

THE MINUTE RELATING TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET FROM THE BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 20 JANUARY 2020

BOS/19/6 DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK

- 16.1 Councillor Ward introduced report BOS/19/6 and outlined the main points for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget 2020/21 and Four-year Outlook.
- 16.2 Councillor McCraw queried the increase in capital spend in relation to the Council's new building programme and acquisitions for 2020-24.
- 16.3 The Assistant Director for Housing outlined the Capital Programme and referred to the HRA Business Plan. He said that new schemes were coming forward. The teams were working diligently on sites and a review of garage sites and whether these were used appropriately would be presented to Cabinet later in the year. Land was always needed and require for further housing developments.
- 16.4 Councillor Dawson asked for clarification of the review of the use of garage sites, as she thought there were quite a few sites which would be more suitable for other uses.
- 16.5 The Assistant Director for Housing assured her that a review would be conducted and that there was ongoing work by the Housing and Assets teams. A report would be presented to the administration for the use of garages.
- 16.6 Councillor Dawson asked if compulsory buying of garages sites, which could be used for housing developments, had been considered and the Assistant Director for Housing responded that there were various aspects to consider before developing garage sites including the Right to Buy options for tenants, listed buildings and general building regulations.
- 16.7 Councillor McCraw asked if the impact on residents was considered when raising the sheltered housing rent and Councillor Jan Osborne, Cabinet Member for Housing, responded that she had challenged the increase for Sheltered Housing before the budget had been set, but that there was an increase in the general need for accommodation and it was a balance between the two areas.
- 16.8 The Assistant Director for Housing added that rent and demand had to be considered on a year on year basis. The figures were based on a five-year budget and further three-year projections. The requirements for the service and residents were always taken into consideration. The current rent was actually lower than predicted five years ago.
- 16.9 Councillor McCraw asked if the surplus in the budget would be transferred to the HRA reserves and the Assistant Director for Housing confirmed that was the case and that investments in future housing developments and land would be supported by the reserve. Currently the HRA reserves were at £12,727m (Appendix B).
- 16.10 In response to Councillors McCraw's question, Councillor Jan Osborne confirmed that further Council houses would be built.

- 16.11 In response to several questions from Councillors, the Assistant Director for Housing referred to Appendix B in the report and assured Members that the funding received from the Right to Buy scheme would be invested in new homes.
- 16.12 Councillor Adrian Osborne proposed that the Finance team be thanked for the work undertaken for the HRA budget and that the recommendations in the report be indorsed to Cabinet.
- 16.13 Councillor McLaren seconded the motion.
- 16.14 Councillor McCraw proposed an additional recommendation to be added; that the Committee noted with satisfaction the proposed new build of 229 new homes.
- 16.15 The Chair asked if Councillor Adrian Osborne would accept the additional recommendation, which he accepted.
- 16.16 The proposed recommendations were put to Members for the vote, which was unanimous.

It was Resolved: -

- 1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed Recommendation 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in the Report to Cabinet.**
- 1.2 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee complimented the Finance Team for the work undertaken for the Housing Revenue Account budget and Four-year Outlook.**
- 1.3 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted with satisfaction the proposal of new build of 229 new homes.**