



Mayor and Cabinet

Housing Select Committee comments on the Housing Revenue Account- Rent Setting report

Date: 8th February 2023

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Outline and recommendations

This report informs Mayor and Cabinet of the views of the Housing Select Committee following consideration of a report titled Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Rent Setting. The Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note the views and take them into account when making its decision.

- Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note the views of the committee set out in Section 4 below.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report informs Mayor and Cabinet of the views of the Housing Select Committee following consideration of a report titled Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Rent Setting. The Committee received an overview of the report from Fenella Beckman, Director of Housing Services. Officers from Lewisham Homes and Regenter B3 also attended the meeting. Following questions to officers, the Committee agreed to refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet. The Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note the views and take them into account when making its decision.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note the views of the committee as set out in section four of this referral and take them into account when making its decision.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Scrutiny's work programme has regard to the corporate strategy¹ which sets out the Council's values, priorities and focus for 2022-2026. These are categorised under the following headings:

¹ <https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/corporate-strategy>

- Cleaner and Greener
- Strong Local Economy
- Quality Housing
- Children and Young People
- Safer Communities
- Open Lewisham
- Health and Wellbeing

4. Housing Select Committee's views

- 4.1 At its meeting on the 5th of January 2023, the Committee considered a report on Housing Revenue Account (HRA)- Rent Setting.
- 4.2 The report outlined the forecast rent, service charge, garage and heating and hot water charge changes for Lewisham Council Dwellings and garages in 2023/24, including resident feedback on the proposals.
- 4.3 The report stated that it would be recommended that the Council make the decision to increase the rent by 7%. The potential average service, heating and hot water charge changes were contained in the Regenter RB3 & Lewisham Homes Service charge reports 2023/24 (a link to these is included in the background papers section). The proposal was for an increase of £2.32pw or 7.0% for the Lewisham Homes area, and an increase of £0.93pw or 13.6% for the Brockley RB3 area.
- 4.4 The Committee believes that it is inequitable to charge one group of social tenants an increase below inflation (Lewisham Homes) and the other not (Regenter B3).
- 4.5 The Housing Select Committee recommends to Mayor & Cabinet that they look again at the proposal to pass on in full the service charge increase in line with RPIX + 1% for Regenter B3 tenants. This recommendation is made in the full knowledge that there are financial limitations and that the Council needs to ensure the HRA is not in deficit but the Committee asks that Mayor & Cabinet look at this again and see if some dispensation can be made to assist RB3 tenants given the Cost-of-Living crisis.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Taking the action suggested in this referral will have financial implications that will need to be considered by Mayor and Cabinet. These will need to be addressed in the response to this referral.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The Constitution provides for select committees to refer reports to the Mayor and Cabinet, who are obliged to consider the report and the proposed response from the relevant Executive Director; and report back to the Committee within two months (not including recess).
- 6.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Taking the action suggested in this referral may have legal implications that will need to be considered by Mayor and Cabinet. These will need to be addressed in the response to this referral.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 The Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.2 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

7.3 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. Taking the action suggested in this referral may have equalities implications that will need to be considered by Mayor and Cabinet. These will need to be addressed in the response to this referral.

8. Climate change and environmental implications

8.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report. Taking the action suggested in this referral may have climate change implications that will need to be considered by Mayor and Cabinet. These will need to be addressed in the response to this referral.

9. Crime and disorder implications

9.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

10.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Background papers

[Housing Select Committee- Meeting Papers](#), 5th of January 2023

Report contact: Nidhi Patil, Scrutiny Manager, Nidhi.Patil@lewisham.gov.uk, 020 8314 7620