

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 15 JANUARY 2020**

**HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor Williams (Chair) Brennan (Deputy Chair), Gibson (Opposition Spokesperson), Mears (Group Spokesperson), Atkinson, Barnett, Fowler, Heley, Hugh-Jones and Osborne.

**PART ONE**

**39 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**(a) Declaration of Substitutes:** There were none.

**(b) Declaration of Interests:**

Councillors Gill Williams, Martin Osborne and Nichole Brennan stated that they were members of the Association of Community Organisations for Reform Now (ACORN).

**(c) Exclusion of the press and public**

The press and public could be excluded from the meeting as there was one Part Two item.

**40 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting on 13 November 2019 were accepted as a true record of the meeting by the committee.

**41 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS**

**End of no-fault evictions in the private rented sector.**

The Queen's Speech outlined some of the main points included in the proposed Renters Reform Bill.

The proposed Bill sets out a package of reforms to the rental market that aim to bring benefit to landlords and tenants.

This includes the abolition of 'no fault' evictions, alongside greater powers for landlords who need to gain possession of a property through the courts when there is a legitimate need to do so.

The Bill also proposes lifetime deposits so that tenants don't need to save for a new deposit each time they move home.

In addition, the proposed Bill contains measures which aim to improve standards in rented accommodation, driving out rogue landlords and helping to professionalise the sector.

We will welcome measures that bring greater regulation of the sector and provide greater security to tenants. In particular, the proposed end to 'no fault' evictions.

### **Successful Leaseholder event.**

Last Saturday (11 January) we held a successful leaseholder event here at Hove Town Hall to discuss the future arrangements for our housing repairs service, planned maintenance works, and major capital works.

The event was very well attended and provided a space for leaseholders to learn more about the new services and discuss any concerns they have with councillors and officers.

Break out groups facilitated by officers enabled leaseholders to openly discuss what they would like to see from these services going forward, what we can do to reassure them around the quality of the repairs service, and how they would like to be involved in the future.

The feedback was captured and will be shared with all leaseholders.

We remain committed to improving services to and building a positive relationship with leaseholders.

Following the success of the event and we are planning to hold another Saturday event in the Autumn.

### **Sustainability Measures for new Homes.**

Following the question from David Croydon to the last Housing Committee.

Council officers met with members of the Housing Coalition on 8 January 2020 to discuss sustainability measures in new homes, including how Passivhaus principles may be applied.

Charles Harrison presented thoughts on how Passivhaus standards and design principles would be central to the council achieving its Zero Carbon emissions target by 2030.

We discussed options for the application of Passivhaus principles to new council homes as well as the possible application of Passivhaus and other sustainability measures to the council's existing housing stock and the private rental sector.

We shared and reviewed information on other local authorities we are aware of who are leading on this work and how we may continue to involve interested members of the Housing Coalition and other key stakeholders in future discussions.

The meeting concluded with officers agreeing to arrange study visits to other Local Authorities who have developed Passivhaus housing schemes, including Crawley and Exeter. We agreed that officers report back findings at a further meeting to be held in three months' time. Where possible we will explore opportunities for key stakeholders to attend study visits.

In the meantime, Passivhaus standards and design principles will also be one of the topics explored further by the council's newly established Sustainability Working Group.

### **Successful Homeless prevention.**

I wanted to share good news on what we have achieved so far, this financial year in terms of preventing homelessness.

We have achieved prevention of homelessness for 602 households and are on track to reach our target of 827 by end of March. This builds on the achievements of last year when we prevented homelessness for 810 households.

We are also on track to enable around 400 households to access suitable private rented accommodation.

Our successful Private Rented Access grant bid enabled us to achieve this, not only for households we have a legal duty to house but also for around 40 rough sleepers and former rough sleepers and single people.

- We have received good feedback from both tenants and landlords.
- We make sure every property is in good condition and affordable.
- We also offer intensive assistance at the start of the tenancy to enable the tenancy to be sustained.

We have submitted a further bid for Rough Sleeping Initiative grant funding to continue this work for people at risk of rough sleeping and those who have slept rough and are ready to move on.

In recognition of our good practice in this area of work, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have invited us to deliver a series of workshops for other local authorities across the country.

