

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to Cabinet

14 February 2023



**Subject:** Housing Revenue Account – Rent Setting 2023-2024

**Report of:** Paul Langford, Acting Strategic Director - City Housing

**Relevant Cabinet Member:** Cllr Sharon Thompson - Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness  
Cllr Yvonne Mosquito – Cabinet Member Finance and Resources

**Relevant O &S Chair(s):** Councillor Mohammed Idrees, Housing and Neighbourhoods  
Councillor Akhlaq Ahmed, Resources

**Report author:** Naomi Morris, Senior Modernisation and Strategy Manager [Naomi.Morris@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Naomi.Morris@birmingham.gov.uk)

Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: 010914/2023		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out how Birmingham City Council seeks to manage its Housing Revenue Account over the 2023/2024 period. The plan provides an updated position on the Council's housing portfolio and the Council's priorities for investing in homes and services to meet the needs of our customers across the city and ensure compliance with current and future legislation.

- 1.2 As a Council we are mirroring government objectives and are refining our focus towards our services.
- 1.3 Part of that work involves delivering a robust business plan in relation to how we strategically invest in our stock through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). As the largest social landlord in Europe, Birmingham City Council face significant challenge navigating and an ever-changing landscape and implementing the recommendations of the Social Housing Regulation Bill.
- 1.4 The Social Housing Regulation Bill has confirmed the intention for government to adopt a more rigorous regulatory approach towards housing management, particularly in relation to high-rise blocks and high-risk properties.
- 1.5 Further changes to existing regulatory frameworks, such as the proposed enhanced Decent Homes Standard, including dealing with damp and mould issues, and a revision of the existing Housing Health and Safety Rating System are also likely to impact the way in which we manage our stock and require significant future investment from the HRA fund.
- 1.6 As a Council, we are also responding to global and national issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, ongoing financial and political instability, and delivering on the Council's wider commitments around the route to zero target.
- 1.7 This plan presents an expansion on our current processes in relation to the HRA and how it is used, whilst setting out the longer-term strategic priorities and the pressures that these will place on the existing HRA fund. The Business Plan is a response to the broader challenges facing the social housing sector which demonstrates an ongoing need for planned investment and a clear understanding of what lies ahead for the organisation.
- 1.8 A rent increase of 7% is recommended, in line with the government cap on social housing rent. This is below nationally forecast inflation, so does not keep up with rising costs of development, maintenance and servicing, but does allow the Council to meet its ongoing obligations. Service charge increases are recommended at 5% with a similar impact.
- 1.9 The report also recommends increases to our Temporary Accommodation charges for tenants in hostels (7% increase) and dispersed accommodation (equivalent to 3.5% increase), to counter part of the increased costs of providing this form of accommodation.

## **2 Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Endorses the approach to deliver a 12-month Investment Plan, directly responding to a change in priorities.
- 2.2 Notes and supports the strategic priorities for investment proposed as part of the HRA Business Plan in the longer term.

- 2.3 Agrees the following proposed approach to rents and service charges, improving contribution to the long-term investment programme and enabling the Council to support the HRA Business Plan:
- 2.1.1. Social Housing rent increases: +7%,
  - 2.1.2. Social Housing service charges: (varied by provision) +5% to +7%
  - 2.1.3. Temporary Accommodation Hostel rent increases: +7%
  - 2.1.4. Temporary Accommodation Dispersed property rent increases: (equivalent to) +3.5%
- 2.4 Notes the new regulatory requirements set out in the Social Housing Regulation Bill.
- 2.5 Endorses the proposed Capital Investment programme, supporting the continued investment and improving our stock for our customers.

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Council remains the largest landlord in Europe, with responsibility for just under 60,000 units of stock across the city. The Council's operation and management of its housing stock has a vital role to play in delivering the Council's six priority outcomes, reaching far beyond its statutory housing responsibilities.
- 3.2 Between 2004-2011, BCC invested over £700m through the Decent Homes programme. With this level of investment, BCC was able to achieve 99% decency (as measured by the standard) by 2011.
- 3.3 Following the Decent Homes programme, investment in the stock portfolio began to reduce and since 2016, investment in our stock has been significantly lower in real terms than that of other comparable stock retained Local Authorities.
- 3.4 The stock is ageing, and numbers have continued to reduce because of the Right to Buy initiative and rate of sales. Our 60,000 units are made up of traditional properties, non-traditional properties, sheltered schemes and 213 high rise tower blocks which have been the focus of significant development following the Grenfell disaster in 2017.
- 3.5 Reducing investment over the last decade, particularly in comparison to comparative urban authorities has led to a significant increase in the number of repairs required to maintain properties at their current standard.
- 3.6 Birmingham's housing stock currently receives an average of 4.4 repairs per year, per property, against a national average of 3.3 repairs per year, per property.
- 3.7 The deteriorating condition of our stock and the increase in repairs have had a knock-on effect on tenant satisfaction. In preparation for the Social Housing Regulation Bill a survey was conducted with 25,000 current tenants, with around 11% responding.

- 3.8 Of these respondents, only 49% felt that their homes were well-maintained and there were 108 individual comments regarding failure to invest in stock. This was the highest area of interest to tenants across all the assessed standards.
- 3.9 A further consequence of the lack of investment has been that the Council's compliance with the existing Decent Homes Standard has fallen from 99% in 2011 to 61% currently.
- 3.10 Comparator authorities (Bristol and Leeds) report current compliance more than 95%. The estimated investment required to bring the Council's stock back to 100% compliance with the existing Decent Homes Standard is more than £370m.
- 3.11 Rental income is a vital component when seeking to deliver an appropriate investment programme across the stock portfolio. From 2020-21, government lifted the rent freeze, enabling authorities to increase rents by CPI+1%.
- 3.12 In 2022-23 Birmingham chose to implement a rent increase of CPI only, which amounted to 3.1%. Whilst this decision was taken in recognition of the financial hardship faced by many households during the pandemic, in real terms this limited the available funds to invest in tenants' homes.
- 3.13 The above factors have worked in conjunction with one another to limit and restrict investment in one of the most important assets the Council is responsible for. Affordable housing makes up 24% of all tenure types across the city, significantly above the national average.

#### **4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal**

- 4.1 There are several drivers that have prompted City Housing to revise their approach to management of the HRA.
- 4.2 The Social Housing Regulation Bill (SHRB) was published in 2022 and is currently progressing through parliament. The SHRB sets out proposals to revise the current Decent Homes Standard (further clarification will follow in late 2022) and a review of the current Housing Health and Safety Rating System.
- 4.3 The SHRB also places greater emphasis on the regulation of landlords and the voice of tenants in the delivery of housing service. In response, the Housing Ombudsman has also updated their Complaint Handling Code, placing further enhanced responsibilities on Local Authorities to manage complaints more proactively.
- 4.4 Damp and mould issues are covered by Decency Standards, and the investment in this area will ensure Birmingham's long-term solution to this issue, as will investment in repairs and maintenance, new property development and decarbonisation work.
- 4.5 The implementation of the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Bill have already prompted significant investment in fire safety, which is ongoing.
- 4.6 This is particularly prevalent in high-rise blocks where regulatory focus is likely to focus most keenly post-Grenfell. The Council is responsible for 213 high-rise

blocks and it is likely that additional regulation in this area will be directed towards those landlords with significant high-rise stock.

- 4.7 Birmingham has made significant commitments towards the route to zero agenda; to meet an accelerated timescale for meeting these targets by 2030, as opposed to government targets of 78% compliance by 2035 and full compliance by 2050.
- 4.8 At present, around 26% of emissions come from homes and the Council's target of achieving net zero by 2030 will therefore require significant investment into our stock.
- 4.9 Legislative change is not the only consideration; the cost-of-living crisis, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, coupled with the ongoing effects of the pandemic, has created a perfect storm.
- 4.10 Birmingham is already one of the most deprived core cities, with 90% of its wards facing greater deprivation than the national average. The HRA must be balanced to ensure that the need to invest in properties through rental income and give long-term benefits around energy efficiency and healthier homes is measured against the financial difficulties that many of our tenants are currently facing.

## **5 Local Context**

- 5.1 The commitment made in the Council's Strategy must include the quality of affordable housing, particularly as BMHT make up 45% of development within the city. This includes the physical spaces in which people live and the Council should act as an example to landlords in other sectors, particularly given that the provision is in the main directed towards low-income households.
- 5.2 City Housing are also progressing their own Housing Transformation programme, looking to provide the best housing services. This is being supported through the implementation of a new Target Operating Model (TOM), and it is anticipated that HRA investment will be required to support the mobilisation.
- 5.3 Birmingham aspires to be bold; this should include the way in which the HRA is managed, to provide the best possible offer for our tenants. Historically, Birmingham has taken a pragmatic approach to paying off borrowing against the HRA, which whilst prudent and appropriate has had the effect of limiting the investment that can be delivered going forward.
- 5.4 In the longer term and in keeping with the Council's aspirations to be a bold and brave authority and landlord, consideration will need to be given to the Council's approach to debt if the strategic priorities are to be met.

## **6 Strategic Priorities**

- 6.1 To support the delivery of a 12-month investment plan for 2023-24, a set of strategic priorities have been identified.
- 6.2 Based on the identified priorities, our primary focus is to ensure the homes of existing tenants are safe, sustainable and of high quality. Whilst there is a myriad

of more aspirational initiatives that could be undertaken decency and tenant safety must be the overriding considerations.

### 6.3 Building and Fire Safety

Post-Grenfell, there has understandably been significant focus on building and fire safety, particularly in high-rise buildings. The Council is responsible for 213 such blocks, which is one of the largest high-rise stock levels in the country.

£33m has already been invested in fitting sprinklers alone and there is significant further work already anticipated in relation to fire doors, signage, Digital Fire Risk Assessments etc.

There is also a significant amount of work required in other high-risk but less high-profile property types such as low-rise blocks which have received minimal investment in building and fire safety given the urgency of need to prioritise high-rise blocks.

Pre-Grenfell, HRA funded fire safety works amounted to around £2m per annum; since then the spend has been in the region of £20m per annum.

Projected expenditure from 2022-29 is an additional £58m. There has been no additional government expenditure provided for these works, which has been a significant and previously un-budgeted pressure on the HRA.

### 6.4 Decent Homes

It is evident that a lack of investment in recent years has left the Council well below the current decency standards. This not only places the Council under significant pressure given the imminent enhanced regulation from the SHRB but has also had a significant negative effect on tenant satisfaction.

Tenants do not feel that their homes have been invested in, which leads to increased complaints into the service as well as the resources expended on managing repeat repairs within our properties to maintain them at a minimum standard which still does not meet decency levels.

Given that the Decent Homes Standard is due for review and the likelihood that any new Decency Standard will be of an enhanced level when compared to the existing standard, and when considering both the significant levels of non-decency with our stock and the significant investment required to merely bring stock back up to this standard (£370m), this is a strategic priority going forward.

### 6.5 Route to Zero and SHDF

The route to zero commitment does not serve only the overarching ambition nationally to move towards a carbon neutral environment. The aftermath of the pandemic and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis had impacted on the ability of low-income households who rely on the lower running costs of affordable housing to be able to manage financially.

The ability to retrofit our homes means that the running costs for our tenants reduce, as the cost-of-living rises, provided much-needed flexibility in a worrying financial climate.

The SHDF offers the Council an opportunity to deliver the retrofit programme at an accelerated pace, having a greater impact on a greater number of our tenants in a shorter period. As detailed above, the total investment towards SHDF works will be around £100m, however the bulk of this investment will come from match funding from the HRA or additional Capital Borrowing.

## 6.6 Supporting Wider Regeneration Opportunities

The business planning process provides real opportunity to identify where they HRA can support kick starting key large scale regeneration opportunities such as Druids Heath.

## 6.7 Alternative Rent Scenarios

The government have recently imposed a 7% rent cap; preventing social housing providers from increasing rents for more than 7%.

This decision has been made following the rise in inflation and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Whilst this is supported in principle to protect tenants who are likely to be on a lower income, it does impact the level of investment that can be made into BCC properties.

The table below sets out the cumulative income forgone with a 7% rent cap, and any further reduced rents. The recommendation for approving a 7% rent cap (the highest available value), links to the cost of the strategic priorities above.

BCC believe that the strategic priorities identified are required to provide our tenants with the necessities around a warm and comfortable home. Failure to invest at an appropriate level means that the ability to deliver on our strategic priorities will be compromised.

2023/24 rent increase	Cumulative rent foregone							
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10	Year 20	Year 30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
7%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6%	-2.6	-5.4	-8.2	-11.1	-14.1	-29.8	-66.6	-111.5
5%	-5.3	-10.8	-16.4	-22.2	-28.1	-59.6	-133.6	-224.0
4%	-7.9	-16.2	-24.7	-33.4	-42.3	-89.8	-200.8	-336.2
3%	-10.6	-21.6	-33.0	-44.6	-56.5	-120.0	-268.4	-449.9

Each 1% reduction in 2023/24 rent increase would mean a permanent loss in income of £2.6m p.a., or £111.5m over 30 years, which is the equivalent of:

- 740 less bathrooms each year – 21,500 over the 30-year business plan; or
- 400 less kitchens each year – 11,600 over the 30-year business plan; or
- 370 less roofs each year – 10,770 over the 30-year business plan

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 City Housing Liaison Board have been consulted as a representative of the full tenant cohort. City Housing Liaison Board were supportive overall, understanding the need for property investment. Some concerns were raised regarding increasing rents during a cost-of-living crisis but understand this is proportionate given CPI increases across the rest of the market.
- 7.2 In July 2022, a pilot satisfaction survey was undertaken with 27,000 tenants, receiving a 10% response rate. 64% of tenants raised concerns about the condition of their property and when the responses were analysed, most of these concerns relate to investment into Decent Homes. Whilst any rent increase must be considered carefully in the context of a cost-of-living crisis, we know it is a priority for our tenants to improve the standard of their homes. Investment from rents is a vital vehicle for this.

## **8 Risk Management**

- 8.1 There are several risks which may impact HRA resources and affect our ability to meet the strategic priorities set out at section 6.
- 8.2 Whilst legislative changes cannot always be anticipated, it is vital that the Council continue to establish strong relationships with policy makers and actively consult around any proposed changes to prepare for these in advance where possible. We continue to engage with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to ensure we remain proactive
- 8.3 If the proposed approach is not endorsed, continuing to invest in our stock in the way we have is likely to lead to greater scrutiny from the Regulator of Social Housing and may lead to significant fines or other enforcement measures, given the age and level of deterioration of our stock portfolio. This will also continue to drive significant demand for repairs.
- 8.4 Given the implementation of the SHRB, it also is imperative that we communicate with tenants to advise how investment will be managed long-term. Current levels of tenant satisfaction are not where they should be and this will impact the overall reputation of City Housing and Birmingham City Council.
- 8.5 Government have not yet provided any additional funding to assist local authorities with the expenditure of meeting the imminent proposed regulatory changes. Any costs of meeting these changes will fall on the Council and again, the current rate of investment is unlikely to meet these changes.
- 8.6 Investment priorities are likely to change over time and this is not reflected in the HRA Business Plan. The business plan will undergo a thorough review in Spring 2023 to ensure ongoing affordability and robustness considering a constantly changing economic environment. This will come forward during 2023 as a separate Cabinet report.



## **9 Compliance Issues**

- 9.1 This report positions Birmingham City Council as a forward thinking, proactive organisation, utilising the HRA in the most shrewd and efficient way.
- 9.2 We will play our part in strengthening Birmingham's position as a thriving, young and diverse global city. Our ambitious approach is based heavily on the priorities set out in our Corporate Plan, moving towards a Bolder, Brighter Birmingham:
- A Bold Prosperous Birmingham
  - A Bold Green Birmingham
  - A Bold Inclusive Birmingham
  - A Bold Healthy Birmingham
  - A Bold Safe Birmingham
- 9.3 This plan is developed in conjunction with several other key documents:
- Birmingham's Strategy
  - Birmingham Council Plan (2019 update)
  - Birmingham City Corporate Plan 2023-2028
  - Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/2028
  - Housing Transformation Programme
  - Housing Strategy 2023-2028

## **10 Legal Implications**

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Part 6 sets out the obligations for keeping of the HRA and how to manage annual reviews of rent and service charges and to ensure that there is a balanced budget for the ring-fenced HRA. This is supplemented by the national rent restructuring policy and the HRA Self-Financing Determination.

## **11. Financial Implications**

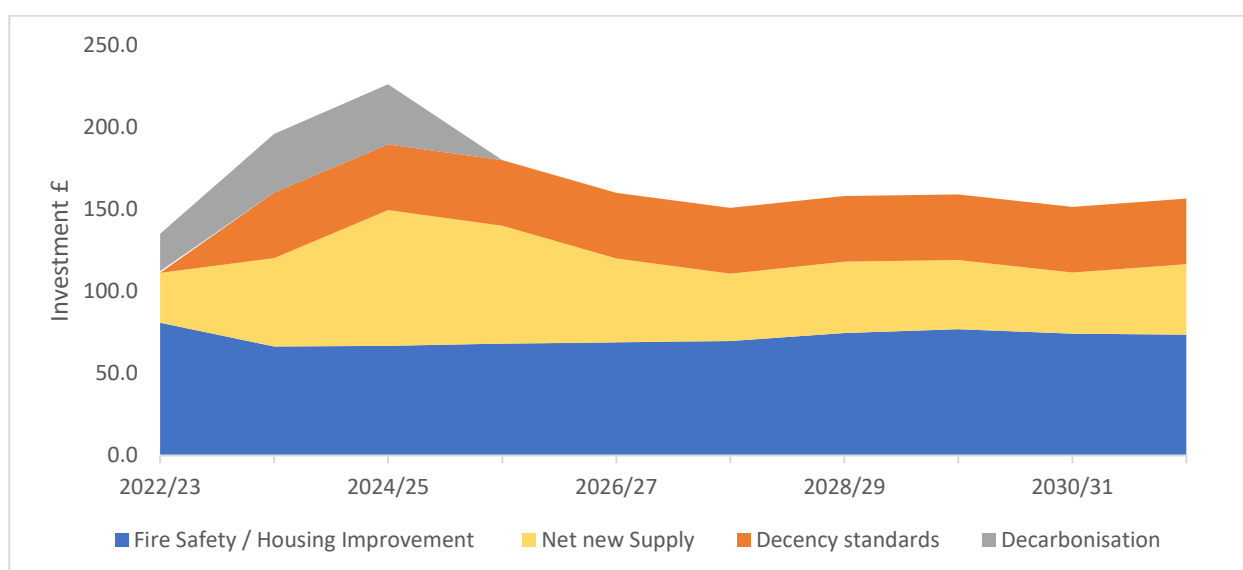
- 11.1 The purpose of the Financial Plan is to detail the level of resource available to deliver the priorities outlined in this Business Plan. The HRA includes all expenditure and income incurred in managing the Council's housing stock and, in accordance with government legislation, operates as a self-financed, ring-fenced account.
- 11.2 Investing in the Housing Stock remains a priority, ensuring our tenants live in properties that are high quality. The Council remains committed to prioritising resources and to replace homes lost through Right to Buy. The Council aims to maintain a consistent level of capital expenditure with a view to improving the

condition of stock and investing in decarbonisation. Appendix 1 shows the ongoing planned investment within the HRA.

