



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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HOUSING COMMITTEE

10 December 2019

7.00 pm – 8.36 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

3

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Chas Townley (Chair)	P	Councillor Lindsey Green	P
Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Julie Job	P
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Norman Kay	A
Councillor Jim Dewey	A	Councillor Phil McAsey	A
Councillor Chas Fellows	A	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Colin Fryer	P	Councillor Debbie Young	P

P = Present A = Absent

Other Member(s) in Attendance

Councillor Doina Cornell

Officers in Attendance

Head of Housing Services	New Homes and Regeneration Manager
Head of Contract Services	Housing Advice Manager
Interim Accountancy Manager	Democratic Services & Elections Officer
Project Manager	

HC.032

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Leticia Gardiner (Tenant Representative) and Councillors Dewey, McAsey and Kay.

HC.033

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

HC.034

MINUTES – 10 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

HC.035 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

HC.036 **HOUSING COMMITTEE ESTIMATES – REVISED 2019/20 AND ORIGINAL 2020/21 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20-2023/24**

The Interim Accountancy Manager introduced the above report which included budget setting and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Councillor Young asked for further clarification on the adjustments to pensions that the Interim Accountancy Manager had mentioned in her introduction. The Interim Accountancy Manager advised that they were expecting the final pension figures shortly and that the employer contribution may be increased but were not expecting any significant changes overall. Councillor Young asked if a consultation had taken place with staff who would be affected by the changes. The Interim Accountancy Manager stated that the employees' pension sum would remain the same and that it was just an actuarial assessment of the employers' contribution.

Councillor Braun asked if Officers had given consideration to other adjustments of the budgets such as improving the energy efficiency of the Council's domestic dwellings. The Head of Contract Services advised that they had looked at the affordability of it, but that Council owned housing stock was only 10% of the total housing in the District and therefore a wider piece of work needed to be carried out first. The Interim Accountancy Manager advised that there was some scope in the budgets however there would not be enough to cover all of the required works.

Councillor Braun welcomed the increase in the homelessness budget and the additional proposed posts, she hoped that these would have some impact on relieving pressure from the team and assisting the homeless.

The Chair also asked the Committee to note the proposals regarding purchasing replacement housing to compensate for the loss of existing properties being used for temporary accommodation. He asked whether more information on this could be provided in the New Homes and Regeneration Managers report on the Capital Programme.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RECOMMENDED
TO STRATEGY
AND
RESOURCES
COMMITTEE**

The Committee RECOMMENDS to Strategy & Resources that:

- 1. The revised General Fund Housing revenue budget for 2019/20 and original budget 2020/21 are approved.**
- 2. The Fees and Charges list in Appendix B is approved.**
- 3. The revised HRA revenue budget for 2019/20 and original budget 2020/21 are approved.**
- 4. The movement to and from HRA balances and capital reserves as detailed in Appendix D and section 10 are approved.**
- 5. That from 1 April 2020:**

- i) **Social rents and affordable rents are increased by 2.7%, in line with national rent guidance.**
- ii) **Garage rents are increased by 2.7%.**
- iii) **Landlord service charges are increased by 2.7%, except district heating charges which are decreased by an average of 21%.**

As detailed in Appendix C:

- 6. The Sheltered Modernisation Programme be added to the HRA Medium Term Financial Plan.**
- 7. The General Fund Housing Capital Programme as detailed in Section 4, be included in the Council's Capital Programme.**
- 8. The HRA Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24, as detailed in Appendix E, be included in the Council's Capital Programme.**

HC.037

BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2019/20 QUARTER 2

The Interim Accountancy Manager advised that the above report took into consideration any proposed budget changes from the previous budget setting report and brought the Committees' attention to the significant changes.

Councillor Young stated that it was interesting that we could repurchase previously sold Right to Buy properties and use Right to Buy Receipts for up to 30% of the cost. The Interim Accountancy Manager advised that they had done this previously and would consider doing it again in the future.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund and HRA Revenue budgets and Capital programmes for this Committee.

