

CAPITAL AFFORDABILITY ASSESSMENT

Starting with an update of the 2023/24 position, the HRA Business Plan has been projected forward over a 30-year period (i.e. 2023/24 to 2052/53), with particular emphasis on the following:

- Potential future rent levels;
- Existing loan charges commitments (unavoidable costs);
- Estimated levels of HRA capital expenditure for each year; and
- Estimated levels of borrowing.

This has involved estimates and assumptions that will change over time, but which are considered reasonable and robust based on known information at this time. A summary of the assumptions made is provided later in this appendix.

AFFORDABILITY ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

The following table summarises the key outcomes from the affordability assessment for the current year plus 4 forward years of the Capital Plan, as well as snapshots at 5-year intervals thereafter.

	23/24 £m	24/25 £m	25/26 £m	26/27 £m	27/28 £m	32/33 £m	37/38 £m	42/43 £m	47/48 £m	52/53 £m
Net Capital Expenditure	11.436	13.784	16.758	14.470	17.721	12.196	12.196	12.196	6.537	8.794
Estimated Borrowing	5.892	6.275	9.614	7.638	11.966	7.372	10.184	9.889	4.000	4.000
Affordability %	12%	7%	9%	11%	12%	16%	23%	23%	24%	21%

The affordability % in the above table represents the ratio of projected loan charges costs to projected rental income in each year.

The affordability of the HRA capital plan is assessed against a parameter, as set out in the assumptions section below and it is currently our view that the affordability % should not exceed 25%. However, if there are circumstances in which it may be desirable to increase borrowing to achieve specific business objectives, this level will be reviewed.

The assessment of the current position confirms that the affordability % is not breached in any of the 30 years of the assessment.

Based on the assessment, the Director of Finance believes that the HRA Business Plan can be regarded as affordable, prudent and sustainable provided the strategic approach to future rent increases detailed in section 9 of the body of the report is adopted moving forward. This affordability assessment will continue to be reviewed in full as part of each HRA rent and budget setting process.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following key assumptions have been made.

Inflation

Whilst it's difficult to predict future inflation levels, it has been assumed for the purposes of the affordability assessment that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) will be in line with the government's target of 2% for all years from 2025/26 onwards.

Rent Increases

For the purposes of the affordability assessment, it has been assumed that rents will rise at CPI + 1% over the whole period of the assessment. The effect of this is to assume a 3% rent rise in each of the 30 years covered by the assessment.

Loan Charges Costs

In line with previously approved parameters, the assessment is based on the presumption that overall loan charges costs should not exceed 25% of the projected rental income in any single year.

Interest and Expenses Rates

Costs in respect of principal repayments for existing borrowing are known with certainty from the Council's fixed asset management system, however assumptions must be made in respect of future interest and debt management expenses rates. Based on current interest rate expectations, it's considered that rates will generally rise over the assessment period.

The following interest rates have been assumed:

- 3.93% - 2023/24;
- 3.17% - 2024/25;
- 3.54% - 2025/26;
- 4.15% - 2026/27;
- 4.10% - 2027/28;
- 4.35% - 2028/29 to 2032/33;
- 4.60% - 2033/34 to 2037/38; and
- 4.85% - 2038/39 for each year thereafter.

For context, the actual interest rate for 2022/23 was 3.93%.

A rate of 0.097% has been assumed in each year for debt management expenses based on recent history.

Capital Expenditure

The draft capital plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 (per Appendix 3 to this report) has been used in respect of the early years of the affordability assessment. Thereafter, the following average levels of future capital expenditure have been assumed for the purposes of this assessment:

- £16.439 million per annum – 2028/29 to 2032/33;
- £12.196 million per annum – 2033/34 to 2044/45; and
- £7.198 million per annum – average for each year thereafter.

These average spend levels reflect the capital investment proposals per this report. These may of course require to be revisited over time to take account of the future actual positions in respect of the assumptions made in this assessment.

Capital Receipts

As noted in sections 8 and 9 of the monitoring report also on the agenda of this meeting, capital receipts accumulated prior to 2023/24 (£0.234 million at 31 March 2023) are to be used in the funding of the 2023/24 capital programme.

As also noted in the monitoring report, capital receipts generated in the current financial year are projected to be £0.127 million and will be held in reserves to be utilised in funding the 2024/25 capital programme.

It is expected that capital receipts in future years will be relatively minimal. It is therefore considered prudent for the purposes of this affordability assessment to assume no capital receipts for future years. Any receipts that are received in future years will be applied to reduce any borrowing requirement in the financial year following the receipt.

The following receipts assumptions have therefore been made in terms of this affordability assessment:

- Receipts applied in 2023/24 - £0.234 million;
- Receipts applied in 2024/25 - £0.127 million; and
- Zero thereafter.

Other Funding

Other funding has only been included where it is already confirmed or where conditional approval has been received (e.g. Scottish Government Affordable Housing Grant or Affordable Housing Revenue Account).

Should any additional “other” funding be secured into the future, this will either be utilised to reduce borrowing or to enhance the capital programme as appropriate, taking on board updated long term affordability assessments, capital requirements or grant conditions.

Capital Financed from Current Revenue (CFCR)

The HRA revenue budget provides for a significant level of resources each year for funding of capital expenditure directly from revenue resources – known as Capital Financed from Current Revenue. The following average levels of CFCR have been assumed for the purposes of this affordability assessment:

- £5.402 million per annum – 2023/24 to 2027/28
- £4.252 million per annum – 2028/29 to 2032/33
- £2.403 million per annum – 2033/34 to 2044/45; and
- £3.198 million per annum – average for each year thereafter.

Inclusion of such sums in the capital expenditure funding package allows for the prudent management of borrowing over the HRA Business Plan period, ensuring that the HRA does not become overstretched by over borrowing.

The above CFCR levels have been projected after allowing for the currently evident significant inflation affecting underlying costs and the significant levels of capital investment projected to be required to meet zero carbon targets. The position detailed above indicates that based on the current assumptions, there would be sufficient revenue resources to support the indicative capital spend levels.

This is though only possible by assuming a sustained approach of rent rises based on a CPI+1% approach over the whole 30-year period of the business plan. Should there be a deviation away from this approach to lower levels of rent rises in future years then it is likely, all other assumptions being the same, that the business plan would need a significant review to assess and ensure its affordability and sustainability. Further detail is included at section 9 of the body of the report.

New Borrowing

It is the level of new borrowing required to fund capital expenditure which determines future revenue commitments in relation to loan charges costs.

The affordability assessment therefore estimates the level of new borrowing required in each year after taking account of all the other assumptions about capital expenditure, capital funding sources, etc. and this in turn has been used to calculate estimated loan charges costs into the future using the interest and expenses rates assumed above. The following average levels of borrowing have been assumed for the purposes of this affordability assessment:

- £8.277 million per annum – 2023/24 to 2027/28
- £11.687 million per annum – 2028/29 to 2032/33
- £9.793 million per annum – 2033/34 to 2044/45; and
- £4.000 million per annum – average for each year thereafter.

Expenditure Slippage

Slippage in the capital programme does not represent a capital funding source but merely a change in the phasing of when expenditure is incurred. As such no slippage assumptions have been included in this affordability assessment.