## **42 CALL OVER**

42.1 The following items were called for discussion:

45	Housing Revenue Account Budget & Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy	✓
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46	Rent Policy for New Council Homes	✓
47	Elwyn Jones Court – Renewable Heating Proposal	✓
48	Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy	✓
49	Future Repairs & Maintenance to Council Housing Stock	✓
50	Update on Progress Against the Housing Committee Work Plan	✓
52	Procurement of Council Owned Short Term Temporary Accommodation – Gladstone Court, Hartington Road, Brighton	✓

42.2 The following item was not called for discussion and the recommendations contained therein are therefore approved and adopted:

51	Housing Management Performance Report Quarter 2: 2019/20	X
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#### 43 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

(a) Petitions - None were received.

(b) Written Questions:

*(A period of not more than 15 minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for questions submitted by members of the public).*

1. Question from: Barry Hughes

Question for Housing Committee 15th January 2020:

In the past council residents have been given the opportunity to consult on the setting of the HRA budget. Indeed, this consultation has, in the past, been started as early as September with councillors, officers and tenant representatives taking part. However, the budget that members will be asked to vote on today has little or no tenant input – apart from the matter of the in sourcing of repairs. I would ask that this committee notes my concerns and for 2020/21 budget planning, reverts to the consultation processes of 2016.

Chair's Response:

Thank you for your question. Your concerns are noted.

As you mention, we have in the past undertaken more wide-ranging budget specific consultation with residents than has been the case this year.

However, while residents' views might not be sought in the same way every year, residents are regularly consulted on a range of important areas for decision. The

outcomes of these consultation events then inform budget decisions, often informing budget proposals over a number of financial years.

For example, many of the budget decisions relating the capital programme of planned works have been informed by priorities that tenants were consulted on as part of the asset management strategy consultations, as well as being informed by stock condition surveys and the known investment needs for our council stock.

As you also mention, significant consultation has taken place regarding the insourcing of the repairs and maintenance service.

This was very detailed consultation and forms a significant part of the current proposed Housing Revenue Account budget proposals.

In addition, residents were recently consulted on their priorities for improving the public areas of estates, the results being reflected in budget proposals for the current year, and the next two financial years.

We would be happy to work with residents to plan future consultation to feed into the Budget setting process for 2021/22 onwards.

Supplementary:

I note that the proposals tabled today include an extra £50,000 for Grounds Maintenance, which is not coming out of service charges in 2020/21 but will be reviewed. I have long suggested that there should be a citywide uplift of Grounds Maintenance charges as many of the charges levied for this service around the city are inadequate – clearly acknowledgment for a need for consultation with those who are the council's eyes and ears on the estates.

Chair's Response:

Thank you for your supplementary question.

As noted, this budget proposal has been informed by feedback from residents at various times in various forums, including feedback from yourself.

Tenants and leaseholders have fed back to us that they are concerned to improve their neighbourhoods and communities as well as their homes and have asked us to prioritise the look of their estates, including how grounds are maintained, as a key area for council focus.

It is our hope that by making the budget proposals as we have, that residents will see tangible improvements results arising from their feedback. We will monitor this and keep this under review in partnership with residents.

We will also keep the issue of service charging under review for future years budget setting as additional funding and focus on this area of work beds in.

## 2. Question from Charles Harrison:

Night Shelters.

Further to my original and supplementary questions about Night Shelters, submitted to the Housing Committee on 13 Nov 2019, I understand that further written details are to be provided by BHCC.

To clarify what information I requested, would it please be possible for the data indicated in the yellow shaded cells on the attached spreadsheet to be provided?

What would you consider to be a reasonable time for providing a written response after a Committee meeting?

Chair's Response:

Thank you for your question.

I apologise for the delay in our response to your supplementary question concerning Night-Shelters asked at our previous committee meeting.

In response, I can advise as follows:

BHCC's selection criteria for a short term/emergency accommodation building:

When looking for a building for a Night-shelter we are looking for a good quality building that is safe and well maintained, can be heated, and offers bathroom facilities (including showers) and a kitchen so hot meals can be provided. The building needs to be able to offer separate sleeping space for women or people who are vulnerable/unable to manage in a large communal environment.

Ideally, we would want the building to be in the centre of the city to improve accessibility for people in need and to be accessible to people with mobility needs, to offer breakaway space so that people can read, listen to music, watch television, and socialise without disturbing the sleep of other residents.