HC.038

HOMELESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

The Housing Advice Manager advised that authorities were required to develop Homelessness Strategies and that these needed to be renewed every 5 years. It had also now become a requirement for housing authorities to incorporate a Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Housing Advice Manager advised that the Strategy was developed with both internal and external partner agencies and it would be reviewed on an annual basis. The next step would be to create an action plan from the Strategy.

Councillor Young stated that she was very pleased to see the section on page 68 regarding domestic abuse, coercive control and rent arrears. She also asked if anything in the draft Strategy had been changed based on the Consultation. The Housing Advice Manager confirmed that there had not been any major changes but amendments had been made which would help provide clarification. Councillor Young requested that any changes to documents in the future were put in bold or underlined so that the amendments were clear.

Councillor Braun asked whether there was a role for the Committee to monitor delivery against the action plan or if this would be monitored through Performance Monitoring. The Housing Advice Manager suggested that it would be best monitored through the

Performance Monitoring and that he would be happy to take progress updates to the Performance Monitoring meetings.

The Chair advised that they would look to hold a meeting regarding homelessness on an annual basis at the Housing Review Panel.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED **To approve the Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy.**

HC.039 **SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME UPDATE AND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF CAMBRIDGE HOUSE, DURSLEY**

The Project Manager gave a summary of the progress the Sheltered Modernisation Programme had made and advised that the programme was on schedule. The Project Manager stated that they planned to continue to concentrate on amber schemes, the development of the provision of 'Hubs' and to begin modernising the 'independent +' schemes. They therefore proposed that the most suitable scheme to next become a 'Hub' was Springfields Court in Cam and that Willow Road had been identified as being suitable as an 'independent +' scheme. The New Homes and Regeneration Manager proposed that they now include the land at Cambridge House into their New Homes Programme and that a budget had now been included within the HRA.

Councillor Miles asked whether the Officers had a process where they evaluate the sheltered homes that had been finished and consider what did and did not work well. The New Homes and Regeneration Manager advised that they had looked back at the two 'Hubs' that had been created and that they were taking what they had learnt into consideration at George Pearce House and Springfields Court. She also advised that the Community Hub Facilitator had now been appointed and that she was working closely with the team to advise if any changes needed to be made.

In a response to a question regarding energy efficiency methods the New Homes and Regeneration Manager advised that they are very conscious that they need to look at what to do in terms of the regeneration of the sheltered housing schemes to help meet the Carbon Neutral 2030 aims and that they would be working closely with the Head of Contract Services.

Councillor Fryer advised that he was very pleased to see that we were retaining Cambridge House and asked if this could be social housing rather than affordable housing. The New Homes and Regeneration Manager advised that the current policy they were following allowed for the new homes programme to be delivered with affordable rents and that because of a substantial increase in costs from build cost inflation and Carbon Neutral 2030 aims social rents may not be viable as the payback period would be stretched even further. Councillor Fryer asked what the difference in the cost of affordable rent and social rent was. The Interim Accountancy Manager advised that she would find this out and would circulate the response to Members.

Councillor Braun asked how successful the 'Hubs' had been and when Dryleaze House was due to become a 'Hub'. The Project Manager advised that the Community Hub Facilitator had only been in post for a couple of months but she had been making great progress and was generating interest in the 'Hubs'. He advised that at the end of next year they were hoping to have 4 'Hubs' in place and that this would be a sensible point to review the

projects. With regards Drylease House the Project Manager advised that it was categorised as green but that the Principal Sheltered Housing Officer would be looking at what could be done in the short term to make some improvements. He also confirmed that they were looking to complete the 7 proposed 'Hubs' within the next 4 years.

Councillor Braun also advised that she had spoken to one of the residents at Concord and they had told her how fantastic the support they had received from the Community Hub Facilitator had been. The Chair asked if the Community Hub Facilitator could be asked to speak to the Housing Review Panel (HRP) in January about the work that was being undertaken.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

- RESOLVED**
- 1. To approve the inclusion of Willow Road in Stonehouse and Springfields Court in Cam into the sheltered modernisation programme for 2020/21 with funding already approved in the MTFP.**
 - 2. To approve the inclusion of the land at Cambridge House, Dursley into the New Homes and Regeneration programme for the provision of new council homes, subject to funding being approved as part of the budget setting process as set out in the HRA budget paper at this meeting.**

HC.040

TENANT SERVICES ENERGY STRATEGY – UPDATE

The Services Manager introduced the above report and advised that the original Strategy was formulated in 2017 and updated in 2019 with the key aims of relieving fuel poverty and maximising carbon reduction in line with the Council's existing and future targets. She brought the Committee's attention to Table 1 which showed the various measures which had been made to improve energy efficiency to date. Appendix 2 contained the existing improvement modelling which showed 3 different levels of investment that they could consider, however the improved SAP ratings proposed would be based on completing the programmes in the MTFP first.

In response to a question regarding the need for skilled workers to implement the Energy Strategy, the Services Manager advised that she had attended a meeting with the GFirst LEP where the skills shortage had been discussed, she confirmed that their plan was initially to try and increase the amount of skilled workers. Councillor Cornell advised that she had spoken to the Chief Executive regarding the capacity within the District for retrofitting and stated that they were looking to hold a meeting in early 2020 to look at what could be done.

Councillor Young stated that we would be unable to increase the energy efficiency of some of our existing housing stock to the targeted SAP rating due to the age and build of the property and that we needed to be realistic about this. The Head of Contract Services agreed with Councillor Young and advised that it would be for Members to decide where the cut-off point would be. He stated that further work would need to be done so that they can bring that information to Committee for Members. The Chair advised that there were approximately 4,000 properties that were listed buildings which would be a big additional challenge for us.

Councillor Braun asked whether Officers had looked at Welsh Government Policy as they were considering changing the rent structure so that people would pay higher rents for a

more energy efficient home. The Services Manager advised that they would look into this with the Carbon Neutral Officer.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

- RESOLVED**
- 1. To approve the approach to the improved energy efficiency of new council homes being delivered subject to the increased budget required set out in the HRA budget report to this committee, being approved; and**
 - 2. To note that Tenant Services will work in conjunction with the CN2030 member-officer group to commission/undertake a wider piece of work to fully consider all the viable options available, including costs and timescales required to maximise the SAP ratings of our existing dwellings; and**
 - 3. To note that in the interim, Tenant Services will continue with the current investment model of planned improvements to energy efficiency in our existing dwellings.**

HC.041

HRA DELIVERY PLAN 2020 - 2025

The Head of Housing Services advised that they had reviewed the existing Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Delivery Plan and that they had added some additional elements following the Tenant and Leaseholder consultation, star survey results and the previous Housing Review Panel (HRP) meeting.

The Chair stated that asset based community development was referred to in the Delivery Plan however it wasn't explicit. The Head of Housing Services advised that they would be able to provide more detail regarding asset based community development in the action plan.

The Head of Housing Services confirmed that a report would be brought to the Housing Committee in June 2020 and then progress would be reported annually.

Councillor Braun stated that they had had a really good discussion at HRP and that she welcomed the focus on tenants and tenant satisfaction. The Head of Housing Services advised that they would be undertaking another Star Survey in 2020.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

- RESOLVED** **To approve the HRA Delivery Plan and Action Plan.**

HC.042

MEMBERS' REPORTS

a. Housing Review Panel

The Chair advised that the last Housing Review Panel looked at both homelessness and the HRA Delivery Plan which had been covered in the Agenda Items presented at this Committee.

b. Tenant Representatives verbal update

The Chair advised that he was pleased to report that the selection panel had selected a new Tenant Representative (Sandra Longstreth) and the appointment would be confirmed at the next Council Meeting.

c. Performance Monitoring.

The Chair advised that the Performance Monitoring Meeting did not take place and therefore there would not be a report.

HC.043 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair advised that as there was no business listed on the February 2020 work programme he would have a discussion with Officers and would consider cancelling the Committee Meeting.

Councillor Braun advised that she would like to see a 10 year strategy on Housings contribution to CN2030 towards the end of 2020. The Chair confirmed that this could provide a framework for the work that the Carbon Neutral group needs to do.

Councillor Miles advised she would like an update on the Non-Traditional Houses Programme. The Chair advised that this could be reported to Housing Review Panel rather than Committee as it did not involve a decision.

HC.044 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting closed at 8.36 pm.

Chair