

CABINET

13 December 2006

TACT COMMENTS ON REPORT CAB1369

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report CAB1369 - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2007/08 was considered by a special meeting of TACT on 6 December 2006.

Comments from TACT drafted by the chairs of the afternoon and evening group and which summarise the views of the group expressed at that meeting are appended to this report.

TACT COMMENT – CAB1369 – HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2007/08

TACT thanks Richard Botham, Head of Landlord Services, for taking the time to take us through his papers on the above subjects.

Option1 or Option 2 is very much swings and roundabouts, what one tenant may gain another will not.

The Government, in its relentless determination to bring local authority rents in line with the formula used by housing associations and as stated in the Executive Summary means all social housing rents will converge by 2011.

TACT for its part ask that the Government by so doing, give us the same rights, and take away the crippling 40% subsidy on the HRA. We for our part will be challenging the Government on this, and trust the Council will support us.

Richard Botham along with others has fought hard to sort out the charges made to the HRA and General Fund so that they are proportioned fairly, and we thank him for this.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- TACT considers recommendation no 1 would best serve the tenants interest, though both have some merit.
- Item 3: Should target rent be charged to the new tenant straight away for that property? This could be a possible solution, but would require further discussion on TACTS part.
- Item 5: Central Control service funded directly from the HRA with effect from 1st of April 2007 would require close monitoring. The grant from the General Fund seems a more positive approach, providing it is on going year by year.
- Item 6: increased garage rents to non tenants, causes no problem for TACT as they have requested this for a long while, however for tenants a two year phase in system would be the chosen option.
- Item 8: sheltered and general needs service charges calculated to recover actual costs on a scheme to scheme basis, should ease the burden on the HRA.
- Item 9: The Councils Scheme of Allocations should be amended to ensure that one third of all new lettings should be allocated to the transfer list applicants and the remainder be allocated to waiting list applicants, met with some opposition from some TACT members. This is what several councils have decided to do, saving the HRA considerable money, and speed up the process of getting homes for people on the waiting list.

Housing Revenue Budget 2007/2008

- Item a) TACT note the provisions made for salary inflation, and request as in previous years the employment of agency staff be kept to an absolute minimum.

- The Repairs Budget has been adjusted to allow for rising costs, TACT accept this has to happen, we will however keep a close watch on the quality of the work carried out, and time taken, so that once more tenants are assured of Best Value for Money.
- b) Housing Options – TACT have this item top of its list of priority, so at our next Independent Day we will be making our plans for the coming year, and contacting Government sources amongst others with our concerns. We will use what ever means to get our message over, we want to stay with the Council as our Landlord.
- c) Repairs and Estate Works – The additional funding is welcome to allow for inflation, changes to the Scheme of Allocations was very much needed, something TACT has been pursuing for a long time. The Emerging Issues will present problems for the HRA. TACT will play its part to try and find solutions and co-operate with the Council when possible.

TACT have covered most of its concerns in this Report, but due to time constraints, less than a day to prepare it, we would seek the right to raise matters at a later date should they arise.