

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Antony Lockley, Director of Strategy and Assistant Chief Executive and Steve Thompson, Director of Resources
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform
Date of Meeting:	10 February 2021

PROPOSED RENT REVIEW 2021/2022

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider the recommendations of the Executive on 25 January 2021 regarding the level of rents and service charges to be charged in connection with Housing Revenue Account dwellings during 2021/2022.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve the recommendations of the Executive from its meeting held on 25 January 2021, namely:

2.1.1 To agree that rents for all Housing Revenue account properties are increased by 1.5% in 2021/2022, following rent reductions in the four years to 2019/2020.

2.1.2 That the minimum level of Housing Revenue Account balances remain protected at £1 million, as previously agreed.

2.1.3 To agree that Housing Revenue Account service charges (as detailed in Appendix 2c, to the Executive report) and that other General Fund service charges (as detailed in Appendix 2d, to the Executive report) are charged as outlined.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To ensure that rent levels are appropriate and the Housing Revenue Account is financially secure as the Council Homes Investment Plan is delivered over the next few years.

Retaining the previously agreed minimum reserves level of £1 million ensures that prudent balances are maintained in the Housing Revenue Account.

- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Not applicable - the report once approved will become part of the Council's new approved budget

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Rents could be set at a lower level, but following rent reductions from 2015/16 to 2018/19 increases are required to enable investment in new Council homes and decarbonisation of existing stock.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Executive at its meeting on 25 January 2021, considered a report regarding the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/2022 and the level of rents in relation to Council housing dwellings and service charges to be applied during the next financial year. The report to the Executive detailed the 2021/2022 Draft Budget and the proposed changes in rent and service charges.

5.2 New charges for Housing Revenue Account Services and related Non-Housing Revenue Account properties were also considered and detailed within the report to the Executive.

5.3 All Members of the Council should have received copies of the papers considered by the Executive at its meeting on 25 January 2021, in connection with the Proposed Rent Review [available via this link](#)

5.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.5 List of Appendices:

5.6 Appendix 10(a) – Executive Decision Notice – EX1/2020 - Proposed Rent Review 2021/2022 - 25 January 2020.

6.0 Financial considerations:

6.1 These were set out in the report considered by the Executive on 25 January 2021.

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 The proposed rent increase is in line with the rent increase allowed by Government for 2021/22, as it has been set at the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%.

8.0 Risk management considerations:

8.1 These were set out in the report considered by the Executive on 25 January 2021.

9.0 Equalities considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

10.1 The Council is committed to achieving climate change targets by 2030 and there are also national policies requiring decarbonisation of housing stock. In common with all other stock holding local authorities Blackpool has many units currently heated by carbon derived options and investment in new technologies and solutions is required.

11.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

11.1 The rent report is shared with the Board of Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd, which includes tenant and leasehold representatives and independent members.

12.0 Background papers:

12.1 None.