

## **HOUSING COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Present: Councillor T A Cullen, Chair

Councillors: L A Ball BEM, B C Carr (Vice-Chair), E Kerry,  
H G Khaled MBE, J M Owen, P J Owen,  
H E Skinner, C M Tideswell and E Williamson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J W McGrath, J P T Parker and S A Bagshaw

### 14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 15 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### 16 **ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee noted that the Regulator of Social Housing sets out the regulatory framework for social housing in England. This Framework is a number of standards that registered providers are expected to meet, including local authorities.

The report was discussed and it was considered that processes had been put in place which had improved the customer experience. The Council staff were thanked for their efforts.

**RESOLVED that the Housing Service Annual Report 2018/2019 be approved.**

### 17 **ACQUISITIONS POLICY**

The aim of the Policy was to set out the Council's approach to acquiring property and land. This is to ensure the Council fulfils its objectives set out in the Housing Delivery Plan. The Policy was debated and members stated that new Council owned social housing was needed.

**RESOLVED that the Acquisitions Policy be approved.**

### 18 **FIXED TERM TENANCIES**

The Council had reviewed its tenancy arrangements in 2017-2018 and an independent legal options review was undertaken.

In January 2018 the Housing Committee had resolved a recommendation that included the introduction of introductory tenancies, which for general needs tenancies, became five year fixed term tenancies after the initial 12-month introductory tenancy period. The Committee debated the merits of fixed term tenancies but the government's change in emphasis noted.

A recorded vote was proposed by Councillor S J Carr and seconded by Councillor T Hallam. The voting was as follows:

<u><b>For</b></u>	<u><b>Against</b></u>	<u><b>Abstention</b></u>
<b>B C Carr</b>		<b>L A Ball BEM</b>
<b>S J Carr</b>		<b>J C Goold</b>
<b>T A Cullen</b>		<b>E Kerry</b>
<b>T Hallam</b>		<b>H G Khaled MBE</b>
<b>H E Skinner</b>		<b>J M Owen</b>
<b>C M Tideswell</b>		<b>P J Owen</b>
<b>E Williamson</b>		

**RESOLVED that the statutory process of consultation to end Fixed Term Tenancies be commenced with affected tenants and that Fixed Term Tenancies no longer be offered to new tenants of the Council.**

19 **INCOME MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

The Rent Setting Policy outlined how the Council would calculate rent for the housing stock that it owned and managed within the Housing Revenue Account. The purpose of the Policy was to ensure the rents would be set in accordance with the relevant statutory and regulatory obligations.

The policies were discussed. It was confirmed that new tenancies would be more expensive but would be capped at a 10% increase. The change to the rent free period was queried. It was clarified that this was largely administrative and now reflected the system used by most Housing Associations. Informal feedback had shown that the change was popular.

**RESOLVED that the Rent Setting Policy, Income Collection Policy and Financial Inclusion Policy be approved.**

20 **GRENFELL RESPONSE UPDATE**

The Committee was updated on actions taken since the last report in September 2018. It was expected that the Grenfell Inquiry would result in significant suggestions for local authorities but the delay in the publishing of the report was a concern. As a result, the Council was acting in advance of such measures becoming law. Further measures would be brought to Committee in due course. The Committee noted the work already taken.

**RESOLVED that the Chair of the Housing Committee write to the Secretary of State regarding the need for guidance on Fire door standards.**

21 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - REVIEW OF BUSINESS PLAN PROGRESS - HOUSING

The Committee noted the report on the progress against outcome targets identified in the Housing Business Plan.

The issue of no storage for mobility scooters in the dementia friendly bungalows was raised. It was confirmed that this issue was being considered going forward and would hopefully be discussed at a future meeting.

22 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - UPDATE TO BUSINESS PLAN FINANCIAL MODEL

In February 2012 the Council approved a 30 year HRA business plan with the financial model being updated and approved by Council each financial year. The Committee noted the capacity within the financial model for the provision of new housing.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that the financial model for the Housing Revenue Account be approved.**

23 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee expressed its gratitude to the employees of the Council. The hard work was reflected in the full Work Programme.

**RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved.**

24 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

**RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

25 AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS CASE

**RESOLVED that the aids and adaptations works be approved.**

26 CONTRACT FOR CONDITION SURVEY

**RESOLVED that the contract be awarded.**

27 HOUSING OPTIONS RESTRUCTURE

**RECOMMENDED to the Personnel Committee that the new Housing Options Team structure be approved.**

28 RENTSENSE SOFTWARE - CONTRACT EXTENSION

**RECOMMENDED to the Finance and Resources Committee that contract be extended.**

