

To: Cabinet

Date: 16 November 2022

Report/Comments of: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Scrutiny Feedback to Cabinet – Asset Management Plan, Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

SUMMARY OF REPORT CONSIDERED	
Report Title:	Asset Management Plan, Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
Purpose/Description of Report:	The report introduced the HRA Asset Management Plan 2023 – 2028. The purpose of the plan is to provide an action plan based on the recommendations from the HRA Business Plan and to set a five-year capital programme.
Key Decision:	Yes
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Cllr R Child, Scrutiny Committee Chairman
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Cllr R Browne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services

1. Introduction and Overview

The Scrutiny Committee met on 18 October 2022 to consider a report on the Asset Management Plan for the Housing Revenue Account. The report introduced the HRA Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 and explained that the plan would provide an action plan based on the recommendations from the HRA Business Plan and to set a five-year capital programme.

The report explained that it is not a legal requirement to produce an Asset Management Plan, however it is good practice and helps provide a good framework for short term planning. It was explained that the Asset Management Plan would be used to set budgets each year and would be updated on an annual basis. This would ensure that the plan remains current in the changing environment of social housing.

The Committee were informed that the Asset Management Plan is an evidence led document. It is informed by a range of things including a survey of the Council's housing stock and the consultation that was carried out with residents as part of the Business Plan. It provides responses to certain policy recommendations that came out of the Business Plan.

Members were informed that the Asset Management Plan includes a clear action plan with target dates and budget requirements for each action. This action plan will be updated annually, and informed by the annual 20% stock condition survey, with the expectation that new actions would be added each year to deal with new and emerging issues.

2. Summary of Feedback/Recommendations for Cabinet Consideration

RECOMMENDATION

- The Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that the Council:
 - 1) works within the remit presented;
 - 2) prioritises reducing tenants' bills through the installation of energy saving measures;
 - 3) removes all remaining storage heaters from Council-owned properties as soon as possible, and;
 - 4) continues to prioritise the insulation of properties.

COMMENTS

- Members expressed concern that the full stock condition survey has shown that 20% of the Council's housing stock is not up to the decent homes standard but were reassured that there is a clear plan to address this through the five-year capital programme in order to improve the standard of the housing stock.
- A Member commented that the Council should not penalise tenants who look after their property well by delaying improvements to their properties if a replacement is not considered necessary when it is due.
- The Committee expressed concern at the number of properties with storage heaters, especially because they are known to be inefficient and expensive to run. The Committee was consulted on an option to accelerate the replacement of all storage heaters. Members concluded that all storage heaters should be removed without delay.
- Members were reassured that improvements continue to be made to Gretton Court and Wilton Court.

- The comments were made that the number of properties required for elderly people in the coming years is significant and suggested that the Council ensure they are prepared for this.
- A Member commented that the plan is good and well written but suggested that there needed to be more prioritisation. Members were reassured that the plan encompassed all actions that need to be completed including business as usual actions and that action plan included categorisation and prioritisation.
- In response to a comment about properties with aluminium windows, the Committee were reassured that the plan commits to replacing them as soon as possible and that within two years all aluminium windows will have been replaced.
- A query was raised on whether solar panels were being installed on properties. In response, the Committee were informed that the Council had installed solar panels on some properties and would commit to install more panels or an alternative technology which best supports the tenant, where funding permits.
- Whilst the Committee supports the zero-carbon agenda, they agreed that the current priority should be to support initiatives which helps keep tenants' bills as low as possible.

Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee