

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 11 March 2014. Minute of meeting of the HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE. Present: Councillor Cooney, Convener; Councillor Jean Morrison MBE, Vice Convener; and Councillors Delaney, Dickson, Jackie Dunbar, Lesley Dunbar, Finlayson, Lawrence, McCaig, Milne, Noble, Samarai, Jennifer Stewart, Thomson and Young (as substitute for Councillor Nathan Morrison).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found at the following link:

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MId=2913&Ver=4>

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 14 JANUARY 2014

1. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 14 January 2014.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT

2. The Committee had before it a statement of business prepared by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to remove items 11 (Update on Informal and Formal Joint Working and Shared Services Arrangements with Aberdeenshire Trading Standards and the Wider Scottish Trading Standards Community) and 13 (Sistema Scotland and Aberdeen);
- (ii) in relation to item 6 (Development of an Asset Management Plan for the Council's Housing Stock) to note that briefings for elected members were being arranged for March or April; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the business statement.

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ANNUAL REPORTS LIST

3. The Committee had before it a list of annual reports prepared by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the annual reports list.

VISION STATEMENT FOR THE HAZLEHEAD GROVE NURSERY WORKING GROUP - H&E/14/031

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the vision statement for the Hazlehead Grove Nursery Project which would be used in various campaigns, promotions and media statements as the project progressed.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the vision statement for the project.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided details of the Community Engagement Plan for the Hazlehead Grove Nursery Project which aimed to generate interest city wide from community groups and to encourage them to be involved with the development and use of the site.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the Community Engagement Plan for the Hazlehead Grove Nursery Project.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request officers to provide a report in twelve months time (1) outlining the lessons learnt with the project and (2) to identify whether there were other areas across the City to expand on the project;
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation contained in the report.

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PROPOSALS FOR SITE DIVISION

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the proposals for dividing the Hazlehead Grove Nursery Site.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the site division proposals contained within the report and the supporting site plans.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation in the report.

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT BUSINESS PLAN PERFORMANCE AND ACTIONS - H&E/14/30

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the key performance measures and progress of key improvement work within the Housing and Environment Directorate.

In relation to the update provided on the Clashieknowe Intermediate Care Project, the Committee noted the request from the Convener for a visit to the complex to be organised during the Easter holidays or the summer recess.

In relation to the update provided on the Clean Up Aberdeen campaign, Councillor Finlayson requested whether the materials collected from the Clean Up operations across the City could be split up so as to be able to recycle some of the materials collected, hereupon the Head of Service advised that this would be looked at.

In relation to Rent Management, Councillor Delaney asked what the Service were doing to identify those tenants entitled to a refund following the court ruling, whereupon the Housing Manager advised that the Revenues and Benefits Team were identifying those tenants entitled to the refund and were working with the Service to ensure the refunds were provided.

In relation to Tenancy Management, Councillor Delaney asked what the Service were doing to improve the tenant visit figures, whereupon the Housing Manager advised that the process for setting the follow up appointment had been amended and that in some cases it was difficult to meet with tenants.

In relation to Void Management, Councillor Finlayson asked what the Service were doing to reduce the high number of voids, whereupon the Housing Manager advised that there had been a range of new easures introduced during February to improve the letting of properties.

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In relation to Housing Allocations, Councillor Delaney sought clarification on the low percentage of new applications being processed, whereupon the Housing Manager advised that all applications were referred to the Prevention Team so that additional issues associated with applications could be identified or confirmed and that this delayed the process.

