

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 JANUARY 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Helen Brown, Geoff Collett, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Dennis Hutchinson Kevin Rush, Brian Lloyd

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APOLOGIES:

Councillor Ray Hughes

SUBSTITUTES:

Councillor David Wisinger (for Councillor David Cox)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Patrick Heesom attended as an observer

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Dave Hughes (Cabinet Member for Housing); Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value); Chief Executive, Principal Accountant, Strategic Finance Manager - Commercial and Housing and Strategic Performance Advisor

IN ATTENDANCE: Community & Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Electoral Services Officer

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

36. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillor Ron Davies and Councillor Kevin Rush.

The Chairman recorded his thanks to Councillor Helen Brown for chairing the meeting in his absence.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. She referred to the February meeting and reported that the Internal Audit report on temporary accommodation would be added to the list of items to be considered at the meeting. On the action tracking report she confirmed that there had been no actions arising from the last meeting.

Councillor Helen Brown asked if a report on Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) properties and best use of housing stock could be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. The Chief Executive supported this suggestion and it was agreed that this be included on the Forward Work Programme.

The recommendations outlined within the report were moved and seconded by Councillor Helen Brown and Councillor Brian Lloyd.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

38. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 30 YEAR FINANCIAL BUSINESS PLAN

The Committee received a report to consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022/23 and the draft HRA 30 year Financial Business Plan. The Chief Executive and Strategic Finance Manager (Commercial and Housing) gave a presentation covering:

- Borrowing
- Rents
- Garage Rents
- Service Charges
- Capital Programme
- Regeneration
- SHARP
- Capital Funding
- Reserves
- Resource Implications (including re-structure to cover work pressures)
- Impact Assessment & Risk Management
- Ways of Working (Sustainable Development)
- Well-being Goals Impact

The rent increase proposed in the business plan, applied an overall uplift of 1.18% to all tenants and, in addition, applied the transitional uplift of £2 to tenants who currently pay at least £3 under target rent which equates to an overall rent increase of 2% as set out in the Business Plan.

The proposed garage rent and garage plot increase was 2% for 2022/23, which equated to £0.20 per week for garage rent and took the rent per week to £10.23 (based on 52 weeks).

On Service Charges, it was proposed that these increases were frozen again in 2022/23 due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and during 2022/23 further work would be undertaken to ensure services provided were of high standard, represented value for money and that the true costs were reflected in the service charges calculations.

Councillor Helen Brown asked if a breakdown of the rent and garage rent charges in £'s and pence could be provided for the Committee. The Strategic Finance Manager (Commercial and Housing) explained that this information would differ for each tenant but she could provide an average for tenants to the Committee following the meeting.

Members spoke in support of the work being undertaken around garage plots, as detailed as part of the presentation.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved and seconded by Councillor Ron Davies and Councillor Helen Brown.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 year Financial Business Plan & Budget for 2022/23 as presented within the report and appendices.

39. COUNCIL PLAN 2022/23

The Chief Executive presented the draft 2022/23 Council Plan which had been reviewed and refreshed following the response to the pandemic and Recovery Strategy. The themes and priorities remained the same as 2021/22, however there were some development within the sub-priorities.

The structure of the Plan continued to be aligned to a set of six Well-being Objectives and the six themes continued to take a long term view of recovery, ambition and work over the next two years. The outlined of the Council Plan for 2022/23 including the six themes, their priorities and actions were appended to the report.

The Strategic Performance Advisor advised that all comments and suggestions would be collated and shared with Cabinet in advance of approval for adoption in June 2022.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved and seconded by Councillor Helen Brown and Councillor Brian Lloyd.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the content of the themes for the Council Plan 2022-23 as presented within the report and appendix.

40. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.28 a.m.)

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Chairman