

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING AND PLANNING PANEL – 17 MARCH 2016
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2016 TO 2046

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report introduces the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2016 to 2046 (the Business Plan) which has been jointly produced by the council and Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust (the Trust) and reflects the shared responsibility for the management of the Housing Revenue Account.
- 1.2 The Management Agreement between the Council and the Trust sets out a requirement for the Trust to produce the Business Plan, which sets out the framework for the delivery of services and improvements in the long term.
- 1.3 The Business Plan outlines the key priorities and principles which determine the use of the Housing Revenue Account. The detailed activities delivered by the Housing Trust are set out within the Trust's Annual Delivery Plan.
- 1.4 The Business Plan focuses closely on investment needs of the stock over the next five years. These needs are determined by analysis of stock condition data and reference to the Asset Management Plan.
- 1.5 The detailed programme of works and capital budgets are agreed via the usual budget setting process.

2 Financial Implication(s)

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 2.2 The detailed HRA budget is agreed via the usual budget setting process on an annual basis.

3 Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To recommend to Cabinet approval of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2016 to 2046, as set out in Appendix A.

4 Background

- 4.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2016 to 2046 (the Business Plan) (Appendix A) has been jointly produced by the council and Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust (the Trust) and reflects the shared responsibility for the management of the Housing Revenue Account.
- 4.2 The Business Plan sets out a joint vision for the future of the housing service, including:

- An aspiration to maintain the council's housing stock at around 9000 rented homes, by investing in the council's Affordable Housing Programme.
 - Managing and maintaining the council's homes to an agreed standard
 - Supporting the development of an Older Person's Strategy and a review of the council's sheltered housing stock, to ensure it continues to meet the needs of tenants now and in the future.
 - Continue to look for opportunities to deliver additional services, such as community alarms, to other providers
- 4.3 The Business Plan helps to inform decision making in order to balance spending on:
- Housing/estate management, tenant involvement and community based services
 - Investment in existing housing stock.
 - Investment in the council's Affordable Housing Programme
 - Repayment of housing debt
 - Mitigating any risk brought about by changes to welfare or housing policies
- 4.4 The Business Plan includes an overview of the current policy framework and highlights some key policy changes which are due to be implemented over the next few years and which will have an impact on the HRA.
- 4.5 Linked to this Business Plan, the council is developing a Delivery Plan for new affordable housing, following a recent strategic review of the current Affordable Housing Programme. This will set out detailed proposals on plans to develop new housing and the implications of these plans on the HRA.

5 Policy Implication(s)

- 5.1 A key objective within the council's Business Plan is 'Meet the borough's housing needs', which is delivered via four core themes:
- Plan for the housing needs of our communities
 - Increase the supply of new, affordable homes
 - Effectively manage the borough's housing stock
 - Allow for sustainable growth that protects our environment and heritage
- 5.2 The council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy sets out five key priorities, four of which have a direct implication for this Business Plan:
- Supply of affordable housing
 - Making the best use of housing in the Borough
 - Prevention of homelessness

- Meeting the needs of older people and other vulnerable groups

6 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 The production of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan is listed as one of a number of controls which are in place, to ensure that the joint strategic risk around success of the partnership between the council and the Housing Trust is well managed.

7 Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 There are no implications arising from this report, which would require an Equality Impact Assessment. All the services and initiatives referred to within the Business Plan are subject to separate Equality Impact Assessments.

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Date 3 March 2016

Background papers: