

Composite motion by Conservative, Green and Liberal Democrat Groups

City of Edinburgh Council

18 February 2021

Item 4.2 – Housing Revenue Account Budget Strategy

Recognising that the Housing Revenue Account is a discrete and ring-fenced component of the budget, the Conservative, Green and Liberal Democrat Groups have agreed the following composite motion to replace the relevant parts of their budget motions.

COUNCIL

1. Notes that over the last year there has been a delay in capital programmes and a reduction in repairs and maintenance activity in council housing.
2. Notes that council rents in Edinburgh are the highest in Scotland by some way, 30% above the Scottish average; and that, notwithstanding the availability of housing benefit and universal credit to cover rent rises for half of tenants, for those at the margin, a rent rise of £100 a year on low and fragile incomes is significant.
3. Agrees that, in view of the ongoing negative impact of the pandemic and the economic recession, to agree to freeze council house rents for one year only.
4. Welcomes the necessary investment in external fabric and communal areas of blocks where the Council is a majority owner within the draft HRA five-year Capital Investment Programme.
5. Agrees acceleration of £1.86m of investment to deliver improvements to internal common stairwells through a prioritised programme of refurbishment across 180 blocks.
6. Approves additional resource of 2 surveyors and 1 case officer for the Mixed Tenure Improvement Service (MTIS) to accelerate property surveys and work with owners to bring forward works to the value of £4m.
7. Agrees to manage this exceptional rent freeze and essential accelerated fabric investment through HRA contingency funding and HRA reserves during 2021/22 with the position being subject to annual review of the budget strategy with updated assessments of delivery of the Capital Investment Programme and Investment Strategy to be considered.

COUNCIL APPROVES

The recommendations by the Executive Director of Place in the Housing Revenue Account Budget Strategy for 2021/31 and the outline 10-year HRA capital programme 2021-31, subject to agreement that there be no rent rise in 2021/22; implementation of the amendments set out in paragraphs 4-6; and any revisions needed to the capital programme as a result.

Moved by: Councillor Graham Hutchison

Seconded by: Councillor Gavin Corbett