Housing Benefit cannot be claimed for night-shelters, so the building needs to offer good value for money as the full costs will need to be met by the local authority in addition to the support costs for people accommodated in the service.

Progress made so far in finding a building

We have procured a 365 day night-shelter which is now up and running and accommodating 15 people every night in good quality accommodation with support to ensure move on into accommodation that is suitable and sustainable for the individual.

BHCC's strategies for procuring a building

- In partnership with Estates and Housing, Health & Adult Social Care Commissioning review all empty council owned buildings.
- H&ASC and Housing work together to explore possibilities in new developments.
- The commissioned Charity Link worker explores options with third sector providers, charities, churches and community groups.

- All of our existing providers are asked about available options they may have or be aware of and we use social media and BHCC website to publicise property searches.
- In addition to the above, the council's Strategic Accommodation Board assess all such accommodation needs for vulnerable households in the city and works to ensure that we have a citywide strategy to meet the identified needs across all departments.

BHCC's timescales for procuring a building

As above, we have procured a 365 day night-shelter which is now up and running and accommodating 15 people every night in good quality accommodation with support to ensure move on into accommodation that is suitable and sustainable for the individual.

3. Question from David Croydon:

Regarding the transition from MCM to Northgate IT system I note that under agenda item 49 (Future Repairs and Maintenance to Council Housing Stock), section 4.11, the transition from MCM, the Mears works management system, and the associated supply chain, to the proposed BHCC Northgate Housing and Works Management IT system is expected to take approximately two years from April 2020.

Would you please clarify the benefits and shortcomings of using the existing MCM system and supply chain?

Chair's Response

Thank you for your question.

The Housing Repairs & Maintenance service will need to be supported by a number of IT systems. The council have investigated how other in-house providers operate repairs services and there are a range of solutions available.

The key focus of the programme is ensuring that customer service is maintained during this period of change. In order to ensure this continuity for our residents, it is proposed that staff transferring across from Mears will continue to use the current MCM system for a limited period to raise and manage individual repairs and monitor the performance of the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service.

The MCM system is a tried and tested system for managing repairs that has operated successfully in Brighton & Hove and across the country for many years. It is also one that transferring staff are familiar with.

One of the key benefits of using the MCM system is the close integration with the materials supply chain. Materials can be purchased when a job is raised in MCM, allowing real time cost capture and the ability to track van stock and order replacements automatically via the operative's PDA device.

If the council were to procure its own supply chain at this time it would not be possible to automate these processes with MCM in the same way, leading to a less efficient service and the necessity to introduce more manual and time intensive processes to process payments and track the true costs of jobs.

Our proposed approach will enable the service to avoid delays or disruptions to the core repairs work and critical urgent works and continue to provide a robust audit trail for jobs and cost of works.

This will provide continuity ahead of the implementation of the Northgate Housing Management system (NPS Housing) which is expected to go live in January 2021. Staff will then manage day to day repairs through this system. All Housing staff, including the new Repairs & Maintenance service will be supported and trained in using the system ahead of implementation.

The MCM system will continue to operate as a Works Management system to provide the operational processes needed for a repairs service. An interface between MCM and the NPS Housing system will be in operation when the system is live.

We also propose to go out to procurement to get a new works management system to replace the MCM works management system and any new system will interface with our NPS Housing System.

The materials supply chain will be reviewed in line with the arrangements for new IT systems, so that any system procured can be fully integrated into a council operated materials supply chain.

The MCM system and Northgate systems can adequately manage call back and warranty jobs and particular attention is being given to this in the implementation of both systems.

4. Question from Sam Dunnett (ACORN):

In the absence of a city-wide selective landlord licencing scheme in Brighton and Hove, many private rental properties fail to meet basic safety standards, while those responsible go undetected and unprosecuted. This is a matter of growing urgency for renters.

ACORN Brighton hopes that the implementation of such a scheme is a firm priority for the city council. At the March 2020 meeting of this committee, a report on the strength of the evidence to support city-wide licencing will be given. Within what specific time period after this will the scheme be submitted to the secretary of state?

Chair's Response:

Thank you for your question.

The private rented sector is our second largest form of housing in the city after owner occupation.



We are committed to ensure it is safe and meets at least minimum standards.

We have recently agreed a Private Sector Housing Enforcement strategy which will be implemented from April 2020.

In the meantime, our Private Sector Housing Team respond and take action where tenants tell us there are issues with the management and standards of their home.

