



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Tel: (01453) 754 351/754 321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

8 December 2020

7.00 pm – 9.00 pm

Remote Meeting

### Minutes

# 3

#### Membership

<b>Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Colin Fryer	P
<b>Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Lindsey Green	A
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Julie Job	P
Councillor Stephen Davies	P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
Councillor Jim Dewey	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Chas Fellows	A	Councillor Debbie Young	P

P = Present                      A = Absent

#### Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Communities  
 Strategic Director of Place  
 Head of Housing Services  
 Head of Contract Services  
 Income & Systems Manager

Housing Renewal Manager  
 Accountancy Manager  
 Senior CN2030 Officer  
 Democratic Services & Elections Officer

#### HC.010

#### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lindsey Green.

#### HC.011

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

#### HC.012

#### MINUTES

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2020 are approved as a correct record**

#### HC.013

#### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none.

**HC.014****STROUD DISTRICT 2030 STRATEGY - LIMITING, ADAPTING, RESPONDING AND RECOVERING IN A CHANGING CLIMATE**

The Senior CN2030 Officer introduced the report and draft strategy. Members were informed that the report would be presented to the Council's four main committees as part of a wider period of consultation. The Council was looking for feedback from Members and the general public which feed into the strategic document for presentation to Full Council in March 2021. The strategy presented 7 themes and 26 targets. The Committee was asked to delegate authority to make changes to the draft strategy following the consultation period. Of relevance to the Housing Committee, Members were asked to consider the impact of the built environment and energy themes.

In response to Members' questions it was noted that the Council had submitted a bid to the Government's decarbonising and social housing fund, working with partners in the South West. The Council was looking at strategies to retrofit its homes. Councillor Young asked if it would be possible at the same time to retrofit 'right to buy homes' if they were adjacent to any of the Council's housing stock and would this allow for shared costs, for example in respect of scaffolding. It was confirmed that this would be possible but would be subject to funding and support from private home owners.

Members noted the Council's role as an exemplar, particularly the impact that people would see with changes within the housing stock, and that a large input from the community and also from Parish and Town Councils would be required for the policy to be effective.

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

**RESOLVED**

- a) **To endorse the draft 2030 Strategy;**
- b) **To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Place and Senior Carbon Neutral 2030 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee to make any changes to the draft 2030 Strategy arising from the current engagement and consultation process, and**
- c) **To commend the draft 2030 Strategy for adoption by Full Council in March 2021, incorporating any changes made as a result of the consultation and engagement process referred to in b) above.**

**HC.015****HOUSING COMMITTEE ESTIMATES – REVISED 2020/21 AND ORIGINAL 2021/22 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 – 2024/25**

The Accountancy Manager introduced the report which set out the revenue and capital budgets for the general fund and the HRA. Key areas that were highlighted were:

- In respect of the general fund, there was a proposal for an increase in temporary accommodation costs for 2021/2022.
- In respect of the HRA, the main incomes would be from rents. The report proposed a rent increase of 1 plus the CPI figures which would give a rent increase of 1.5%. Service charges would also increase by 1.5%. Sheltered Housing charges would be set individually.

The report contained details of the Mid Term Financial Strategy and information on the HRA capital expenditure, the new build programme, the buy-back scheme and right to buy receipts.

Members noted the increase in rent arrears and asked if this would have an impact on delivery of the housing programme. Members were informed that there was an increase in provision within the budget for rent arrears. It was confirmed that the trends in arrears were being monitored including the impact that may be attributable to Covid-19. Officers confirmed that the arrears since the first lockdown had not been as severe as first feared. A lot of effort had been put into helping tenants with payment plans which had helped.

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

- RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**
- a) **The revised General Fund Housing revenue budget for 2020/21 and original budget 2021/22 are approved;**
  - b) **The Fees and Charges list in Appendix A is approved;**
  - c) **The revised HRA revenue budget for 2020/21 and original budget 2021/22 are approved;**
  - d) **The movement to and from HRA balances and capital reserves as detailed in Appendix C and section 10 are approved;**
  - e) **That from 1 April 2021:**
    - i. **Social rents and affordable rents are increased by 1.5%, in line with national rent guidance**
    - ii. **Garage rents are increased by 1.5%**
    - iii. **Landlord service charges are increased by 1.5%, except sheltered housing charges which are individually set**
  - As detailed in Appendix B;**
  - f) **That the General Fund Housing Capital Programme, as detailed in Section 4, be included in the Council's Capital Programme, and**
  - g) **That the HRA Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix D, be included in the Council's Capital Programme.**

