

Minutes of the meeting of the **Special Housing Management Sub-Committee** held on **4 December 2001** when there were present:-

	Cllr Mrs J Hall - Chairman	
Cllr T G Cutmore		Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr V H Leach		Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr T Livings		Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson
Cllr J R F Mason		Cllr Mrs M A Weir

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P A Capon, C C Langlands and Mrs L I V Phillips.

OFFICERS PRESENT

D Deeks	Head of Financial Services
Mrs M Martin	Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

W Norfolk	Adviser from Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenants Association
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149 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2001 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

150 KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN RELATION TO HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FINANCE

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Head of Financial Services and noted the contents. The report informed Members of the changes taking place within the Housing Revenue account relating to finance. The key changes are:-

- The introduction of the major repairs allowance
- The introduction of resource accounting
- Rent reforms
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plans
- Supporting people framework.

Members noted that in financial terms and based on current information, the Housing Revenue account would appear to have a short life. This message is consistent with information given to Members in recent years. Changes to the subsidy rules, the introduction of the Major Repairs Allowance and budget underspends have allowed additional life to that initially projected.

Even with rent increases, repairs will be more difficult to fund and with reductions of stock there will be real reductions in the service provided. The future policies in relation to the Housing Revenue account need to be considered. Members noted that a Best Value Review on Housing Strategy would be reported shortly. Following this, detailed financial consideration of the options presented will be required to illustrate the policy options.

151 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – REVENUE ESTIMATES

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services which invited Members to consider the annual budget prior to its submission to Council on 22 January 2002.

Appended to the report were the Draft Revenue Estimates covering 2001/02 and 2002/03 and also the 2002/03 estimates shown in the resource accounting format.

Resolved

That the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2001/02 and 2002/03 be presented to Council on 22 January 2002. (HFS)

152 HOUSING RENTS AND CHARGES

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Financial Services relating to the setting of rents with regard to the new formula rent, which Members had earlier noted (Minute 150 refers).

Members received a presentation from the Head of Financial Services on Rent Restructuring. The Sub-Committee requested that a copy of this presentation be forwarded to all Members.

Members noted that:-

- the contents of this report were based on provisional information released by the Government.
- final announcements would be made in December which would enable clarification to be given to the specific issues regarding rent setting for 2002/03.
- this Authority has always agreed rent increases in line with Government rent guidelines.

The Head of Service agreed that a leaflet be prepared to inform tenants about the changes. The adviser from the Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenants Association requested that a draft copy of this be forwarded to all tenant representatives.

Recommended to Council on 22 January 2002

- (1) That rents be increased in accordance with Government guidelines.
- (2) That rents of garages be increased by 20p to £6.00 per week.
- (3) That charges to residents of sheltered accommodation be increased by an average of 2.42%. (HFS)

The meeting opened at 8.45 pm and closed at 9.30 pm

Chairman

Date