

CABINET**Tuesday, 24th January, 2017**

Present:-

Councillor Burrows (Chair)

Councillors T Gilby
 Bagley
 Blank
 A Diouf

Councillors Huckle
 P Gilby
 Serjeant

Non Voting Catt
 Members Dickinson

J Innes

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

121 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
 RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

122 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ludlow.

123 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 6 and 13 December, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

124 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the four month period 1 February to 31 May, 2017 was reported for information.

***RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

125 **MINUTES OF THE SHEFFIELD CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority held on 12 September, 24 October and 5 December, 2016 were reported for information.

***RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes be noted.

126 **ANNUAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE INCREASE**

In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Housing Manager and the Director of Finance and Resources submitted a report setting out proposed increases in Council house rent and service charge levels for 2017/18.

In 2012 the Council had entered into a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) self-financing agreement, and as a consequence was required to produce a HRA Business Plan that was financially viable, delivered reasonable standards for tenants and maintained properties to at least the minimum Decent Homes Standard. The report noted that in March, 2016 the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 had introduced rent policy within legislation for the first time. This had meant that from April, 2016, and in each year up to April 2020, Chesterfield Borough Council housing rents for existing tenants had to decrease by 1% from the chargeable rent for each individual property as they had been at, as on 8 July 2015.

The Housing Manager noted that with the roll out of Universal Credit to all claimants in Chesterfield during 2017/18 the Housing Benefit element would no longer be paid directly to the council on a weekly basis but would instead be paid directly to tenants. This would be paid four weekly in arrears with responsibility for the payment of the rent to the council being with the tenant. As Universal Credit would be paid on a 52 week basis it was recommended that rent collection by the council should change from a 48 to a 52 week basis so to ensure that tenants would have sufficient income to pay their rent. The report noted that tenant consultation would take place on this and other proposed changes to the tenancy agreement during 2017/18.

The Housing Manager's report also outlined proposed increases to the Housing Revenue Account Service Charges for tenants. Increases to service charges were only proposed to ensure that the charges made covered the cost of providing the service.

***RESOLVED –**

1. That for 2017/18 individual social rents be set based on the current National Social Rent Policy, giving a cash rent decrease of 1.0% with effect from 3 April 2017.
2. That for 2017/18 and onwards, where a social rent property is re-let to a new or transferring tenant, the rent level be increased to the target rent for that property.
3. That for 2017/18 individual affordable rents be set based on the current National Social Rent Policy, giving a cash rent decrease of 1.0% with effect from 3 April 2017.
4. That for 2017/18 and onwards, where an affordable rent property is re-let to a new or transferring tenant the rent level be set by reference to 80% of the market rent for a similar property at the time of re-letting.
5. That from 3 April, 2017;
 - I. heating service charges for Sheltered Schemes are increased from an average of £18.13 to £18.49 per week.
 - II. garage rents are increased from £6.22 to £6.72 per week.
 - III. that the annual rental charges for garage sites are increased as below:
 - Shale sites from £42.50 to £45.90
 - Asphalt sites from £53.50 to £57.80
 - Other sites from £58.50 to £63.20
 - IV. Tenants Metered Water Charges are increased on average from £3.70 to £3.77 per week.

- V. the weekly charges for the Garden Assistance Scheme are increased as below:
- Grass cutting and hedges from £4.45 to £4.70
 - Grass only from £3.15 from £3.30
 - Hedges only from £1.30 to £1.40
- VI. the Sheltered Scheme service charge is increased from £12.57 to £12.78 per week.
- VII. there is no increase in the Sheltered Scheme support charge.
- VIII. the weekly charges for the Careline service (inclusive of equipment rental) are increased as below:
- Monitor and Response, £5.50 to £6.00
 - Monitor, Response and support service, £8 to £8.50
- IX. hire rates for Community Rooms be charged at a rate of between £8 and £20 for a 4 hour slot, dependent on the nature of the group hiring the room.
- X. the weekly charge for communal staircase cleaning is increased from £1.74 to £2.10.
- XI. the Tenant Home Contents Insurance Premium Tax is increased from 9.5% to 10%.
6. That from no later than 1 April, 2018 the council moves from collecting rent from a 48 to a 52 week basis, and that tenant consultation on this and other changes to the tenancy agreement takes place during 2017/18.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

1. To enable the council to set the level of council house rents in accordance with Government guidelines.
2. To enable the council to set service charges for 2017/18 and to ensure that the cost of delivering services continues to break even.

3. To contribute to the council's Corporate Priority 'To improve the quality of life for local people'.

127 **COLLECTION FUND REVISED ESTIMATES 2016/17**

The Director of Finance and Resources presented the Collection Fund revised estimates for 2016/17. An estimated surplus of £367,981 on the Council Tax elements of the Collection Fund was expected.

Proposals were made about the allocation of the estimated surplus between the major precepting authorities (Derbyshire County Council, Fire and Police Authorities). These authorities would be able to take this surplus into account when calculating their Council Taxes for the financial year 2017/18.

***RESOLVED –**

That the estimated surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund for 2016/17 of £367,981 be approved and allocated to the major precepting authorities as detailed at Appendix A of the Director of Finance and Resources' report.

REASON FOR DECISION

To fulfil a statutory requirement and to feed into the budget setting process for 2017/18.

128 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED –

That under Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the public 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 Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 – as they contained information relating to

3. information relating to financial and business affairs.

129 DISPOSAL OF 29 COBDEN ROAD

The Housing Manager submitted a report seeking approval to dispose of 29 Cobden Road, Chesterfield, as well as of the adjacent garage site.

The Housing Manager noted that over time the council had acquired a number of miscellaneous residential properties which had been held within the Housing Revenue Account and managed by the Housing Service. These properties were not 'traditional' council houses, in that they were not situated on the large municipal estates and had had a variety of uses over the years. The property at 29 Cobden Road had previously been used as accommodation by a supported housing provider, but had been empty since 2013. The report noted that despite efforts to offer the property to other supported housing providers, due to Derbyshire County Council significantly cutting supported housing budgets the property was no longer viable for a provider to take on and use as supported housing.

The report included details of the alternative options for the site which had been considered and subsequently rejected; including leasing to another supported housing provider, refurbishment and subsequent sale as well as appropriation in to the Housing General Fund. It was recommended that the option that offered the best value for the council, and which would maximise the amount of the capital receipt realised for investment in the Housing Capital Investment Programme, was to sell the property on the open market. The report also recommended that the adjacent garage site should also be sold. The alternative option for the garage site of investing in essential improvements to the garages had been discounted due to the high costs of the required improvement works and also the low level of returns offered by this option.

***RESOLVED –**

1. That the Housing Manager be authorised to dispose of 29 Cobden Road, Chesterfield.
2. That the Housing Manager be authorised to dispose of the garage site adjacent to 29 Cobden Road, Chesterfield and that there be an overage clause included in the terms of the sale to ensure that the council retains an interest in any future development value of the site.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

1. To manage the council's Housing assets effectively and to support the Housing Capital Development programme.
2. To contribute to the Council's Priorities - 'to improve the quality of life for local people' and 'to provide value for money services'.