

# NOTICE OF MEETING

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## **CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND TACKLING HOMELESSNESS**

**FRIDAY, 26 JANUARY 2024 AT 9.30 AM**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER - THE GUILDHALL, PORTSMOUTH**

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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

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### **Membership**

Councillor Darren Sanders (Cabinet Member)

Councillor Cal Corkery  
Councillor Raymond Dent

Councillor Charlotte Gerada  
Councillor Daniel Wemyss

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(NB This agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting).

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**Deputations by members of the public may be made on any item where a decision is going to be taken. The request should be made in writing to the contact officer (above) by 12 noon of the working day before the meeting and must include the purpose of the deputation (for example, for or against the recommendations). Email requests are accepted.**

### **AGENDA**

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Members' Interests**
- 3 Council Housing Budget (including rents) 2024/2025 (Pages 5 - 48)**

## Purpose of Report

1. The law requires that all income and expenditure relating to Council Housing is accounted for separately in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). All other council income and expenditure is accounted for together in a separate account called the General Fund. This report deals solely with the HRA.
2. The City Council has delegated the function of setting rents, charges and revenue budgets for Council Housing to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Tackling Homelessness. Following consultation with residents and leaseholders, this report seeks to address all HRA budget issues.
3. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet Member's decisions on the City Council Housing budgets, rents and other charges and to give authority for managers to incur expenditure in 2024/2025.
4. The report also seeks to:
  - Note the Forecast Revenue Outturn for 2023/2024 and give authority to the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services & the Director of Finance and Resources to amend the budgets to reflect the latest available information prior to finalising budgets for 2024/2025.
  - Note the Forecast Revenue Budgets for 2025/26 to 2027/28 arising from the proposals set out in this report.
  - Set rents with an average increase of 7.7%, which is in line with the maximum increase allowed by Central Government's Social Rent Setting Policy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Tackling Homelessness approves the following:**

1. **The Forecast Revenue Outturn for 2023/24 arising from monitoring discussion with Managers, as set out at Appendix 3, be noted.**
2. **All rents and charges to be effective from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 or such other date as determined by the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources.**
3. **Dwelling Rents for 2024/25 to be set with an average increase of 7.7% which is in line with the maximum allowable under Central Government's Social Rent Setting Policy, as summarised in Appendix 4.**
4. **General Service Charges for 2024/25 to be set at this meeting, as set**

out in this report and in accordance with Appendix 5.

5. Sheltered Housing Service Charges for 2024/25 to be set at this meeting, as set out in this report, and in accordance with Appendix 6.
6. Laundry Charges for 2024/25 to be set at this meeting, as set out in this report, and in accordance with Appendix 7.
7. Heating Charges for 2024/25 to be set in accordance with Appendix 8.
8. Garages and Parking Site Rents for 2024/25, as shown in Appendix 9, be approved and authority to let garages at reduced rents where demand is low be delegated to the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services, in consultation with the Director Finance and Resources.
9. The Revenue Budget for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 3, be approved and authority given to the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources, to amend the budgets to reflect the latest available information prior to finalising budgets for 2024/25.
10. The relevant Managers be authorised to incur expenditure in 2024/25.
11. The Forecast Revenue Budgets for 2025/26 to 2027/28 arising from the proposals contained in this report, as set out in Appendix 3, be noted.

#### **4 Fire Safety Policy (Pages 49 - 74)**

##### Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to update members of a review of the existing fire safety policy by the Fire Safety Group, including the resident consortium and to seek approval to implement proposed changes to the policy.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the fire safety policy (Appendix A - Fire Safety Policy, version 1.3) is approved and Housing, Neighborhood and Building Services implement the revised fire safety policy which includes the following changes.

The main change to the fire policy is the management of the means of escape and communal areas within blocks of flats. The policy changes the current 'managed use' approach to a 'zero tolerance' approach to be adopted for common walkways or stairwells except for Cat 2 and Cat 2.5 blocks that will remain 'managed use'.

Other changes to the fire policy include the scope of the policy extended to specifically include individual doors opening onto

**common parts of the building and the external structure (including doors, windows, cladding and balconies) of blocks of flats. The lowering of the classification of higher risk blocks from ten storeys to seven storeys, confirmation of where fire safety information will be provided and premises information boxes, details of fire door inspections, firefighting equipment fault reporting and assisted evacuation.**

**2. The implementation and communication plan that is set out in section 5 is approved.**

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