

## HOUSING AND HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 19 JULY 2016

### PRIORITY REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER HOUSING AND HOMES

#### REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR PETER GRIFFITHS

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets out my portfolio priorities for 2016/17.

#### 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

I have accountability for:

Council housing management services	Oversight and direction of estate management services and best use of housing stock (across all housing providers).  Repairs and maintenance programmes.
Registered Social Landlords	Liaison with the Birmingham Social Housing Partnership on neighbourhood management initiatives and the housing growth agenda.
Private Rented Sector	Licensing and regulation.  Private Tenancy Unit activities.  Bond and deposit scheme initiatives.
Pre-tenancy Services/ Housing Options	Assessing housing need, options for vulnerable adults, children and young people and offenders.  Temporary accommodation provision/ homelessness.  Initiatives for rough sleepers.
Housing Supply	To review the supply of housing and tenure based on an analysis of housing need including responsibility for BMHT. The Cabinet Member will advise the Deputy Leader in relation to housing supply and tenure.
Tenant engagement in social housing	Tenant engagement in the management and development of social housing and Housing Liaison Boards.
Neighbourhood Management	Wider council and public sector integration at the local level.

### **3. PRIORITIES**

Executive remains committed to working together towards the vision of a fair, prosperous and democratic city.

This includes the opportunity for every citizen accessing an affordable and decent home in thriving local communities.

My portfolio priorities for this year are to:

- Develop a housing strategy to ensure all those involved are responding to the needs of local people and improving place and that it develops internal and external partnerships which maximises the City's housing offer.
- Increase the provision of new homes, looking at alternative investment opportunities, different construction methods and development of new housing partnerships.
- Continue to work with our partners to reduce homelessness, tackle rough sleeping and develop a new Homelessness Strategy, including a review of the provision of temporary accommodation and the approach to preventing homelessness.
- Continue to work with partners to improve the provision of homes in the private rented sector and apply appropriate regulations designed to drive up the quality of homes and management offered.
- Maintain the existing good working relationship with tenant groups and City Housing Liaison Board.
- Implement the Housing Allocations Scheme and review after six months.
- Continue to maintain investment in our existing properties with an increased focus on investment in poorer dwellings.
- Ensure that the HRA debt repayment offers best value for money.
- Maximise rent collection through the efficiency of void turnaround whilst responding to the emerging impacts of welfare reform.

### **4. OTHER KEY PROGRAMMES**

In addition to the priorities outlined above, there are a number of other key programmes that will be progressed during 2016/17 including:

- Completing the review of housing services to older people, ensuring that we consult on the types of support services and the adequacy of the accommodation we provide.
- Continuing with review of tenancy conditions in line with Housing and Planning Act 2016.

## 5. KEY BUDGET ISSUES

I am responsible as the Cabinet Member for significant financial resources in the delivery of my portfolio service as summarised in the table below:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Expenditure £m</b>	<b>Income £m</b>	<b>Net Budget £m</b>
Provision of Social Housing for Social Tenants	284.0	(284.0)	-
Private Sector Housing (including empty properties, private sector licensing, safer places and troubled families)	3.5	(3.5)	-
Homelessness (including temporary accommodation)	14.0	(11.0)	3.0

In addition, a total of £378m will be invested over the next three years between 2016/17 and 2018/19 across all those services to maintain our existing homes and deliver new housing including building new private rented sector homes (a specific scheme in St. Vincent Street in Ladywood). The work will continue through BMHT on the building of new homes (both social homes and for sale properties for example at Newtown) and the programme to refurbish our hostels will be completed.

I am expecting all services to be provided within the approved resources for 2016/17 (although there are likely to be pressures and additional costs relating to temporary accommodation). All capital projects are also scheduled to be completed as planned.

My portfolio of services will be facing significant challenges over the next 2-3 years and in particular with regard to Housing (there is an increasing need for new homes of all tenures, homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation is likely to increase in part due to the national welfare reforms and the continued reductions in public funding for services).

The new Housing and Planning Act 2016 has significant implications for Council Housing (the enabling legislation has approved the disposal of higher value properties, the introduction of market rents for tenants who earn more than the specified income – referred to as pay to stay and the review of secure lifetime tenancies). It is likely that this will result in further reductions in resources for public housing (this following the recent national -1% housing rent policy that was introduced in April 2016 – this will reduce controllable resources by 25% in a full year from 2019/20).

Our medium and long term financial plans will be under continuous review to ensure the long term sustainability and affordability in the provision of all my services (in particular out social housing) and to protect investment in new build and our existing stock.

I want to have a clear sense of the value of assets owned by the City which might be utilised to improve the housing offer in the city, considering innovation in funding mechanisms, housing construction methods and available land.

I will continue to develop this financial agenda by working closely with the Chairs of Birmingham Social Housing Partnership, City Housing Liaison Board, Landlords Forum and the Combined Authority. I will express my reservations, as appropriate, to national government on the development of new policies and the implementation of the recent legislation.

Councillor Peter Griffiths

Cabinet Member for Housing and Homes