

HOUSING COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2017

7.00 pm – 8.55 pm
Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

3

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Mattie Ross **	P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
Councillor Chas Townley *	P	Councillor Phil McAsey	A
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Jenny Miles	P
Councillor Miranda Clifton	P	Councillor Elizabeth Peters	P
Councillor Colin Fryer	P	Councillor Tom Skinner	P
Councillor Julie Job	A	Councillor Debbie Young	P

** = Chair * = Vice Chair
P = Present A = Absent

Tenant Representative

Ian Allan P

Other Councillors in Attendance

Councillor Steve Lydon

Officers in Attendance

Strategic Head (Tenant and Corporate Services)	Head of Asset Management
Head of Housing Contracts	Accountancy Manager
Head of Housing Management	Democratic Services Officer
Asset Manager	

HC.042

APOLOGIES

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Julie Job.

HC.043

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

HC.044

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none.

HC.045

MINUTES – 20 DECEMBER 2017

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2017 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

HC.046**WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was discussed and the following items were highlighted:

- Update on small sites, garages and disposals – 28 March 2017.
- Review the effectiveness of tenant consultation mechanisms – 21 February 2017.

A query was raised regarding a possible checklist for Housing Officers to use when they need to help tenants with difficult tasks. The Head of Housing Management will look into this.

RESOLVED

To update the Work Programme, accordingly.

HC.047**GENERAL HOUSING: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2017/18 – 2020/21**

The Accountancy Manager presented the report and explained that the budget had been prepared noting the legislative changes which are now in place. The budget over the next 4 years will reduce significantly as specified in the report and appendices.

During questions the following issues discussed:

- Queens Court and the sale of the whole site.
- Garages – detailed work is needed to review the garage sites.
- RTB sales in future years to be kept under review.
- Savings only show in the MTFP when they have been realised.
- Spending on kitchen, bathrooms and roofing.
- Service charges – officers working with registered providers regarding this issue.
- Community Land Trusts.
- Capital Receipts on sales of land.
- It is good that the revenue is available for green and amber schemes for sheltered housing.

**RECOMMENDED
TO STRATEGY
AND
RESOURCES
COMMITTEE**

- a) (i) **The revised HRA budget for 2016/17 and original HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2017/18 are approved;**
- (ii) **The movements to and from balances and capital reserve as detailed in Appendices B and C are approved;**
- b) **That from 01 April 2017:**
- i) **Social rents and affordable rents are decreased by 1% (equivalent to 83p per week at the average rent level), as calculated in accordance with legislation.**
- ii) **Garage rents are increased by 2% (equivalent to 24p per week), as detailed in paragraph 28 and Appendix A);**
- iii) **Other landlord service charges at general needs properties are increased by between 2% and 3%, as detailed in paragraph 29 and Appendix A;**
- iv) **Landlord service charges at Sheltered Housing Schemes are increased by 2% (equivalent to 47p**

per week). As detailed in paragraph 30 and Appendix A.

- c) That the Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2020/21 be approved, as detailed in Appendix C.

HC.048

GENERAL HOUSING: DEVELOPMENT OF THE HRA DELIVERY PLAN

The Head of Housing Management presented the report and explained that it sets out an action plan of the key aspects of delivery and challenges that face the service. Performance against the plan will be recorded on the Council performance management system and reviewed every six months. Performance will be reported back to Committee.

During questions the following issues were discussed:

- A good proposal which brings everything together.
- The Housing Strategy will be reviewed later in the year taking into account the White Paper.

RESOLVED

1. To approve and implement the HRA Delivery Plan presented to this committee
2. To note that this plan will be reviewed every 6 months, to analyse and update it with new or obsolete: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, develop responses to these, model their financial impact and update the projected financial position as a result, making recommendations to this committee on any budget changes +/-

HC.049

COUNCIL HOUSING: DEVELOPMENT OF THE TENANCY POLICY

The Head of Housing Management presented the report and explained that the Housing and Planning Act 2016 brings an end to lifetime tenancies, this excludes sheltered housing. The Act will bring in Fixed Term tenancies for all new tenancies; it doesn't affect existing lifetime tenancies. The guidance is awaited.

A Task and Finish group will be set up to discuss the issues. Members on the group will be: Councillors Townley, Fryer, Young and Kay and the tenant representatives Ian Allan and Sadie Tazewell (following her appointment at Full Council on 9 February 2017).

RESOLVED

1. To develop a tenancy policy for the councils own housing stock on the administration of fixed term tenancies following the receipt of guidance on this aspect of the HPA 2016, this may include considering policy on any aspects devolved for local determination.
2. To set up a T&F group to undertake this review, and bring a recommendation back to this Committee to consider, at the first opportunity after guidance on the implementation of fixed term tenancies has been issued by DCLG.

HC.050**COUNCIL HOUSING: RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES REVIEW**

The Head of Housing Management presented the report and explained that target rents are based on the average income of people who live in the district, the Council is required to charge a target rent. Currently service charges are part of the rent that tenants pay. It is proposed that the Council change the way in which it sets and recovers service charges and rents.

During questions the following issues were discussed:

- Make sure there is an effective apportionment of service charges. It should also be more transparent on how the charges are spent.
- The Council cannot charge owners of ex-council houses a service charge, but when a RTB sale takes place it incorporates a contribution towards service charges.
- Much of the review work will be carried out by officers. The Head of Housing Management will investigate the cost of consultants and report back to Committee in February.
- The committee's tenant representative has been invited by the tenants to talk about sheltered service charges.
- How we spend the service charge should be more transparent.

RESOLVED

1. **To approve the increase in rent of all new lettings to that of the government's local formula rent level.**
2. **To approve the commencement of a project to investigate further, the viability, benefit and regulatory requirement upon us to de-pool service charges from rents, and charge these separately and transparently.**
3. **Following on from (2) above, to approve a review of rent setting options with a report on the findings, brought back to this committee for debate and direction in June 2017.**

HC.051**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Member questions had been received from Councillor Young. Supplementary questions had been asked, they would be responded to in writing following the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

Chair