- 11.3 The proposals within this report are consistent with the budget position and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as presented within the Budget Report 2023/24. Income generated through the HRA proposals are factored into the HRA Business Plan alongside corresponding spend commitments delivering a sustainable and affordable HRA.
- 11.4 The spending proposals in the HRA Business Plan have been financially evaluated to consider value for money and financial sustainability. The proposed use of the funding available to the HRA from rents/service charges, right to buy income and borrowing is considered value for money in that it has prioritised statutory compliance and local objectives, while allowing an operationally effective provision of services to social tenants. The plan is considered financially robust through its ability to balance spend and debt servicing with collectable income, while also paying off borrowed funds within a 30-year timeframe.

## 12 Capital Investment Resource

- 12.1 Appendix 1 details the draft capital investment resource plan for 2023/2024 and provides a forecast to 2033.
- 12.2 One of the key objectives of this HRA Business Plan is to provide a framework within which the Council's capital investment and financing decisions can be aligned with the Council's corporate priorities over the medium term. The investment set out in Appendix 1 demonstrates our commitment to investing in our customers and making sure the homes they live in are looked after.
- 12.3 Investment across the key priorities over the next 10 years are illustrated in the table below:



## 13 Rents and Service Charges

- 13.1 In November 2017 the government announced its intention to set a rent cap for 2023/24 at 7%.
- 13.2 Cabinet is recommended to increase social and affordable rents by 7%, to counter some of the impacts of high inflation and borrowing costs and make available the income to both continue delivery of effective housing services to social tenants and fund borrowing for the capital investment laid out in the plan (summarised in 8.4).
- 13.3 The average weekly rent to be implemented because of this revision will be £100.18 (representing the weekly rent payable over a 48-week cycle, with 4 weeks rent payment holidays, 2 weeks in each of December 2023 and March 2024).
- 13.4 This weekly rent over 48 weeks is equivalent to an annualised average rent over 52 weeks of £92.49. It is further proposed that social rents for new tenants are set at formula rents as set out in the “Policy statement on rents for social housing” (February 2019).
- 13.5 It is proposed that rents charged for properties let at affordable rents continue to be calculated by reference to formula rents, as set out in the “Policy statement on rents for social housing” (February 2019), with an uplift on a 52-week basis of £3.02 per week (representing an increase of 7% from 2022/23), with the overall rent charged representing approximately 70% of market rents in Birmingham.
- 13.6 It is proposed that service charges are increased to reflect changes in costs of service delivery because of pay and price inflation. The Low-Rise Cleaning service charge has moved to a Citywide charge to reflect the provision of a standard service across the City.
- 13.7 The implementation of the change to a standard Citywide charge will be introduced over 2 years. Service Charges will be levied over a 48-week cycle alongside the weekly rent, with the major average charges on a 52-week basis as follows.

<b>Service Charge</b>	<b>April 2022 Average Charge</b>	<b>April 2023 Average Charge</b>	<b>Change from 22/23</b>
Door Entry / Night-time Security	£10.56	£11.09	+5%
Traditional Concierge / Night-time Security (Bloomsbury EMB only)	£22.18	£23.29	+5%
Cleaning	£2.89	£3.03	+5%
Multi-Storey Communal Areas	£7.07	£7.56	+7%
Caretaking	£9.88	£10.37	+5%
Careline	£2.87	£3.01	+5%
CAT 1 / High Rise	£8.18	£8.59	+5%
CAT 2 / Extra Care	£10.79	£11.33	+5%

Sustainable Drainage Scheme	£55.00	£62.43	+13.5%
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13.8 Other Rents are recommended for increase as below

