

Motion by SNP Group and Green Group

The City of Edinburgh Council

**Item 4.2 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget
Strategy 2023/2024 – 2032/2033**

Council:

- 1.1 Notes that the officer proposals at Appendix 3 and 4 reduce the ten-year capital programme from £2.9bn to £1.6bn investment in council housing resulting in the council housebuilding programme coming to an end with no new homes being put into design and development, and the investment in energy efficiency reduced so that only 81% of homes will meet EESSH2 standards.
- 1.2 Agrees that an end to the council housebuilding programme would be catastrophic for Edinburgh, given the urgent need for more social housing.
- 1.3 Further agrees that this reduction in investment is unacceptable given the number of tenants suffering from damp and mould and the negative impact poorly insulated homes have on climate emission targets

2. Rent Increase

- 2.1 Therefore, agrees to a rent increase of 4.7% this year and commits to this level of increase for the next thirteen years, which would allow the capital programme to be brought back in line with previous targets on council house building and investment in improving existing homes.
- 2.2 Notes that 70-80% of tenants will have some form of assistance with paying their rent in the form of benefits from the UK Government but that some tenants will be liable for the increase, therefore agrees a tenant arrears fund as set out below (3.1-3.3).
- 2.3 Agrees that CEC must continue to make the case to COSLA and the Scottish Government for increased grant funding for new build social housing and for the investment required to bring housing stock up to the EESSH2 standard, and that any increase in funding in these areas should be used to offset the 4.7% increase in future years wherever possible.

3. Tenant Arrears Fund

- 3.1 Recognises that the Tenant Hardship Fund proposed by officers does not go far enough to mitigate the potential impact of a 4.7% increase on those tenants who would be liable to pay an increase themselves. Agrees to bring back detailed options in one cycle to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee on an alternative easy access fund which makes it straightforward and guarantees support for any tenant who might experience hardship due to the rent increase. These plans must follow offers of engagement with political groups to explore alternative models.

3.2 Agrees that £500k of the £4.744m additional revenue from the rent increase in 2023/2024 will be set aside for this purpose. If further funding is required in year, it will come off the amount allocated for Strategic Housing Investment as set out in the table below to replace Appendix 3. Also agrees that if the full £500k is not utilised any remaining sum will be allocated to Strategic Housing Investment.

	Projected Outturn 2022/23 (£m)	Proposed Budget 2023/24 (£m)	Movement £m
Net Income	103.169	107.913	4.744
Expenditure			
Housing Services	35.862	37.294	1.432
Property Maintenance	25.094	24.942	-0.152
Debt Charges	36.905	36.676	-0.229
Strategic Housing Investment	5.308	7.501	2.193
Tenant Hardship Fund	0.000	0.500	0.500
Damp and Mould	0.000	1.000	1.000
Total Expenditure	103.169	107.913	4.744

3.3 For future years beyond 2023-2024, agrees that officers will look at ways that this fund could be supplemented from funding outside of the HRA to support tenants on low incomes and protect the most vulnerable residents reporting back on this scoping exercise to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee.

4. Damp and Mould

4.1 Notes the unacceptable levels of damp and mould that too many tenants are experiencing and that previous calls for action have not been delivered on.

4.2 Agrees that the processes around damp and mould are not working, and therefore agrees for a task force will be put together to implement a rapid action plan for dealing with damp and mould with £1m funding available for immediate improvements for tenants.

4.3 The task force will take the data we already have around repairs, the additional information we are gaining from the stock condition survey and work out a plan for prioritising the capital investment in ESSH2 to target properties most impacted by damp and mould. The task force will also be in position to implement any management actions that come out of the damp and mould internal audit, and to look at guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator around 'Right First Time' repairs and how this can be achieved in damp and mould cases. In particular the task force will focus on why there are multiple visits from the same trades and often from

inspectors to the same property before effective action is taken to deal with damp and mould. An action plan will be developed to ensure that damp and mould is made an absolute priority by the council, with reports to CLT and Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work regularly to give an update on progress.

4.4 Does not agree Appendix 4, agrees that a new Appendix 4 will be brought back for approval alongside the HRA capital budget report based on a 4.7% increase over thirteen years.

Moved by Cllr Kate Campbell

Seconded by Cllr Ben Parker