

Supplementary Committee Agenda



Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel Tuesday, 25th October, 2011

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 5.30 pm

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (The Office of the Chief Executive)
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10. JOINT HOUSING AND FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY STANDING PANEL - HRA (Pages 3 - 4)

In April 2012, the Government will be introducing a major, long term change in the way that local authority Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) are funded. This will involve a change away from the current "HRA Subsidy System" to a new "HRA Self Financing System," under which this Council will need to make a one-off payment to the Government in excess of £180 million (instead of making annual payments to the Government – currently in excess of £11 million per annum), for which we will need to borrow a substantial proportion.

There are two key aspects to this process from the Council's point of view. The Council needs a well-thought out robust 30 Year Financial Plan for the HRA, setting out all expected housing income and expenditure to meet the Council's housing objectives, and the right treasury management solution for borrowing the money in order to meet the cost of the payment to the CLG, and ensure that we receive the best terms.

Following informal consideration by Cabinet members and in view of the introduction and importance of HRA Self Financing, the Chairmen of the Housing and Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panels have agreed that a Joint Meeting of the two Scrutiny Panels should be held with officers and the Council's HRA Business Planning Consultants CIHConsult – chaired by Councillor Stephen Murray, to discuss CIHConsult's draft report before the Indicative HRA Financial Plan is adopted by the Cabinet on the 5 December 2011. Attached is a Proposed Timetable, which sets out the approach to the formulation and adoption of the HRA Financial Plan, together with dates.

The Joint Meeting of the Housing and Finance Scrutiny Panels will be held at 7p.m. on Monday 28 November 2011 in the Council Chamber, and all members of the Council are invited to attend the meeting to discuss this important issue.

Proposed Timetable

Indicative Date	Body	Purpose / Activity	Anticipated Outcome
By 7 th October 2011	CIHConsult	Provision of initial draft report from CIHConsult for Housing and Finance officers to feedback comments	Sufficient information to officers to enable feedback
By 14 th October 2011	Director of Housing and Finance Officers	Consideration of draft CIHConsult by Housing and Finance Officers	Feedback of officers' comments to CIHConsult
By 19 th October 2011	CIHConsult	Provision of updated initial draft for inclusion within Management Board agenda	Report on Management Board Agenda
26 th October 2011	Management Board	To consider an early draft of report from CIHConsult and to consider the issues	Provision of feedback to CIHConsult, for report to informal meeting with Cabinet members
26 th /27 th October 2011	Director of Housing	Provision of Management Board comments to CIHConsult	Provision of comments to update report
By 1 st November 2011	CIH Consult / Director of Housing	Provision of updated draft report to DoH, for dispatch to Cabinet members	Updated report to be sent to members for informal Cabinet meeting
7 th November 2011	Informal meeting with Cabinet & Deputy Cabinet members, Housing & Finance Officers & CIHConsult. Ernst & Young to be invited.	To consider CIHConsult's draft report and the issues/options raised, and to formulate and provide CIHConsult with the Cabinet's initial, informal views	Amendment of CIHConsult's report to incorporate the initial views of Cabinet members
28 th November 2011	Joint meeting of Housing and Finance Scrutiny Panels & CIHConsult (with all Members of Council invited)	To consider CIHConsult's revised report, based on the Cabinet's initial, informal views	To provide the Cabinet with the joint scrutiny panel's views for consideration at the Cabinet meeting
5 th December 2011	Cabinet	To consider CIHConsult's revised report, and to approve an Indicative HRA Financial Plan, taking account of the views expressed by the Joint Housing & Finance Scrutiny Panel meeting	Approval of Indicative HRA Financial Plan, to enable Finance to progress treasury management arrangements
January 2012	Receipt of final debt allocation settlement from CLG		

30 th January 2012	Cabinet	To approve the final version of the HRA Financial Plan, taking account of the final debt settlement from CLG	Approval of final version of the HRA Financial Plan, for inclusion within the HRA Business Plan and to further inform the treasury management arrangements
13 th March 2012	Housing Scrutiny Panel	To consider the draft HRA Business Plan 2012-13, including the agreed Financial Plan, and to recommend any changes to Housing P/H	Endorsement of the HRA Business Plan 2012-13 and provision of comments to Housing P/H
By 31 st March 2012	Housing P/H	To agree the HRA Business Plan 2012-13 for adoption	Adoption of the HRA Business Plan 2012-13

Notes:

- 1) CIHConsult = The Council's HRA Business Plan Consultants
- 2) Ernst & Young = The Council's consultants looking at various Council issues, including a study into the Council's approach to the treasury management aspects of self-financing. The Leader of Council has asked for E & Y to be invited to the informal meeting with Cabinet members.
- 3) The same report from CIHConsult will need to be submitted to both the Joint Scrutiny Panel meeting (28th November) and Cabinet (5th December 2011) for consideration, with the Scrutiny Panels' views tabled at the Cabinet meeting. Note, constitutionally, it will be a Housing Scrutiny Panel, to which Finance Scrutiny Panel members will be invited, and will be chaired by the Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel.
- 4) Once Cabinet has agreed the Indicative 30-Year Financial Plan on 5th December 2011, Finance will then further progress the treasury management arrangements (not covered by this Timetable)
- 5) CIHConsult to attend both the informal Cabinet meeting (7th November 2011) and the Joint Scrutiny Panel meeting (28th November 2011) only.