With regard to approval for a Selective Licensing scheme in the City.

This is a complicated process which is made more difficult by the history of legal challenge.

There is no intent to put any fresh application before the Secretary of State, instead we are aiming to have a smaller scheme put before committee which does not require Secretary of State approval.

There are several statutory requirements we have to meet to enable approval of a compliant scheme.

As reported to Committee we are undertaking property surveys. Once this evidence is obtained it will be combined with the other evidence we already have. This will then inform whether there is sufficient evidence to support a scheme and the nature of the scheme. That is, its legal basis, for instance anti-social behaviour or property conditions.

Then it will have to go to public consultation. It should also be noted that the legal basis of any selective scheme is about the community aspect and not specifically about the internal conditions of a property, which would include safety.

This is a welcome opportunity to remind all private tenants in the city that they have several routes to rectify property disrepair issues. If possible, they can and should consider seeking legal advice and where needed take legal action through the Courts.

As mentioned, private sector tenants may also contact our officers in the Private Sector Housing team, who have statutory powers to address any safety concerns relating to a property.

(c) Deputations - None were received.

#### **44 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS**

- a) Petitions - None were received.
- b) Written Questions – None were received.
- c) Letters – One letter has been received from Councillor Siriol Hugh-Jones.

Dear Geoff Raw

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Housing Committee meeting of 15th January 2020.

Given that the Mears repairs and major works contract for council properties is to be replaced from April with separate arrangements for responsive repairs, ongoing maintenance and improvements, major capital projects and specialist works, I have the following questions:

1. Aside from the extra staff who are coming in-house to deal with responsive repairs, what personnel resources is the Council putting in place to monitor and enforce the new arrangements, both in terms of the legal team and management and contract surveyors?
2. What asset management system is to be used from April and how soon are the existing asset management and Housing IT systems expected to be integrated into any new asset management system and IT system? What progress has been made to date?
3. I understand that repair jobs are not currently raised for faults with items under warranty (planned/major works) and are instead referred to the relevant contractor to rectify, with the result that no record is made on the existing repairs system of the fault having been reported or of any progress made to resolve such issues. In light of this, are you able to: a) provide assurance that this problem will not be replicated in any new system put in place from April; b) give an estimate of how - and how soon - any such faults (raised but not necessarily recorded ahead of the Mears contract terminating) will be remedied; c) provide assurance that the Council is aware of the volume of such faults despite them not being recorded in the repairs system?

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Siriol Hugh-Jones

### **Chair's Response**

Dear Councillor Hugh-Jones,

Thank you for your letter.

As you have set out the council is in the process of establishing new arrangements for the delivery of responsive repairs and maintenance, planned improvement works and major works to council housing stock. This follows a series of decisions made through Housing & New Homes Committee and Policy, Resources and Growth Committee in September 2018 and October 2018.

Housing Committee has a full update report on progress with the programme to set up these arrangements at the Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

I have answered each of your three questions below:

1. *Aside from the extra staff who are coming in-house to deal with responsive repairs, what personnel resources is the Council putting in place to monitor and enforce the new arrangements, both in terms of the legal team and management and contract surveyors?*

Approximately 160 Mears staff will transfer into the council on 1 April 2020. These staff will form the new 'Housing Repairs & Maintenance' service that will sit alongside our other existing services in Housing.

All works will be overseen by a range of professional staff within the Housing service including Quantity Surveyors, technical surveying staff and contract managers. The council is committed to ensuring that works are carried out to the right standard and deliver value for money for all residents. The council's Housing Property & Investment team is being reviewed to reflect the proposed arrangements from April 2020 and this will include increasing technical resource and capacity alongside other emerging priorities for the housing sector.

The proposed HRA budget for 2020/21 is being considered at Housing Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and includes provision for an increase in client-side resources of 10 full time staff.

The budget also includes a one-year investment of £0.142m to supplement the £0.250m that was put in place for the repairs programme to pay for the continuation of programme management resources associated with the set-up, mobilisation and delivery of the new repairs and maintenance services. This will include delivery of support for the transfer of staff to the council, delivering improvements to the service in line with the objectives set with stakeholders in 2018 and further changes to the service including the procurement and implementation of works management systems for the in-house repairs service.

