

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

Meeting held 7 February 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Terry Fox (Chair), Julie Grocutt (Deputy Chair), Douglas Johnson (Group Spokesperson), Bryan Lodge, Joe Otten, Martin Smith and Richard Williams

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Angela Argenzio, Dawn Dale, Shaffaq Mohammed and Paul Wood.

2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 It was noted that the report to item 7 on the agenda (Family Hubs and Start For Life Programme) is not available to the public or press because the information contained therein is subject to a Government embargo. The Committee will ask the members of the public and press to kindly leave for that part of the meeting and the webcast will be paused.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS RELATING TO THE ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED

4.1 There were no petitions or public questions.

5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUSINESS PLAN AND HRA BUDGET 2023-24

5.1 The Executive Director, Operational Services, submitted a report providing the 2023-24 update of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, including revised priorities and capital improvement plans for 2023-24, and the 2023-24 HRA revenue budget and revenue contribution to capital for the Council housing stock in Sheffield.

5.2 The HRA Business Plan for 2023-24 had been considered at the meeting of the Housing Policy Committee on 2nd February 2023 and that Committee had identified four matters which it had requested be considered by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee when it makes its recommendations to the full Council in relation to the approval of the Housing Revenue Account. Those four matters were – (1) maintaining the Stock Increase Programme (SIP); (2) looking again at how to invest in order to decrease the repairs bill; (3) looking at the possibility of further investment into retro-fitting; and (4) increasing tenant involvement, exploring the option of tenant-led local housing advisory panels and reporting arrangements with

LACs.

5.3 Members of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee asked questions of the Director of Housing in relation to the HRA Business Plan and Budget, including in relation to the matters identified by the Housing Policy Committee. The Committee made no decisions in respect of those matters but during the debate it was noted that amendments may be submitted for consideration by Full Council in relation to the HRA Business Plan and Budget which may make proposals concerning those matters.

5.4 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee approves for submission to the meeting of the City Council on 20 February 2023:-

- (1) the HRA Business Plan report for 2023-24, as set out in the Financial Appendix to the report;
- (2) the HRA Revenue Budget 2023-24, as set out in the Financial Appendix to the report;
- (3) rent increases for council dwellings by 7% from April 2023, in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard;
- (4) rent increases for temporary accommodation by 7% for 2023-24;
- (5) garage rent increases for garage plots and garage sites by 7% from April 2023;
- (6) the sheltered housing charge increase by 7% for 2023-24;
- (7) the burglar alarm charge increase by 7% for 2023-24;
- (8) the furnished accommodation charge increase by 7% for 2023-24;
- (9) the Hardship Fund increase by a further £300,000 for 2023/24, to £450,000; and
- (10) no increase to the community heating charge at this time.

5.5 **Reasons for Decision**

5.5.1 This report and its recommendations, set out the scale of the challenge ahead, the limited resources available and the difficult decisions that now need to be taken to deliver a balanced HRA budget for 2023/24. The delivery of a balanced HRA budget is dependent on setting a 7% rent increase for Council tenants as set out in this report. The proposed recommendations:

- optimise the number of good quality affordable council homes in the city
- maximise the financial resources to deliver key outcomes for tenants and the city in the context of a self-financing funding regime

- ensure that tenants' homes continue to be well maintained and to optimise investment in estates; and
- assure the long-term sustainability of council housing in Sheffield.

5.6 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 5.6.1 No other options were considered. The Council is required to both set a balanced HRA budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced.

6. FAMILY HUBS AND START FOR LIFE PROGRAMME

- 6.1 **RESOLVED:** That the public and press be excluded from the meeting and the webcast be paused before discussion takes place on this item of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present during the transaction of such business, there would be a disclosure of embargoed confidential information under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

- 6.2 The Director of Public Health submitted a report providing an overview of the national Department for Education (DfE) Family Hub and Start for Life Programme in Sheffield and sought approval to commence the delivery of the programme. The programme included the delivery and expansion of the Empowering Parenting Communities Programme (EPEC), Perinatal Mental Health Programme (PNMH) including peer support, and the Parent and Infant Relationship Service (PAIRS).

- 6.3 The report sought approval to allocate £1.5m of Department of Education grant funding to enhance and develop the services provided by Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust and the Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust in order to deliver the programme.

- 6.4 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

1. approves the commissioning strategy and grant awards, as set out in this report, which will allow the Council to spend funding in line with terms of the signed Memorandum of Understanding; and
2. delegates authority to the Director of Public Health to make any otherwise reserved commissioning and grant award decisions in relation to the Delivery Plan.

6.5 Reasons for Decision

- 6.5.1 A requirement of the national DfE grant is to ensure adherence to the clinical models to support perinatal mental health and in line with the agreed delivery plan approved by DfE. This requires SCC to contract directly with NHS Trusts at Sheffield place level in order to fulfil these requirements and to meet allocation of the grant spend within appropriate financial year timeframes.

6.6 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 6.6.1 No alternative options have been considered. The Memorandum of Understanding is prescriptive about how the funding can be spent. The method of commissioning of these services were specified during the grant application process.