

COUNCIL
THURSDAY 22ND FEBRAURY 2018

MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION

CABINET
WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2018

75. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Rents and Charges 2018/19 (Minute For Confirmation)

Councillor Cathy Martyn, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, and the Acting Corporate Director, Communities and Housing, submitted a joint report presenting to Cabinet the proposed rents, service charges, support charges for 2018/19 and proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2018/19.

Councillor Martyn and the Acting Corporate Director, Communities and Housing responded to questions put by Councillors Emma Bushell, Oliver Donachie and Bob Wright on the following matters:

- a) The periods of occupancy permissible for users of the use of the Hay Lane and Chiseldon Traveller and Gypsy sites.
- b) The numbers of new social and affordable houses built by all providers in the current financial year.
- c) The Swindon Joint Strategic Needs assessment of the number of new affordable homes required each year to meet demand and the likelihood that this target will be met in the current year through the Council's Affordable Housing Development Programme and other affordable housing provision.
- d) The detail of any representations to be made by the Council to the Housing Minister regarding the removal of the HRA borrowing cap.
- e) The number of non-traditional (BISF) properties that might not be included in the intended home insulation programme due to the re-prioritisation of funding toward fire safety improvements in high rise blocks.
- f) The impact on some tenants of increased heating charges applicable for the David Murray John building.

Resolved – (1) That Council be recommended that:

- a) **The proposed average rent for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwellings for 2018/19 of £79.63 per week (52 week basis), which is a decrease of 1.0%, be approved. This will be an average decrease of £0.80 per week (52 week basis). The range of decreases is shown in paragraph 3.9 of the report.**
- b) **The Acting Corporate Board Director, Communities and Housing, be authorised to seek authority from the Secretary of State to extend the permission for the use of the Housing Revenue Account for payments to**

the Council's tenants under the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme, and provide a budget of £200k in 2018/19, as detailed at paragraph 3.25 of the report.

- c) The housing related support charges for 2018/19 and service charges for 2018/19, as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.**
- d) Leaseholder service charges are set for 2018/19 as shown in Appendix 3, to the report.**
- e) Based on the proposals set out within this report, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) proposed budget 2018/19, shown in Appendix 4 to the report, be approved and that the HRA Capital Budget and Funding be approved as shown in Appendix 5 to the report.**
- f) The draft 3 year capital projects and planned maintenance programme be approved at an indicative funding level of £15.5m (2017/18 prices) for 2018/19 (Appendix 6 to the report refers).**
- g) Rents charged on General Fund properties are reduced in line with Government guidance on Housing Revenue Account rents by 1% for 2018/19. Service charges for General Fund properties, as shown in Appendix 7 to the report, are approved.**
- h) Rents charged for plots at the Hay Lane Traveller and Gypsy Site are increased by £2.57 per week (5.0%) to £53.83 per week (52 week basis) in line with Council policy of fees and charges, and the rents for workpens, as shown in Appendix 7 to the report, are approved.**
- i) The charges for Private Sector Leased (PSL) accommodation for those accepted as homeless outlined in Appendix 7 to the report are approved.**
- j) Any underspend or overspend on the 2017/18 Housing Revenue Account be managed through the general revenue reserves.**

(2) That written responses be provided to Councillor Emma Bushell in respect of her questions regarding:

- a) The numbers of new social and affordable houses built by all providers in the current financial year.**
- b) The Swindon Joint Strategic Needs assessment of the number of new affordable homes required each year to meet demand and the likelihood that this target will be met in the current year through the Council's Affordable Housing Development Programme and other affordable housing provision.**
- c) The detail of any representations to be made by the Council to the Housing Minister regarding the removal of the HRA borrowing cap and the negotiation of the Housing debt settlement.**

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.