2. *What asset management system is to be used from April and how soon are the existing asset management and Housing IT systems expected to be integrated into any new asset management system and IT system? What progress has been made to date?*

The council will continue to use the Apex asset management system from April 2020. We currently populate data in Apex from various external sources periodically rather than via any interface e.g. installations dates of property components such as boilers (based on data from OHMS), kitchens and bathrooms (based on data from Mears).

The council is also running a significant programme to replace its existing Housing systems (OHMS) with a new system (NPS Housing) following a procurement process in 2018. Further details were reported to Housing & New Homes Committee in June 2018 and the report is available [Housing-Management-IT-System-Procurement-Update.pdf](#)

The new system is currently due to go live in January 2021. We have made provision for an interface to Apex as part of the contract specification, but we do need to go

out to procurement for a new asset management system as our current contract with Apex will expire March 2022.

The key focus of the programme is ensuring that customer service is maintained during this period of change. In order to ensure this, we propose that staff transferring across from Mears will continue to use the current MCM system to raise and manage individual repairs and monitor the performance of the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service.

The insourced repairs service will then transition to managing day to day repairs through NPS Housing when the new system is live. All Housing staff, including the new Repairs & Maintenance service will be supported and trained in using the system ahead of implementation.

The MCM system will continue to operate as a Works Management system to provide the operational processes needed for a repairs service. An interface between MCM and the NPS Housing system will be in operation. A new works management system will then be procured, and any new system will interface with the NPS Housing System.

3. *I understand that repair jobs are not currently raised for faults with items under warranty (planned/major works) and are instead referred to the relevant contractor to rectify, with the result that no record is made on the existing repairs system of the fault having been reported or of any progress made to resolve such issues. In light of this, are you able to a) provide assurance that this problem will not be replicated in any new system put in place from April; b) give an estimate of how - and how soon - any such faults (raised but not necessarily recorded ahead of the Mears contract terminating) will be remedied; c) provide assurance that the Council is aware of the volume of such faults despite them not being recorded in the repairs system?*

We are aware of concerns recently raised around the raising of repair orders for recalls and warranty repairs. This is being addressed urgently as clearly all of these cases should be recorded within our core repairs system. Our initial feedback is that this is not happening in all cases. This issue is being addressed immediately and will not be replicated in any new system implemented.

We have received spread sheets recording information sent to contractors and we will be reviewing these to identify the volumes. We are in the process of establishing a recording method and ICT officers are setting this up to the end of the current contract.

In terms of the time it takes to resolve any such faults, the council and our contractors will treat these as urgent issues; however, the time taken can vary depending on the nature of the issue and investigation. All contractors are responsible for defect rectification and we build this into the demobilisation of all of our contracts.

As part of the end of the existing contract with Mears there will be a responsibility for undertaking repairs that fall within the warranty for each element and Mears are required to attend to these to the end of the warranty period. This is being managed with Mears as part of the standard contract close down process.

With regard to the future contracts we are establishing procedures for recording all 'call backs' on works and these will be monitored as key performance indicators within contracts.

I hope this information is helpful.

d) Notices of Motion – None were received.

#### **45 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2020/21 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

- 45.1 The Committee considered the report presented by Jill Fisher (Head of Finance), Monica Brooks (Principal Accountant) and Glyn Huelin (Head of Housing – Repairs & Improvement).
- 45.2 The report presented the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue and capital budget for 2020/21 as required by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989. Members are required to consider the revenue budget proposals including re-investments (service pressures) and changes to rents, fees and charges along with the capital programme. The report also set out the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and a 30-year financial forecast.
- 45.3 The HRA contains the income and expenditure relating to the council's social landlord duties covering approximately 11,500 rented properties and 2,900 leasehold properties. The income and expenditure relating to these properties, including rent rebates, is accounted for separately from the council's other services and activities which form part of the council's General Fund.
- 45.4 Councillor Peter Atkinson considered that the rent increase of 2.7% seemed reasonable. It was noted that Brighton and Hove City Council temporary accommodation is generally good, and the increase in photovoltaic panels is good news. The increase in arrears from Universal Credit, is not good news. Councillor Atkinson was informed that there is an energy review in the Housing delivery plan, housing associations are included in early engagement programmes on downsizing, 50 homes will benefit from solar panels, and senior resident's laundry charge covers all costs will include energy supply at £2 per week. It was noted that lightning protection for blocks of flats is being looking into.
- 45.5 Councillor Mary Mears felt that inflation should not be included in the HRA budget.
- 45.6 Councillor Mears was informed that as a result of the Grenfell fire enquiry, sprinklers have been installed in new builds and the Committee will be informed in the future of other installations. It was noted that the development of a new solar energy efficiency strategy for council homes with a detailed report is being brought to Housing Committee in June 2020. Ventilation and heating repairs and maintenance will not be covered by Mears Group PLC.

