

27 February 2014

Brighton &amp; Hove City Council

**Subject:** Housing Revenue Account Budget 2014/15 - Extract from the Proceedings of the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014

**Date of Meeting:** 27 February 2014

**Report of:** Head of Law

**Contact Officer:** Name: **Mark Wall** Tel: **29-1006**  
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**Wards Affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE*****Action Required of the Council:***

To receive the item referred from the Policy &amp; Resources Committee for approval:

**Recommendation:**

- (1) That the budget for 2014/15 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report according to the final year of rent convergence to be confirmed by the government in its rent restructuring guidance for 2014/15 be approved;
- (2) That individual rent increases and decreases in line with rent restructuring principles as determined by the Government and detailed in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.16 in the report and according to the final year of rent convergence to be confirmed by government in its rent restructuring guidance for 2014/15 be approved;
- (3) That the changes to fees and charges as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, subject to the mobility scooter storage charge being set at £3.00 per week rather than £4.00 be approved; and
- (4) That the new service charges outlined in Appendix 2 to the report, subject to the revision in (3) above, including the phased implementation of the new Intensive Housing Management charge be approved; and
- (5) That the Equalities Impact Assessment shown in appendix 3 to the report be noted.

**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

4.00 pm 13 February 2014  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor J Kitcat (Chair); Councillors Littman (Deputy Chair), G Theobald (Opposition Spokesperson), Morgan (Group Spokesperson), Hamilton, Lepper, A Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Randall and Shanks.

**PART ONE****122 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2014/15**

- 122.1 The Executive Director for Finance & Resources introduced the report, which outlined the proposed Housing Revenue Account budget for 2014/15, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. She noted that the report had been considered by the Housing Committee at its meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> January which had recommended that the budget as set out be recommended to the Council for approval.
- 122.2 Councillor Randall moved an amendment to the recommendations which proposed that the motor scooter storage fee be reduced from £4.00 to £3.00 per week and noted that it would then be reviewed after a six month period.
- 122.3 Councillor Littman formally seconded the amendment.
- 122.4 Councillor Randall stated that there was a need for a strong Housing Revenue Account in order to protect the council's stock and noted that there was a high level of satisfaction amongst tenants for the services provided by Housing Management. However, there was a need to look at aspects of the various charges that were made and to take these into consideration as part of the review of charges and rents. He noted that housing rents in the private sector and through Housing Associations were much higher than those charged by the council and therefore there was a need to continue to support council tenants and to look to help those on the waiting lists. He recommended the proposed budget as amended to the committee and to the council.
- 122.5 Councillor Lepper referred to the proposed amendment and noted that new service charges were proposed for tenants and queried whether it was appropriate to seek to add more charges in this way. She was unsure that the £3.00 charge for motor scooter storage was still too high and queried whether if a reduction was made after six months, there would be a rebate to those tenants. There were a number of elderly tenants who did not qualify for housing benefit but would now be faced with an additional cost.

- 122.6 Councillor Randall stated that there was a need to provide storage areas for mobility scooters to prevent health & safety issues and that it was intended to undertake a review of the charge after six months, at which time a change could be made if it was necessary.
- 122.7 Councillor Peltzer Dunn questioned the proposed level of charge for the storage and what was regarded as an acceptable unit of electricity to be used. He noted that there was a need to provide lighting in public areas and to ensure that lifts were serviced and maintained, for which charges could be made, but was uncertain as to how far such service charges should go.
- 122.8 The Chair stated that it was difficult to define an acceptable wattage of electricity; however in making a service charge, tenants were aware of what they were paying for. He noted that an amendment had been proposed and put it to the vote which was carried. He then put the recommendations as amended to the vote which were carried.
- 122.9 **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**
- (1) That the budget for 2014/15 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report according to the final year of rent convergence to be confirmed by the government in its rent restructuring guidance for 2014/15 be approved;
  - (2) That individual rent increases and decreases in line with rent restructuring principles as determined by the Government and detailed in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.16 in the report and according to the final year of rent convergence to be confirmed by government in its rent restructuring guidance for 2014/15 be approved;
  - (3) That the changes to fees and charges as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, subject to the mobility scooter storage charge being set at £3.00 per week rather than £4.00 be approved; and
  - (4) That the new service charges outlined in Appendix 2 to the report, subject to the revision in (3) above, including the phased implementation of the new Intensive Housing Management charge be approved; and
  - (5) That the Equalities Impact Assessment shown in appendix 3 to the report be noted.