

The minute of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 13 January 2022 for MOS/21/02 Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Four-year Outlook

MOS/21/02 DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) AND FOUR -YEAR OUTLOOK

- 15.1 Councillor Whitehead introduced the report outlining the effects the Covid-19 pandemic had on the new build schedule and related issues around supply cost and availability of materials, which had caused a backlog in maintenance and repairs on existing properties. Rent collections had not been affected however, rent increases would take place in the next financial year based on the Government formula of CPI+1%.
- 15.2 Councillor Caston questioned how Right to Buy projections were estimated. The Assistant Director- Housing responded that they had been calculated by looking at and monitoring sales, however this had declined during the last year. The projection had been made based on trends over a 10-year period and were continuously adjusted.
- 15.3 Councillor Mansel queried whether dwelling rents for new properties had been included. The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources responded that new builds had not been included as an assumption as it was unknown when they would be completed.
- 15.4 Councillor Scarff queried the planned maintenance carry forward and how much of the total spend would be spent in the forthcoming year. The Assistant Director – Housing responded that to ensure the fund carry over would be spent, the staffing resource, existing contracts and their renewal had been looked at. Also retrofitting would be a great percentage of the planned maintenance schedule.
- 15.5 Councillor Welham queried whether the large number of properties, which required updating would cause a lack of funding.. The Assistant Director – Housing responded that there was a significant investment required in existing properties and would be costly. Funding would be available through borrowing, however, the HRA team would need to look at expenditure in the future
- 15.6 Councillor Mansel questioned what environmental improvements had been budgeted for. The Assistant Director – Housing responded that this related to environmental work within estates and increased biodiversity.
- 15.7 Councillor Field queried the rise in rent in relation to issues with universal credit, and an increase in heating bills. The Assistant Director – Housing responded that rent reductions from 2015-2020 had an impact. The level of investment required for existing properties would be paid for by the increased rent Feedback from tenants would be included in the HRA business plan.
- 15.8 Councillor Caston suggested that in the future more information surrounding the level of council house rent in comparison to other authorities' properties be included in the report and also how many residents were subsidised in the current year. He asked this information was made available before the Full Council meeting in February and to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee next year.
- 15.9 Members debated the issues, and the following suggestions were made:

- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook and
- That information is provided for the level of council rent compared with other authorities for benchmarking for the current year and the number of tenants receiving rent rebate in the current financial year be provided to Council in February and to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their review of the Budget in the next municipal year.

15.10 Councillor Caston proposed the recommendations.

15.11 Councillor Ekpenyong seconded this motion.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

- 1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 and Four-year Outlook.**
- 1.2 That information is provided for the level of council rent compared with other authorities for benchmarking for the current year and the number of tenants receiving rent rebate in the current financial year be provided to Council in February and to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their review of the Budget in the next municipal year.**