

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 20 May 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, Donnelly (as substitute for Councillor Nathan Morrison), Finlayson, Lawrence, McCaig, Milne, Nathan Morrison, Noble, Samarai, Jennifer Stewart and Thomson.

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

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MI d=2914&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 11 MARCH 2014

1. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 11 March 2014.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to article 12, resolution (i), to note that the letter was not issued to the Justice Minister as the current system had improved with two dedicated Sherriff's working on the cases; and
- (ii) to otherwise 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) in relation to item 1 (Modernising Public Space CCTV) to note that a comprehensive report would be submitted to this Committee on 26 August 2014;
- (ii) to delete item 3 (Major Repairs to Multi Storey Blocks); 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:-

- (i) to delete item 5 (2013/14 Housing Capital Programme); and
- (ii) to otherwise note the annual reports list.

REDUCTION IN GENERAL WASTE CONTAINER SIZE FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION OF MIXED RECYCLING COLLECTIONS - REFERRAL FROM ZERO WASTE MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE

4. With reference to article 4 of the minute of meeting of the Zero Waste Management Sub Committee of its meeting of 25 February 2014, the Committee had before it by way of a referral, a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which sought approval for the reduction in the general waste bin capacity from 240 litres to 180 litres for residents receiving the existing kerbside recycling collections and requested the Sub-Committee to note that the reduction in capacity would be implemented in conjunction with the roll out of mixed recycling collections.

The Zero Waste Management Sub Committee approved the recommendations and referred the report to this Committee for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to a question from Councillor Finlayson regarding recyclable materials not being collected when they were not placed in the current containers, to note that households could request additional containers and bags as only materials placed in the approved containers would be collected; and
- (ii) to otherwise note and approve the content of the report.

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY WORKING GROUP, CHANGE TO REMIT - REFERRAL FROM THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

5. With reference to article 7 of the minute of meeting of the Homelessness Strategy Working Group of 8 May 2014, the Committee had before it the revised remit of the Group which had been amended to reflect the modernising of the Housing Access Service.

The Committee resolved:-

to note and approve the changes in the remit as outlined in the report.

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HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT BUSINESS PLAN PERFORMANCE AND ACTIONS - H&E/14/045

6. 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 Void Management, the Convener provided an update relating to the current void figures and intimated that officers were using the new voids path and that there were several factors affecting the overall management of voids and requested that officers submit a report to the next meeting providing a detailed account of all of the void paths.

In relation to Housing Allocations, Councillor Delaney requested an update in relation to Smithfield Court, whereupon the Housing Manager advised on the current situation in relation to the remaining tenant and the Head of Regeneration and Housing Investment advised that the work on site was due to commence in August with a completion date of within eight months.

In relation to Housing Allocations, Councillor Jackie Dunbar intimated her concerns over the low number of applications being processed within 28 days. The Housing Access Manager advised that there were a number of vacancies which he advised would be filled soon and that the backlog of applications were currently being processed.

In relation to Homelessness Temporary Accommodation, Councillor Finlayson enquired as to the high cost of the weekly rents, wherein the Housing Manager advised that all of the properties were fully furnished and had a service charge for the management of the property. He also stated that the majority of tenants offered the temporary accommodation qualified for full or partial housing benefit.

In relation to Landlord Registration, Councillor Delaney enquired as to why the Council were not able to progress with issuing rent penalty charges for the 17 landlords that had not re-registered, whereupon the Head of Housing and Community Safety advised that the Council had to identify whether those landlords were still renting their properties before any action could be taken.

In relation to Street Scene, Councillor Finlayson requested information specifically relating to the 0% value for Grounds Maintenance – Dog Fouling, wherein the Environment Manager advised that the figure provided was a random sample and would change depending on which streets were sampled at the time. He further advised that the most up to date report from Street Scene would be circulated to members.

The report recommended:

that the Committee provide comments and observations on the performance information contained in the report.

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The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to Void Management, to note the update provided by the Convener relating to use of the new voids path and to instruct officers to submit a report to the next meeting of this Committee providing a detailed account of all void paths, specifically the issues around each of the paths;
- (ii) in response to a question from Councillor Delaney relating to Housing Allocations, specifically Smithfield Court, to note that the work on site was to commence in August and it was envisaged to be completed within eight months;
- (iii) in response to a question from Councillor Finlayson relating to Homelessness Temporary Accommodation and the weekly rent cost, to note that the weekly rent charges were attributed to them being fully furnished and the service charge;
- (iv) in response to a question from Councillor Delaney relating to 17 late Landlord Registrations and why the Council were not issuing rent penalty charges at this stage, to note that the Council had to identify whether the premises were still being let as private or rented accommodation and that the Head of Housing and Community Safety would provide Councillor Delaney with an update after the meeting;
- (v) in response to a question from Councillor Finlayson relating to Street Scene and the 0% value for Grounds Maintenance – Dog Fouling, to note that the figure provided is a random sample and would change depending on which streets were sampled at the time and to note that the most recent report would be circulated to members; and
- (vi) to otherwise note the report.

2013-14 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - H&E/14/042

7. With reference to article 8 of the minute of its meeting of 11 March 2014, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Directors of Corporate Governance and Housing and Environment which provided a status report for the 2013/14 Housing Capital Programme as at 28 February 2014 summarising both income and expenditure.

