

Full Council

Monday 24 February 2025 6pm

HRA Budget Commentary

Green Group

Cllr Elliot Tong, Green Housing Spokes

1 Overview

Our main budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account are as follows:

An “extra care” housing officer to work on complex case work including hoarding related casework.

A systematic review of older garage stock to find new sites for council housing.

A “cold spot” review to pick up unreported condensation, damp and mould cases in areas where there is already a concentration of such reports and disrepair claims.

2 Extra care officer / hoarding related case work

Hoarding is often the easiest sign to spot that a resident may be in need of help. For example, a common trigger for a hoarding problem to start or get worse is the death of a close family member. Left untreated, hoarding can be a serious health and safety threat for the hoarder, their family and their neighbours as well as causing property damage.

However, hoarding isn't always taken seriously. So we were very nervous about suggesting extra resources to deal with hoarding and delighted to discover that officers were already working on a funded proposal for next year.

For that reason, no additional funding is applied for and we take this opportunity to put on record our support for this proposal.

2 Review of garage stock to find opportunities to build housing

Modern cars are larger than cars were when the garages were built and some of the older garages are no longer well used. Much of the older HRA garage stock is used for other purposes rather than as garages. Some of these uses cause problems for neighbours. We have requested a review of this stock to ascertain whether the sites can be repurposed for housing. This suggestion has been taken up by officers and is included in the main budget.

3 Cold spots

Previous Green budget proposals have covered the issues of under-reporting repairs and particularly of condensation, damp and mould. We are still getting new historic cases for a variety of reasons and have proposed a "cold spot" review in places where there is already a high density of claims. Review costs are minimal and no specific allocation is proposed. However, the review is mentioned in the report because there is a clear prospect that it will result in an increase in repairs and repair costs over the budgeted amounts.

Closing remarks

As usual our proposals are driven by our case work in Abbey ward where over 1 home in 3 is a council property.

The voices of our residents, their questions and our case work are the foundation of this report. We also wish to thank officers for their help and advice.

Cllr Elliot Tong

19 February 2024