

Tenant Services Management Board – AGM, Public Question Time.

Councillor Morrell raised three issues with board members. It was requested that a review occur with regard the general fund and the cost of director charges.

It was also requested that the Tenant Services Management Board review the current level of vandalism to properties and consider where savings could be made.

Councillor Morrell also suggested that the board consider the disposal of land to registered social landlords.

Mr Barrah advised that Councillor Morrell's questions regarding the budget had already been received at a previous meeting and were currently being looked into.

Councillor Brooks advised that a breakdown of the cost of directors would be useful.

Response to Public Question Time

Request for a review with regard to the General Fund and the cost of Director charges.

At budget setting for the 2011/12 financial year, additional charges were allocated to the HRA that related to the costs of Strategic Directors. On review of the recharges it was discovered that insufficient charges had been made to the HRA for the time that Directors spend on housing matters, consequently this adjustment was undertaken. This change was subsequently agreed by the Executive and the Council's Section 151 Financial Officer and is consistent with the HRA ring fence. It is legitimate for all appropriate costs for all tiers of the authority to be accurately reflected in the charges attributed to the HRA.

In addition, concern was raised in relation to the perceived high cost of the Tenant Empowerment Team. It should be noted that this team's costs do not just relate to Tenant Empowerment, although the budgets do include provision for training etc of tenant representatives. The team also has responsibility for service improvement across the whole service, for example Officers are currently working on significant improvement projects concerning debt and void management. These are key transactional activities for the HRA of increasing importance as we move to self financing.

Request that the Tenant Services Management Board review the current level of vandalism to properties and consider where savings could be made.

Under the current tenancy conditions officers are not able to routinely visit properties to inspect conditions for wilful damage or neglect. If, however, officers attend for other reasons they will raise any concerns in this regard at the time. If tenants request repairs and the work is something that is attributable to the actions of the tenant, the work is recharged to the tenant who will have to pay appropriate costs of such repairs.

Suggestion that the Board consider the disposal of land to registered social landlords.

Each disposal for housing development is subject to member decision, and generally considered to be appropriate in order to progress the Council's key priority of affordable housing. Historically we tend to sell land to RSLs for £1 as the value of

the land itself is “our” contribution towards the deal and the provision of more housing. As we move to self financing, a balance will need to be struck between the benefits of any HRA assets in terms of enabling more affordable housing, and the impact on the HRA finances in terms of the decision being a prudent business decision. To assist in this process officers intend to bring forward a draft policy for consideration by members and the Tenant Services Management Board, that will provide a framework for such decisions in future.