

Subject: Adult & Community Learning – Extract from the proceedings of the Housing Committee meeting held on 29 April 2020

Date of Meeting: 30 April 2020

Report of: Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law

Contact Officer: Name: Shaun Hughes Tel: 01273 290569
E-mail: shaun.hughes@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Wards Affected: Moulsecoomb & Bevendean

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Action Required of Policy & Resources Committee:

To receive the recommendations of the Housing Committee for consideration.

Recommendation:

That a contribution of £40,000 from the HRA be set aside in the 2020/21 financial year only to support the funding requirements detailed in Option 1 in the report and subject to recommendation 2.3 (i) below for the Policy & Resources Committee being approved, and that any future HRA contributions be conditional on tenants support evidenced by consultation and that should this consultation be favourable, the HRA contribution be proportionate to the established benefits derived by tenants from these services, as also described in 3.41.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

4.00pm 29 APRIL 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Williams (Chair), Knight (Substitute), Gibson, Mears, Atkinson, Wares (Substitute), Fowler, Heley, Hugh-Jones and Osborne.

PART ONE

79 ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING

- 79.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director for Families, Children & Learning, concerning the proposals for the future delivery model of the council's Adult & Community Learning offer funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 79.2 The report was introduced by the Assistant Director, Education & Skills.
- 79.3 Councillor Knight was informed by Assistant Director, Education & Skills that the National Government funding would be lost if the recommendations were not approved, along with the 'Good' Ofsted rating. The Councillor was informed that the staff within the authority have the skills and expertise to run the project inhouse with a good track record if high standards. It was noted that the staff from the Friends Centre will be utilised. The sum stated in the recommendations would be manageable within in The HRA it was noted.
- 79.4 Councillor Hugh-Jones was informed by Assistant Director, Education & Skills that the authority became aware of the lease on the Friends Centre becoming available at the beginning of 2020. It was noted that ESFA have recently consulted on the introduction of a cap on the percentage of the funding to procure services from third parties. If the recommendations are implemented the council would need to provide the service in house or return the grant. The possible costs of redundancy were not known at this time. It was noted that this matter would be looked into later. It was confirmed that the Friends Centre were entitled to agree a one year lease to the authority.
- 79.5 Councillor Atkinson noted that the Hangleton and Whitehawk consultations were good and was informed that the percentage of tenants consulted was not known, however this would be recorded in future.
- 79.6 Councillor Gibson noted that the money would be requested from the General Fund by the Policy & Resources Committee if the Housing Committee did not agree the recommendation to use the HRA.

- 79.7 Councillor Mears expressed concerns that the Children, Young People & Skills Committee had not discussed the item. It was also a concern that if the HRA was used, tenants would be paying twice, having already paid Council Tax.
- 79.8 Councillor Knight felt that the HRA funds should be put to good use and this would support the most disadvantaged in the community. Councillor Knight supported the scheme and the Green Group amendment.
- 79.9 Councillor Wares expressed concerns at dipping into the HRA but did not want to lose the service. The General Fund would be a better way of finding the money it was felt as the HRA was over used. Councillor Wares noted that tenants wanted repairs done to their homes and the HRA should be used for this. It was felt that the Housing Committee should refuse the recommendation and let the Policy & Resources Committee choose the option of using the General Fund. Councillor Wares did not support the recommendation to the Housing Committee.
- 79.10 Councillor Mears felt the HRA should not be used in this case and that tenant's views supported this. Councillor Mears did not support the recommendation to the Housing Committee.
- 79.11 The Green Group amendment was proposed Councillor Gibson who stated that the services were highly valued. Councillor Gibson was concerned that the initial funding would be based on inadequate information, however it was noted that the General Fund was very tightly squeezed at this time. The amendment would make it clear that the HRA could only be used for one year. The amendment was a compromise based on limited tenant consultation.
- 79.12 The Green Group amendment was seconded by Councillor Hugh-Jones who commented that they were disappointed by the level of consultation. It was noted that East Brighton were supportive and that it was vital to show the benefits to tenants.
- 79.13 Councillor Wares reiterated the concerns that there had been inadequate consultation and the HRA should not be raided now or in the future as this would push costs onto tenants. Policy & Resources should grant funds from the General Fund.
- 79.14 The Chair then put the Green Group amendment to the vote, which was carried by 8 votes to 2.
- 79.15 The Chair then put the recommendation as amended to the vote, which was carried by 8 votes to 2.
- 79.16 **RESOLVED:** That a contribution of £40,000 from the HRA be set aside in the 2020/21 financial year only to support the funding requirements detailed in Option 1 in the report and subject to recommendation 2.3 (i) below for the Policy & Resources Committee being approved, and that any future HRA contributions be conditional on tenants support evidenced by consultation and that should this consultation be favourable, the HRA contribution be proportionate to the established benefits derived by tenants from these services, as also described in 3.41.