#### **HC.016**

#### **GREEN HOMES GRANT LOCAL AUTHORITY DELIVERY SCHEME PHASE 1B BID**

The Strategic Director of Communities and Housing Renewal Manager introduced the report. Members were reminded of a motion passed at Full Council in October 2020, to accept an offer of just under £1m funding under Phase 1a of the Green Homes Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS). This provided a Government grant for energy efficiency (insulation work) improvements for 100 park homes across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, with Stroud District Council being the lead body for the projects. That work was now underway. A subsequent round of funding, LADS Phase 1B, had since been opened up by the Government and due to the success of the earlier bid, the District Council was eligible to apply for another £1m funding for further delivery works on another 100 park homes, to be carried out during the period February to September 2021.

In response to Members' questions, it was confirmed that the first round of funding would be allocated by 31 March 2021 and that 75% of the work had already been completed.

There was also funding from National Grid to provide for a number of air source heat pumps to properties that did not have access to gas supplies.

Members were pleased to see that the Council had been successful in bidding for Government grants and congratulated Officers for their initiative in seeking these grants.

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

- RESOLVED**
- a) Authorise the submission of a Bid;
  - b) If successful to authorise the Chief Executive to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and any accompanying documentation in relation to the Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery Grant Scheme Phase 1B and to Further act on the Council's behalf with regards to the delivery of this project, and
  - c) If successful to add the Green Homes Grant to the capital programme.

**HC.017**                      **COUNCIL HOUSING – HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION**

The Income & Systems Manager introduced the report which summarised the proposals to invest in a single integrated housing management system which would encompass housing and repairs management functions. The existing system, which was twenty years old, consisted of seven individual systems. A new system would allow for the provision of performance management systems and the ability for tenants and customers to access services online.

In a response to a question about whether the investment proposed was sufficient to allow for all the self-service aspects and development costs, Members were informed that the Council had entered the high end of the market and the expectation was that there would be an interface with other Council services. Tenants would be consulted on the options for the self-service aspects and identify the services that tenants wanted. The Chair noted that one of the key benefits would be the case management system which would allow tenants to monitor a range of services such as: programmed works, servicing and payments. It was confirmed that for tenants who did not wish to use an online system then the telephone helpline would continue to be made available.

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

**RESOLVED**                      **To approve the procurement of an integrated Housing Management System (HMS)**

**AND**

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**                      **To approve an additional revenue budget of £260,000 in 2020/21 to allow the Council to invest in a single integrated system encompassing the whole housing and repairs functions, as well as better integration with the wider Council.**

**HC.018**                      **COUNCIL HOUSING – COMMUNITY ENERGY RETROFIT**

The Strategic Director of Communities and Senior CN2030 Officer introduced the report. Members were advised that what may appear to be a relatively small project would

provide invaluable information going forward as the Council worked towards meeting its 2030 carbon emission targets. The report identified the strategy towards renewable energy systems that were efficient and low cost to run. The targets would deliver an estimated 65% reduction in carbon emissions and 50% cost savings to tenants. Key to success would be to ensure wide community engagement and tenant involvement.

The proposed model would focus on seven independent living bungalows, currently fitted with electric storage heaters. These would be removed and new equipment would be installed which would generate and store electricity onsite and realise revenue benefits. A heat pump would be fitted in each property that draws on a shared ground loop system.

It was confirmed that results of the pilot would be brought back to Housing and other Council Committees. Members were informed that tenants would be supported through the process and assistance would be provided to know how best to utilise the new technology. Members were informed that it was a partnership project with specific timelines linked to the funding. It was likely that the project would take 12-18 months.

The Committee welcomed the project and noted the benefits for tenants including health benefits and savings on energy costs. The knowledge gained from the project would help the wider roll out of energy refit to the Council's properties.

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

- RESOLVED**
- a) **To endorse the Community Energy Retrofit Pilot, and**
  - b) **To note that feasibility and pilot will progress through a collaborative planning and management process overseen by the Strategic Director of Communities in consultation with relevant officers and the Chair of the Committee.**

## **HC.019**                      **MEMBER REPORTS**

- a) Housing Review Panel: The Chair provided an update on rough sleepers, increase in ASB and the Green Homes Grant. Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair) would lead on the panel in the future and written reports would be provided where possible.
- b) Performance Monitoring: Members welcomed the written report which had been circulated.

## **HC.020**                      **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair introduced the report and commented on some of the changes to the programme which would be picked up in the New Year.

## **HC.021**                      **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chair