	22/23	23/24	
Garage rent (excl VAT)	£10.25	£10.51	2.5%
Parking Spaces	£2.76	£2.90	5.0%
Equity Parking Spaces A	£1.37	£1.44	5.0%
Equity Parking Spaces B	£1.94	£2.04	5.0%
Sundry Parking	£2.55	£2.68	5.0%

## 14 Charges in Temporary Accommodation

- 14.1 Most of the TA accommodation provided in discharge of the Council's statutory duty is accommodation leased from private sector landlords, the Council's own dispersed properties, homeless hostels and use of Bed and Breakfast to manage peaks in demand.
- 14.2 The current Temporary Accommodation charging policy has been in place for several years and is signed off annually by Benefits Service. Rents are based on a cost recovery basis as set out in 2014/15 charging methodology.
- 14.3 For the Bed and Breakfast and Private sector leased properties these are fixed rates, capped at Local Housing Allowance level 2011 and therefore are not subject to any changes.
- 14.4 Cabinet is recommended to approve a 7% increase on homeless centres, in line with Social Housing rent increase. This will counter some of the impact of high inflation rates in 2023/24.
- 14.5 The impact of any rent increase in Temporary Accommodation on tenants will be minimal; any tenant that has some entitlement to either Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, will not be impacted as the full increase will be covered by benefits. This is only applicable where the tenant is claiming the benefits they are entitled to. It is proposed that the Housing Solutions and Support Service undertake some targeted support to households who are not claiming the right benefits, to ensure income is maximised prior to the increase.
- 14.6 Cabinet is recommended to increase rent on our dispersed properties by only the equivalent increase in the rent paid to the Housing Revenue Account for the use of these properties. This is equivalent to a 3.5% rent increase.
- 14.7 See below table for figures:

2022/23 Current Charge	2023/24 Proposed Charge	£ Change	% Change
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Homeless Centres		£	£		
<b>Flat</b>	0 bedroom	168.82	174.83	6.01	3.6
	1 bedroom	176.66	183.26	6.60	3.7
	2 bedroom	201.17	208.21	7.04	3.5
	3 bedroom	221.47	229.38	7.91	3.6
	4 bedroom	230.68	239.46	8.78	3.8
<b>Bungalow</b>	0 bedroom	158.28	163.40	5.12	3.2
	1 bedroom	166.29	172.00	5.71	3.4
	2 bedroom	173.11	179.19	6.08	3.5
<b>House</b>	1 bedroom	166.72	172.60	5.88	3.5
	2 bedroom	181.81	188.19	6.38	3.5
	3 bedroom	201.55	208.66	7.11	3.5
	4 bedroom	228.22	235.35	7.13	3.1
<b>Maisonette</b>	2 bedroom	176.88	183.05	6.17	3.5
	3 bedroom	193.02	199.65	6.63	3.4
	4 bedroom	207.25	214.50	7.25	3.5

		2022/23 Current Charge £	2023/24 Proposed Charge £		7% Increase £
<b>Hostels</b>	1 Room	241.95	258.89		16.94
	2 Rooms	287.17	307.27		20.10
	3 Rooms	332.58	355.86		23.28
	4 Rooms	377.88	404.33		26.45

## 15. Procurement Implications (if required)

None

## 16. Human Resources Implications (if required)

None

## 17. Public Sector Equality Duty

17.1 There are no specific issues identified, as the changes will be implemented for all tenants of the Council and all service users. It is estimated that 77% of council tenants will be insulated from the full impact of the revised charges from 4th April 2023 as they are eligible for support towards their housing costs through housing benefit or universal credit.

17.2 Those tenants who require assistance will continue to be offered additional financial planning advice through the Central Housing Rents Team and Debt Advice Services to reassess and maximise benefit entitlement, and to help tenants to budget effectively.

**List of appendices accompanying this report:**

Housing Revenue Account 10 Year Business Plan – Appendix 1

Equality Assessment – Appendix 2

