

Chichester District Council

CABINET

6 October 2015

Recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

1. Contacts

Mrs C Apel, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Tel: 01243 783738 Email: capel@chichester.gov.uk

Mr A Shaxson, Chairman of the Hyde Review Task & Finish Group
Tel: 01730 825254 Email: ashaxson@chichester.gov.uk

2. Cabinet is requested to:

Instruct the Head of Housing and Environment Services to write a letter to the Hyde Group Chichester setting out the Council's concerns and recommending the following:

- 1) A full and urgent review is carried out of blocks/estates where tenants have complained that incorrect service charges have been applied, in particular those considered as part of this review namely Pilgrim Court (Chichester), Butts Meadow (Wisborough Green), Bishop Luffa Close (Chichester), Warrenside (South Harting) and Townfield (Kirdford). However these properties are illustrations of something that the group has reason to believe is widespread and we would wish all serviced properties in the Chichester district to be re-examined by January 2016.**
- 2) A full report is made to the January 2016 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee covering:**
 - a) the methods used to calculate the service charge increases in these properties and the justification for the changes that have been implemented**
 - b) the progress made in resolving complaints and improving communication**
 - c) current performance against the organisation's key performance indicators**
- 3) That the Hyde Group jointly reviews with the Council the current rental differentials between social and affordable rents including service charges to ensure that it is appropriate and suitable for purpose.**

3. Background

- 3.1** The Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 15 September 2015 considered a report from the Hyde Review Task and Finish Group which is attached at Appendix 1. The Task and Finish Group was chaired by Mr A Shaxson with members being Mr N Galloway, Caroline Neville and Mrs P Plant. Mrs C Apel also took part in her capacity as Chairman of the OSC as well as Mrs S Taylor (as Cabinet Member for

Planning & Housing).

- 3.2 A letter from the Hyde Group in response to this final report had been received in advance of the meeting and this is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The OSC agreed the recommendations in the report attached at Appendix 1 but added a further recommendation 3 requesting Hyde to work with the Council on reviewing the differentials between social and affordable rents including service charges to ensure that these are appropriate.
- 3.4 The OSC also requested Hyde to provide the following:
 - a) information on corporate management structure and governance arrangements.
 - b) information on tenant scrutiny arrangements and how they plan to involve local councillors on scrutiny groups.
 - c) the latest performance information in relation to enquiries and complaints received in respect of service charges since April 2015
 - d) a copy of the process and standard response times for residents enquiries.
 - e) a copy of the complaints procedure including relevant contacts and the monitoring body for the Hyde Group.

The full minute on this item will be available on the OSC committee page on the Council's website before this Cabinet meeting takes place.

- 3.5 Cabinet is requested to consider this report and appendices and to agree the recommendations.

4. **Resource and legal implications**

- 4.1 There are no significant resourcing or legal implications as a result of this review.

5. **Alternatives that have been considered**

- 5.1 There are no alternatives to consider.

6. **Consultation**

- 6.1 Consultation has been carried out with members and with tenants affected by the service charge increases imposed by Hyde to understand the scale of the problem.

7. **Community Impact and Corporate Risks**

- 7.1 There is an impact to local residents who are tenants of Hyde due to wide scale complaint and dissatisfaction with Hyde following the introduction of increased service charges. There is a corporate risk to the council's ongoing relationship with Hyde.

8. **Other implications**

Crime & Disorder:		None
Climate Change:		None
Human Rights and Equality Impact:		None
Safeguarding		None

16. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Final report from the Hyde Review Task and Finish Group

Appendix 2 – Hyde Group letter to the Chief Executive dated 11 September 2015

17. **Background papers**

17.1 Notes from the Task and Finish Group (available on the OSC committee web page)

17.2 Minutes of the OSC 15 September 2015 (available on the OSC committee web page)