- 45.7 Councillor Gill Williams stated that they had been working closely with those affected by the recent fire in a block of flats and will make sure that action will be taken to ensure the safety of residents who live in the city.
- 45.8 Councillor David Gibson approved of the consultation approach to the strategy, the increase of the Photovoltaic panels and the pre-engagement aspects. It was noted that the additional £3.5m would achieve approximately 14/15 homes. Councillor Gibson was informed that the burrowing cap had not yet been reached. Approximately 40 homes are being brought under the right-to-scheme each year. A further member of staff is to be added to the income team to assist with the transition to Universal Credit. Councillor Gibson supported the creation of reserves for future spending.
- 45.9 Councillor Siriol Hugh-Jones was informed that at the end of the current contract for repairs and maintenance in March 2020, a number of significant projects will complete this financial year with the associated service charges being billed to leaseholders later this year. The stock condition survey is ongoing and regular. The survey will influence HRA Capital programme and include empty properties. It was noted that not all rents were received from tenants and this added to the rental income overspend for 2019/20. New build properties have helped to increase income. Downsizing is being encouraged to free up properties across the city and is always under review. Councillor Hugh-Jones was informed that the cost of senior housing guest rooms would be investigated, and the committee informed of the findings.

**Resolved:****The Housing Committee approves:**

- 2.1 That a rent increase of up to 2.7% in line with government legislation as detailed in paragraph 4.11 of the report;
- 2.2 That service charges and fees as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report;
- 2.3 That the contribution to Youth Services from the HRA will continue with the addition of inflation at a total cost of £0.255m in 2020/21 was noted;
- 2.4 That the proposal to set up a capital reserve of £2.900m for use in 2021/22 as discussed in paragraph 4.9 of the report was noted;
- 2.5 That the proposal to set up a new Rent Reduction Reserve for £1.010m (see paragraph 4.10 of the report) was noted;
- 2.6 That the current HRA forecast outturn for 2019/20 in Appendix 1 to the report of £0.200m underspend was noted; and
- 2.7 That the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and 30-year financial projections shown in Appendix 5 to the report was noted; and

**The Housing Committee approves and recommends to Policy & Resources Committee:**

- 2.8 That the updated HRA Revenue Budget for 2020/21 as shown in Appendix 2 to the report be agreed and recommended to full Council for approval;
- 2.9 That the Capital Programme Budget of £40.120m for 2020/21 be agreed and notes the 3-year programme as set out in Appendix 4 to the report and recommended to full Council for approval; and
- 2.10 That for 2019/20, any new revenue costs (estimated at £0.080m) arising from the increased support for delivery of housing supply, should be met from HRA general reserves.

**That Full Council:**

- 2.11 Approves the updated HRA Revenue Budget for 2020/21 as shown in Appendix 2 to the report;
- 2.12 Agrees the Capital Programme Budget of £40.120m for 2020/21 and the 3-year programme as set out in Appendix 4 to the report be noted; and
- 2.13 That for 2019/20, any new revenue costs (estimated at £0.080m) arising from the increased support for delivery of housing supply, should be met from HRA general reserves.

**46 RENT POLICY FOR NEW COUNCIL HOMES**

- 46.1 The Committee considered the report presented by Sam Smith and Diane Hughes.
- 46.2 At Housing & New Homes Committee meeting on 15 November 2017 it a Rent Policy for new council homes was agreed. Members asked that this policy come back to Housing Committee to be reviewed.
- 46.3 The priorities and work plan for the Housing Committee and service for the next four years, 2019 to 2023, agreed at Housing Committee on 18 September 2019, includes to review the rent policy to maximise the number of council homes replaced at social or living wage rents. The report outlines the current Rent Policy which applies to all new council homes including new build, conversion and properties purchased under the Home Purchase Policy and how in future the rent policy may seek to maximise the number of council homes replaced at social or living wage rents.
- 46.3 Councillor Peter Atkinson felt that the issue was sensitive, and rents should be set at the lowest possible. It was noted that energy bills are likely to be significantly lower due to sustainability measures in new build schemes. Councillor Atkinson approved of the affordability and was informed that the rent policy is to maximise the number of lowest rents.
- 46.4 Councillor Gibson welcomed the report and noted that affordability is very important for tenants and the rent policy should enshrine the pledge to increase lower rents across the housing stock. The living wage rents were best. It was felt

that some tenants already subsidise other tenants, that mixed communities are positive, and that case-by-case basis was the best way forward.