In relation to Repairs Management, Councillor Delaney sought clarification on the low number of properties having received a gas safety check within twelve months, whereupon the Head of Service advised that work was ongoing to ensure that all properties were visited and that a renewal gas safety certificate was issued.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to the update provided on the Clashieknowe Intermediate Care Project to request officers to organise a visit for members to the complex preferably during the Easter holiday period or the summer recess;
- (ii) in relation to the update provided on the Clean Up Aberdeen campaign and a request from Councillor Finlayson, to request officers to establish whether the materials collected from the Clean Up operations across the City could be split up so as to be able to recycle some of the materials collected;
- (iii) in relation to Rent Management and in response to a question from Councillor Delaney relating to what the Service were doing to identify those tenants entitled to a refund following the court ruling, to note that the Revenues and Benefits Team were identifying those tenants entitled to the refund and were working with the Service to ensure the refunds were provided;
- (iv) in relation to Tenancy Management and in response to a question from Councillor Delaney relating to what the Service were doing to improve the tenant visit figures, to note that the process for setting the follow up appointment had been amended and that in some cases it was difficult to meet with tenants;
- (v) in relation to Void Management and in response to a question from Councillor Finlayson relating to what the Service were doing to reduce the high number of voids, to note that there had been a range of new measures introduced during February to improve the letting of properties;
- (vi) in relation to Housing Allocations and in response to a question from Councillor Delaney relating to the low percentage of new applications being processed, to note that all applications are now referred to the Prevention Team so that additional issues associated with applications could be identified or confirmed and that this delays the process;
- (vii) in relation to Repairs Management and in response to a question from Councillor Delaney relating to the low number of properties having received a gas safety check within twelve months, to note that work was ongoing to ensure that all properties were visited and that a renewal gas safety certificate was issued;
- (viii) to otherwise note the content of the report.

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2013-14 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - H&E/14/19

8. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its meeting of 14 January 2014, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Housing and Environment and the Director of Corporate Governance which provided a status report for the 2013/14 Housing Capital Programme as at 31 December 2013 and summarised both income and expenditure in this regard.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) note the financial information contained within the report;
- (b) instruct that the Head of Finance continues to update the Committee in consultation with the Director for Housing and Environment on the actual outturn position for 2013/14 following completion of the year end statutory accounts; and
- (c) approve the virements outlined in appendix 2 to the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

2013-14 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - H&E/14/20

9. With reference to article 10 of the minute of its meeting of 14 January 2014, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Housing and Environment and the Director of Corporate Governance which advised on the current year revenue budget performance to date for the services which relate to this Committee and any areas of risk management action.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee-

- (a) note the report and the information on management action and risks that is contained therein;
- (b) instruct officers to report the year end position to the appropriate committee; and
- (c) approve the request to earmark £400k from the 2013/14 under spend for 2014/15 to spend on environmental improvements linked to Aberdeen's Greenspace Strategy and In Bloom agenda.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the money earmarked as at recommendation (iii) would be used for improving areas across the city and that the suggestions made from elected members and the local community would be considered as part of the improvement plan for the projects; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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CAPITAL MONITORING - HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT PROJECTS - EPI/13/153

10. With reference to article 11 of the minute of its meeting of 14 January 2014, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure which advised on the capital spend to date for the Housing and Environment projects included in the Non-Housing Capital Programme.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the current position.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Delaney declared an interest in the subject matter of the following article by virtue of his position as Chairperson of Grampian Housing Association and chose to withdraw from the meeting during this item of business.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING - GRANT ASSISTANCE - H&E/14/27

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought agreement on the provision of grant assistance to Grampian Housing Association to help deliver a housing development at Hopetoun Grange.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve a grant of up to £261,734 to enable the provision of 16 social rent units;
- (b) approve that the grant be paid from developer contributions received from Section 75 obligations; and
- (c) note that the approval of the grant would contribute to the Strategic Infrastructure Plan target of 2,030 new affordable houses by 2017.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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RENT ARREARS UPDATE - H&E/14/26

12. With reference to article 12 of the minute of its meeting on 14 January 2014, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on the actions being taken to implement targets for the management of rent arrears and in particular those tenants with 13 weeks or more of rent arrears.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the content of the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that a letter be submitted to the Justice Minister expressing the concerns of the Committee relating to the number of cases currently being heard in court in any one week and the potential that this number is reduced and the effect that this would have on tenants incurring further debt; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation in the report.

PROPOSED HMO LICENCE FEES FOR 2014/15 - H&E/14/25

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval to set the revised Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Fees from 1 April 2014.

