

## **HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 JANUARY 2024**

**5.30 – 8.36pm**

**Present:** Councillors Pounds (Chair), Griffin, Holloway, Lee, Porrer, Robertson, Swift, Thittala Varkey, Tong

**Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives:** Diana Minns (Vice Chair), Mandy Powell-Hardy

**Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness:** Councillor Bird

### **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL (Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness)**

#### **2024/25 Housing Revenue Account Budget Setting Report**

As part of the 2024/25 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 2024/25 budgets.

Councillor Pounds had left the meeting before the vote on the Part 2 recommendations. Councillor Robertson (Vice-Chair Councillor representative) chaired this vote.

The Housing Scrutiny Committee considered and approved recommendations L - s by 5 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions.

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Accordingly, Council is recommended to:

- 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.