

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Council – 1 March 2023

Report Title

Recommendation from Cabinet – Housing Revenue Account Rents and Service Charges 2023/24

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the proposed values of the housing rents, non-dwelling rents, District Heating and service charges and the draft Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2023/24.

This report should be considered alongside the HRA Business Plan report for 2023/24.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered the Housing Revenue Accounts Rents and Service Charges 2023-24 proposals at its meeting on 8th February 2023. Overview and Scrutiny Management Board recommended that consideration be given to whether additional measures, such as tenancy advice and support, could be introduced to mitigate the impact of rent increases for residents who are particularly vulnerable to changes in rent levels (for example recipients of Personal Independence Payments and Disability Living Allowance for children) and that consideration is given to developing a communication strategy, including drop-in sessions, to raise awareness of changes to the district heating charges and support available to households.

The recommendations were adopted by Cabinet at its meeting on Monday 13th February 2023.

Recommendations

That Council approve:

1. That dwelling rents are increased by 7% in 2023/24 (Option 1) in line with the latest Government policy on rents for social housing which caps rent increases to 7% for 2023/24.
2. That shared ownership rents are increased by 7% in 2023/24 (Option 1) as per the increase on Council dwelling rents.
3. That there is a 6% increase in charges for garages and parking spaces, communal facilities, cooking gas and use of laundry facilities.
4. That the Council retain the Energy Bill Relief Scheme amounts to offset some of the deficit incurred in cushioning tenants from energy price rises.
5. The unit charge per Kwh is increased by 186.43% and weekly prepayment charges are increased by 44% to 150%, depending on property size, for District Heating Schemes in 2023/24 (Option 1) to enable the Scheme to break even in the long term.
6. Approve £2.593m 'cushioning' effect that the Council has put in place through the District Housing Scheme for 2023/2024 (which was £1.65m in 2022/2023).
7. Approve the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2023/24 as shown in Appendix 2.
8. That the Council retain the policy of realigning rents on properties at below formula rent, to the formula rent level when the property is re-let.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Non-dwelling rent, service charges and Furnished Homes charges 2023/24
- Appendix 2 Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24
- Appendix 3 Part A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment form
- Appendix 4 Part B – Equality Analysis form
- Appendix 5 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government – Policy Statement on rents for social housing (February 2019).

District Heating Scheme Charges Review – Full Council (13 December 2017).

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 08 February 2023

Cabinet – 13th February 2023

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No