- 46.5 Councillor Mary Mears raised concerns on how the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is made up of tenant's rents, is spent. It was noted that there are restrictions within the HRA that would not allow cross subsidising from market rented properties. Councillor Mears was informed that the best way forward was on a case-by-case basis.

**Resolved:**

The Housing Committee:

- 2.1 Noted the current Rent Policy.
- 2.2 Noted that a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the implementation of the policy to date.
- 2.3 Approved the options to revise the Rent Policy for additional council homes that maximises the number of council homes replaced at social or living wage rents. The options for the Rent Policy to be kept under review.

**47 ELWYN JONES COURT - RENEWABLE HEATING PROPOSAL**

- 47.1 The Committee considered the report presented by Miles Davidson.
- 47.2 Elwyn Jones Court is a 75 bed Seniors' Housing Scheme in Brighton. An options appraisal has been conducted to explore upgrades for the space heating and domestic hot water systems. The report explains the findings of this feasibility study and recommends the installation of a low carbon heating solution at Elwyn Jones Court – specifically a ground source heat pump.
- 47.3 Councillor Theresa Fowler felt the scheme was good news and an investment for the future.
- 47.4 Councillor Mary Mears noted that the removal of boilers in senior housing stock had in the past lead to increased fuel bills, and some had lived with this situation for two years. Councillor Mears was informed that the negative impact of the removals in 2017 has been acknowledged and was being addressed.
- 47.5 Councillor Siriol Hugh-Jones noted the 8 year pay back for the ground source heat pump. Councillor Hugh-Jones was informed that the option would be for 20 years with reductions being achieved for 2/3 of tenants by the scheme.
- 47.6 Councillor Peter Atkinson felt the report was good news, particularly at this time of year and for the future.

**Resolved:**

The Housing Committee:



- 2.1 Delegated authority to the Executive Director for Housing Neighbourhoods & Communities to take all steps necessary to procure and award a contract for the installation of a ground source heat pump (option 1) with the option of a maintenance contract for a term of five years.

#### **48 DRAFT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY**

- 48.1 The Committee considered the report presented by Justine Harris and Emily Ashmore.
- 48.2 The report summarises the development to date of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. The draft strategy identifies the key homelessness and rough sleeping issues in Brighton and Hove and action which will be taken to address these.
- 48.3 Councillor Nichole Brennan commended the report and noted the positive elements of the report including references to No Second Night Out, Homeless Bill of Rights and Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). The help from partners was recognised.
- 48.4 Councillor Amy Heley was informed that the data gathering figures for the report will be available in the future.
- 48.5 Councillor Mary Mears felt the executive summary and the consultation were good.
- 48.6 Councillor David Gibson felt it was good to have so much information and to reflect on what has and has not been achieved with regard to reducing homelessness. Councillor Gibson was informed that the Housing Work Plan will show the progress of the strategy and that Housing Committee has oversight of all elements of the strategy.
- 48.7 Councillor Peter Atkinson considered that reconnecting the homeless who arrive in the city from other areas with place of origin a priority. It was noted that the action plan forms part of the strategy, giving a sense of what is going on.
- 48.8 Councillor Mary Mears was informed that the figures for the National Government contribution are kept in house.
- 48.9 Councillor Siriol Hugh-Jones was informed that Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) are informed when prisoners are released and are offered support by the authority.

#### **Resolved:**

The Housing Committee:

- 2.1 Noted the consultation on the Homeless & Rough Sleeper Strategy undertaken to date, our response, and how this has shaped the development of the new draft strategy.

- 2.2 Approves the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for further consultation.

