

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE No. 03/2007-08 COUNCIL 4 FEBRUARY 2008

Chair:
Councillor Gideon Bull

Deputy Chair:
Councillor Pat Egan

- 1.1 This report to full Council arises from a report considered by a special meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the setting of council housing rents for 2008/09.
- 1.2 The housing rent increase element of the financial planning budget package was referred to the committee at the meeting of the Cabinet of January 22nd 2008.
- 1.3 The report received covered the way rents were calculated under the Government's rent restructuring formula, housing subsidy entitlement and its link to rent setting. It also outlined procedures for assisting tenants experiencing difficulty in paying their rent.
- 1.4 Following discussion of the report at the committee, the following resolutions were made.

The Committee RESOLVED:

That the proposed rent increase for 2008/09 be noted.

That the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee write to Government Ministers to express its disappointment at the negative effect that the rent restructuring formula has had in Haringey, particularly the withdrawal of Government funding to contain rent increases to 5% and the late timing of the announcement which provided inadequate time for planning by the Council.

That its concern with the consultation process and the low level of response be expressed.

That Council Officers and specifically Homes for Haringey Officers, do all in their power to encourage benefit take-up, particularly amongst Council tenants who are not currently in receipt of benefit, including a pro-active, outreach-based approach by Tenancy Officers.

That an information pack detailing the reasons behind the increase together with information on encouraging benefit take-up be provided to Councillors.

That the spirit of the resolutions by the Residents Finance Panel as contained in the report be echoed.

That initiatives that may ameliorate some of the impact of the rent increase be investigated by officers e.g. reducing water rate charges by the introduction of water meters.

That the committee commend Officers for the record levels of rent collection, and encourage them to continue the improvement.