The report recommended:-

That the Committee implement the new fee structure for the period of 2014/15 as set out in the following table, which shows a 10% reduction on the 2013/14 fees:

Renewals				New Applications			
No of Tenants	Fee £	Part 1 £	Part 2 £	No of Tenants	Fee £	Part 1 £	Part 2 £
3-5	250	125	125	3-5	495	370	125
6-10	360	235	125	6-10	720	600	120
11-20	675	550	125	11-20	1,350	1,225	125
21-50	1,260	1,090	170	21-50	2,520	2,355	165
51-100	2,115	1785	330	51-100	4,230	3,900	330
101-200	3,420	2,920	500	101-200	6,840	6,340	500
201+	3,690	3,025	665	201+	7,380	6,715	665

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

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REVIEW OF REPAIR PRIORITIES - H&E/14/17

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided information on the review of priorities for Response Repairs.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the proposed changes to the priorities for response repairs as set out in the Review of Priorities for Response Repairs as contained in appendix A and allow the allocation of each priority to the corresponding repair categories, those being:

- Amendment of the repair priorities
 - Emergency (4 hours)
 - Urgent (24 hours) – New
 - High (3 days)
 - Non-Emergency (5 days) – New
 - Routine (10 days)
- Allocate relevant repair categories to each of the priorities listed above to ensure each priority reflects the level of priority required i.e. emergency means anything which may affect tenants' safety or cause significant damage to the fabric of the building.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

REPLACEMENT OF HANDHELD DEVICES (TRADES OPERATIVES) - H&E/14/18

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval for the procurement of 200 handheld devices (smartphones) under an appropriate framework agreement which were to be used by trades operatives within Building Services as a replacement for the current devices being used.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the procurement of 200 handheld devices (smartphones) under an appropriate framework agreement or other appropriate tendering process to be used by trades operatives within the Council's Building Services in replacement of existing devices which would entail a total estimated expenditure of up to £148,000.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation in the report.

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2014-15 - H&E/13/69

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which (1) presented the revised Food Regulatory Service Plan as contained in Appendix A as required by the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement and (2) contained the improvement plan for the forthcoming year.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approve in principle the maintenance and development of food regulatory services necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement;
- (b) approve the Food Regulatory Service Plan 2014/15 as set out in appendix A to the report; and
- (c) note the review of the 2012/2013 Food Regulatory Service Plan as set out in appendix A to the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY INTERVENTION PLAN 2014-15 - H&E/14/16

17. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the Occupational Health and Safety Intervention Plan which outlined the Environmental Health Service's proposals for delivering the occupational safety and health regulatory service for 2014/15.

The report recommended:

that the Committee approve the Occupational Health and Safety Intervention Plan for 2014/15 and to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to make arrangements for its implementation.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

REVISION OF THE ABERDEEN CITY WASTE STRATEGY - H&E/14/23

18. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the revised Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2010-2025.

The report recommended:

that the Committee approves the revised Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2014-2025 and recommends it to the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

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The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

RECYCLING SERVICE CHANGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MIXED MESSAGING - H&E/14/22

19. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on existing recycling services, proposed schemes over the next year and the impact they would have upon the effective messaging of increasing recycling performance.

The report recommended:

that the Committee note the implications of the report and instruct officers to arrange a members' briefing session to explain the changing services.

Councillor Finlayson requested whether clear signage or other methods could be provided at recycling centres to indicate what can and cannot be recycled, whereupon the Head of Service advised that this would be looked into.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request officers to consider the use of clear signage or other methods to assist people to know what they could or could not recycle; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation contained in the report.

INSTALLATION OF FOOD WASTE AND RECYCLING FACILITIES ON PRIVATE LAND - H&E/14/24

20. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which established the legal positioning of Aberdeen City Council in relation to installation of food waste and recycling facilities on land not owned by the Council.

The report recommended:

That the Committee approve the use, as a last resort, of legislative notices to ensure all residents are treated equally in the provision of food waste collection and recycling services.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation in the report.

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CITY PLAY AREAS - H&E/14/29

21. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which advised on the progress of the first year of the Programme of Play Area Refurbishment Works.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) acknowledge the success of this year's refurbishment programme; and
- (b) agree that the Service should continue the rolling programme of play area refurbishment as detailed within the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

ABERDEEN IN BLOOM 2014 - H&E/14/28

22. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on Aberdeen's In Bloom campaign for the year ahead which included participation in Britain in Bloom 2014.

The report recommended:

that the Committee -

- (a) note the content of the report; and
- (b) request a further report to Committee at its meeting in Autumn 2014, with an update on Aberdeen in Bloom campaigns in 2014.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

- **NEIL COONEY, Convener**.

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