

Conservative amendment

HRA Budget 2026/27

Amendment by Councillor Houghton

That the Council:

(i) approve the budget as attached in Appendix 1, page 2, of the report, subject to the following amendments:

(a) approval of the setting of the weekly unrebated rents at an increase of 9.8%, for municipal homes, to take effect from Monday 6th April 2026;

(b) the reduction in the capital borrowing requirement of £10m by including the Additional Capital Grant in the Capital Programme;

(c) notes the Council's investment in void reduction and the stated target of reducing the void total by 400 during 2026/27, and instructs the Chief Officer – Housing to report the financial gains arising from this work through quarterly service updates so that they can be transparently incorporated into future-year HRA modelling.

(ii) agree to work towards restoring the working balances to 10% in future years to meet future operational requirements and risks, noting that if the Housing Revenue Account records a deficit and has no reserves then the Council's General Fund must make a contribution to balance the Account;

(iii) approve the level of miscellaneous rents and service charges, including Heat with Rent and the General Fund Support Services Charges as detailed in Appendix 1, pages 22 to 23, to take effect from Monday 6 April 2026;

(iv) approve, based on a rental increase of 9.8% the Base Capital Programme for the financial years 2026/27, 2027/28, 2028/29, 2029/2030 and 2030/31 Appendix 1, pages 27 to 29;

(v) approve the permanent inclusion of a £1,000,000 Rent Assistance Fund from, 2026/27;

(vi) approve the move from a 48 week to a 52 week rent structure for all rents with effect from 6 April 2026, including miscellaneous rents;

(vii) delegate authority to the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Chief Officer – Capital and the Chief Officer – Housing to vire monies within the Housing Capital Plan to support any works that may be required to review the non-traditional housing stock and city centre multi storeys, retrospectively reporting any virement to the next available meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee as part of the Quarterly Financial Performance reports.

(viii) recognises that the Housing Revenue Account now represents a significant corporate risk due to its exposure to interest rate movements, borrowing costs, inflation, repairs volatility and reserve fragility, and that its stabilisation requires coordinated work across Housing, Capital, Asset Management and Finance;

(ix) requests that, for a period of 12 months, the Chief Executive provides corporate oversight of this cross-service work and issues quarterly service updates to all councillors on progress with HRA stabilisation, including reserve trajectory, void performance, borrowing exposure and any emerging risks.