The report recommended:

that the Committee -

- (a) note the financial information contained within the report; and
- (b) instructs 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.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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2013-14 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - H&E/14/043

8. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its meeting of 11 March 2014, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Directors of Corporate Governance and Housing and Environment which advised on the 2013/14 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) consider and note the report and the information on management action and risks that is contained herein; and
- (b) instruct that officers report the year end position to the appropriate Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

CAPITAL MONITORING - HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT PROJECTS - EPI/14/123

9. With reference to article 10 of the minute of its meeting of 11 March 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/14/037

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval for the provision of grant assistance to Grampian Housing Association to help deliver additional affordable housing units at Hopetoun Grange, Bucksburn and to Grampian Housing Association and Castlehill Association to help deliver an affordable housing development at Maidencraig, Lang Stracht.

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The report recommended:

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the funding of 5 additional affordable housing units at Hopetoun Grange with a grant to Grampian Housing Association of up to £103,126 to enable the provision of social rented units;
- (b) considers one of the following two options for funding the development of 36 Affordable Housing Units at Maidencraig with the officer recommendation of Option 1 as it represented best value for the Council:
 - (i) Option 1 - the grant of up to £968,258 to Grampian Housing Association (12 units) and Castlehill Housing Association (24 units) to enable the provision of 36 social rent units; or
 - (ii) Option 2 - the grant of up to £1,046,439 to Grampian Housing Association (12 social rent) and Castlehill Housing Association (12 social and 12 mid market rent) to enable the provision of 24 social rent and 12 mid market rental units; and
- (c) agree that the grants will be paid from developer contributions received from Section 75 obligations with any balance to be paid from the income received from the reduced Council Tax Discount for Second Homes and Long Term Vacant Properties.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve recommendations (a) and (c) as contained in the report; and
- (ii) to approve recommendation (b)(i) as contained in the report.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY - H&E/14/038

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which (1) provided an update on the current position with Section 75 financial contributions for affordable housing and the income received from the reduction in Council Tax Discount for Second Homes and Long Term Empty Properties and (2) provided details of affordable houses completed in 2013/14 and those expected to be completed in 2014/15 through to 2016/17.

The report recommended:

that the Committee -

- (a) note the content of the report; and
- (b) instruct officers to continue to develop proposals for projects to utilise this funding whether they be City Council or Registered Social Landlord led projects.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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WELFARE REFORM AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION UPDATE - H&E/14/035

12. With reference to article 15 of the minute of meeting of Council of 21 August 2013, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on actions taken since that report and on developments with the Welfare Reform agenda.

The report recommended:

that the Committee note the progress made and the on-going actions as outlined in the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

REQUIREMENT FOR MAJOR REPAIRS AT VARIOUS SEATON MULTI STORIES - H&E/14/033

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided the outcome of further investigation into methods for dealing with water penetration in multi story blocks in the Seaton area and sought approval to proceed with over cladding, replacement of windows and flat roof renewal, where appropriate, in the seven blocks identified in the report following the positive outcome of discussions with private owners within the blocks.

The report recommended:

that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to pursue the proposal to carry out structural repairs, over clad, appropriate flat roof renewal and install new windows in the seven blocks referred to in the report;
- (ii) approve the use of ECO funding granted to the Council in connection with this project to be used to limit the cost of over cladding and window replacement works to private owners; and
- (iii) instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to monitor the situation with future energy efficiency grant funding levels and report back to this committee if any reduction in funding may have a detrimental effect on this project.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

PROJECT BRIEF FOR HAZLEHEAD GROVE NURSERY PROJECT - H&E/14/046

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the project brief for the Hazlehead Grove Nursery Project and advised that the document was a working document which would be developed and used for communicating key messages about the project.

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The report recommended:

that the Committee approve the project brief.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in response to questions from Councillors Finlayson and Thomson relating to allotments on the site, to note that the Head of Environment Services would be submitting a report relating to allotments to the next meeting of the Hazlehead Grove Nursery Working Group;
- (ii) to request that the size of the educational space and whether the University could be involved be discussed at the next meeting of the Hazlehead Grove Nursery Working Group; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the project brief.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ACCREDITATION SERVICE (UKAS) ASSESSMENT OF THE ABERDEEN SCIENTIFIC SERVICES LABORATORY (ASSL) - H&E/14/044

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on the status of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accreditation and the progress of the recommendations of assessment of the Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory.

The report recommended:

that the Committee -

- (a) note the work being undertaken to implement and develop the recommendations of the 26 and 27 March 2014 UKAS surveillance report; and
- (b) approve the continuation of accreditation as a license to operate.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to congratulate all staff involved with the accreditation; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

PROCUREMENT OF BIG BELLY LITTER BINS - H&E/14/041

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which (1) sought approval to exempt the award of a contract for the lease of Big Belly litter bins from the Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts and Procurement (approved by Council on 5 March 2014) by reason of special circumstances and (2) sought approval of the estimated expenditure, as detailed in Section 3 of the report.

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The report recommended:

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the request under Standing Order 1(6)(a) for an exemption from the Council's Standing Orders on Contracts and Procurement to enable a contract to be awarded for the provision of Big Belly litter bins; and
- (b) approve the estimated expenditure of £96,200 for the lease of twenty Big Belly litter bins over a five year period.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

- **COUNCILLOR COONEY, Convener.**

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