Head of Housing Development Agency said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Circa two thousand homes were being built to the Passivhaus standard.
- ii. National bodies and other local authorities were supportive of the standard but were not building on similar scale schemes to Cambridge as the risks were higher to achieve targets.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 (with 3 abstentions) to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**21/14/HSC Proposed new Build Passivhaus Housing Schemes**

This item was chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

**Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report brought forward proposals for 35 dwellings across five sites as a first step in delivering homes on Passivhaus principles.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

- i. Approved new build housing schemes
  - a. at Ditton Walk.
  - b. at 71-73 Fen Road.
  - c. at Aragon Close.
  - d. at Sackville Close.
  - e. at Borrowdale.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Subject to Council approval of the budget, 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.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Senior Housing Development Manager.

The Senior Housing Development Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Allocated disabled parking was available.
- ii. There was a lot of misinformation around what the City Council planned for the Fen Road site, it was hoped the Officer's report addressed this.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **21/15/HSC Update on the Programme to Build new Council Homes Funded Through the Combined Authority**

This item was chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

#### **Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report provided an update on the programme to deliver 500 Council homes with funding from the Combined Authority.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing**

- i. Noted the continued progress on the delivery of the combined Authority programme.
- ii. 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).
- iii. 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).
- iv. 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.
- v. 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.

#### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

#### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

#### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Housing Development Agency.

The Strategic Director and Head of Housing Development Agency said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Funding for some of the program came from the Combined Authority, but this would not cover the whole program. The City Council would continue to report to the Combined Authority on a quarterly basis. Future funding may come from Central Government.
- ii. Jimmy's Homeless Shelter managed the pods. They would provide reports to the City Council. Pods were set up in Dundee Close and Newmarket Road. Crowlands Way pods had planning permission.
- iii. Sixteen pods were planned, future ones could be made accessible if there was demand. Pods and furniture had to be ordered in advance of being set up. The Council could order more modular homes if they were needed.
- iv. Officers were reviewing housing sites to balance the need for conventional homes and modular ones. Officers had to look at the need for different accommodation on-site.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 (with 3 abstentions) to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 9.50 pm

**CHAIR**