#### **49 FUTURE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE TO COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK**

- 49.1 The Committee considered the report presented by Glyn Huelin.
- 49.2 The report updated the Committee on the progress of the programme to set up the future delivery of responsive repairs, empty property refurbishments, planned maintenance and improvement programmes, and major capital projects to Council housing stock post April 2020.
- 49.3 Councillor Siriol Hugh-Jones was informed that a small number of operatives staff the out-of-hours service as only a small number of repairs are normally needed. It was noted that job specific operatives will be on call for each type of job. The implementation of the Northgate system, which will replicate the existing, is expected to go live with phase one in January 2021. Later phases will include mobile working. It was also noted that alternative procurement routes are being explored, including a mini competition for subcontractors, so that any urgent major capital works required can be delivered on time. Repairs are to carry on as they are now. It was noted that Mears are being paid to use MCM system.
- 49.4 Councillor Mary Mears was informed that an out of hours call handling provider is being procured via an existing framework agreement and close to agreement. A contingency plan, and reserves, have been put in place in case the 1 April deadline is not met.

#### **Resolved:**

The Housing Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the progress with the programme which is outlined in the body of the report.

#### **50 UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST THE HOUSING COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

- 50.1 The Committee considered the report presented by Martin Reid.
- 50.2 The report is the first progress report since the Committee agreed to the Work Plan and sets out progress to date for members to review.
- 50.3 Councillor David Gibson felt there was no need for modesty and was cheered by the report. The ninety additional Council homes are good news, along with the recommendation to form a small Members group to work with officers on measures and report format.

#### **Resolved:**

The Housing Committee:

- 2.1 Noted the progress reported against the Housing Committee Work Plan 2019-23.

- 2.2 Suggests that any further monitoring measures that may be useful to support provision of additional information on progress against the Housing Committee Work Plan and agree that a small group of Committee members work with officers on measures and report format for inclusion in future update reports to Committee.

## 51 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2019/20

The following item was not called for discussion and the recommendations contained therein are therefore approved and adopted.

### Resolved:

The Housing Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the report.

## 52 PROCUREMENT OF COUNCIL OWNED SHORT-TERM TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – GLADSTONE COURT, HARTINGTON ROAD, BRIGHTON

- 52.1 The Committee considered the report presented by Ododo Dafe.
- 52.2 The report presented to the Housing Committee an opportunity to acquire Gladstone Court, a block of 38 flats. The Council is the freeholder of the site which the vendor holds on a long lease for a term of 150 years. The opportunity enables the Council to meet short-term temporary and emergency accommodation needs, and thereby supports the programme agreed by the Housing & New Homes Committee to purchase council owned short-term temporary accommodation which it will manage itself. It accords with the Housing Committee Work Plan commitments agreed at Housing Committee on 18 September 2019 relating to additional affordable homes, as well as the provision of council run short-term temporary accommodation.
- 52.3 Councillor Nichole Brennan felt the report was good news and that having the accommodation inhouse was the for the best. It was considered the acquisition would be good temporary accommodation for families. Councillor Brennan considered that having required private landlords to supply descent accommodation, the authority would need to supply the same, if not better.
- 52.4 Councillor David Gibson noted the site was within their ward and the procurement of the accommodation was a tangible move forward. It was considered by the Councillor that the scheme would stop public money going to private landlords.
- 52.5 Councillor Mary Mears noted that temporary accommodation had lasted a number of years for some residents and this was a concern. Councillor Mears was informed that the staffing and management of the block would be a new way forward for the Council, but the Housing team have considerable management skills to call on.

**Resolved:**

The Housing Committee:

- 2.1 Agrees the purchase of Gladstone Court for the use of emergency and short-term temporary accommodation for a sum to be negotiated up to the maximum set out in the Part 2 report.
- 2.2 Recommends to Policy & Resources Committee that the Council makes an offer of up to the agreed sum detailed in the Part 2 report to acquire Gladstone Court.
- 2.3 Recommends to Policy & Resources Committee that the freehold of the site is appropriated from the General Fund for Part II Housing Act 1985 purposes for a fee of up to £250,000, as estimated by external valuation.

**53 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL**

53.1 There were no items referred to Full Council.

**54 PROCUREMENT OF COUNCIL OWNED SHORT-TERM TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – GLADSTONE COURT, HARTINGTON ROAD, BRIGHTON - EXEMPT CATEGORY 3**

**55 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS**

55.1 The Committee considered the items listed in Part Two of the agenda and decisions thereon should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 6.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of