

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 26 August 2014. Minute of Meeting of the HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Cooney, Convener; Councillor Jean Morrison MBE, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Cormie (as substitute for Councillor McCaig), Delaney, Dickson, Lesley Dunbar, Finlayson, Lawrence, 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&MIId=2915&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.

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO RESOLVE THAT ANY EXEMPT BUSINESS ON THIS AGENDA BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC EXCLUDED

1. The Convener proposed that the Committee consider the report identified on the agenda as being for determination in private, with the press and public excluded.

The Committee resolved:-

that in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting for item 8.1 (Police Houses) (article refers) on the agenda so as to avoid disclosure of information of the class described in the following paragraphs of Schedule 7 A to the Act:- article (paragraph 2).

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 20 MAY 2014

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 20 May 2014.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

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COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to remove item 10 (Installation of Combined Heat and Power and Proposals for Major Repairs to Multi Storeys in the Cornhill Area);
- (ii) subject to the decisions taken on the following items on the agenda, to remove item 5 (Development of an Asset Management Plan for the Council's Housing Stock), 9 (Rent Arrears) and 12 (Void Management (within Performance Report);
- (iii) in relation to item 7 (Houses in Multiple Occupation – New Powers in Relation to Overprovision), to note that a comprehensive report would be submitted to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee in October to allow for further information from other Local Authorities to be included in the report; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the business statement.

ANNUAL REPORTS LIST

4. 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.

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5. 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 Houses in Multiple Occupation and Landlord Registration, Councillor Delaney enquired as to why the issuing of penalty notices were being done on a trial basis and requested that all landlords who had failed to register were issued the penalty notice and further requested that information be issued highlighting the benefits of being a registered landlord, whereupon the Head of Housing and Community Safety advised that work was being done in this area and that the details of the actions taken would be included in the report due to Committee in October 2014.

In relation to Street Cleansing and the high percentage of Weed Growth, Councillor Nathan Morrison enquired as to whether the statistics provided was for both streets and buildings, whereupon the Environment Manager advised that the figures were for street

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cleanliness only and that the Service were looking at different options to tackle weed control on streets.

The report recommended:

That the Committee –

- (a) provide comments and observations on the performance information contained in the report;
- (b) note the minor amendments to the structure of the report which reflects the restructure of the Homelessness and Housing Advice Service, now referred to as the Housing Access Service and Housing Support Service,
- (c) note the additional performance indicators as requested by Committee on the new void paths.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in response to a question from Councillor Delaney relating Houses in Multiple Occupation and Landlord Registration and the issuing of penalty notices to landlords who had lapsed in their registration and whether information could be issued highlighting the benefits of being a registered landlord, to note that the Service were working on this and would provide information in the report for the Committee in October;
- (ii) in response to a question from Councillor Nathan Morrison relating to Street Cleansing and the high percentage of Weed Growth and whether this included buildings, the Environment Manager advised that the figures were for street cleanliness only and that the Service were looking at different options to tackle weed control on streets;
- (iii) to otherwise note the contents of the report and information provided.

2014/15 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - H&E/14/062

6. With reference to article 7 of the minute of meeting of 20 May 2014, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Housing and Environment and the Acting Director for Corporate Governance which provided a status report for the 2014/15 Housing Capital Programme as at 30 June 2014 summarising the income and expenditure.

The report recommended:

- (a) to note the financial information contained within the report; and
- (b) to instruct that the Head of Finance continues to update the Committee in consultation with the Director of Housing and Environment on the actual outturn position for 2014/15 following completion of the year end statutory accounts.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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2014/15 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT - H&E/14/063

7. With reference to article 8 of the minute of its meeting of 20 May 2014, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Housing and Environment and the Acting Director for Corporate Governance which advised on the 2014/15 revenue budget performance to date for the services that relate to this Committee and any areas of risk management action.

The report recommended:

- (a) to note the content of the report and the information on management action and risks contained therein; and
- (b) to 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/14/157

8. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its meeting of 20 May 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.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ASSET MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK - H&E/14/034

9. With reference to article 13 of the minute of its meeting of 14 May 2013, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on the current position of the development of an asset management model for the Council housing stock.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (i) note the progress to date on the development of an asset management model for the Council's housing stock;

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- (ii) approve the creation of an Asset Management Steering Group and Asset Management Action Group to identify and take forward the development of and Asset Management Plan; and
- (iii) instructs the Director of Housing and Environment to report annually on the future high level outcomes and how these will influence decision making on the housing stock.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

RENT ARREARS UPDATE - H&E/14/057

10. With reference to article 12 of the minute of its meeting of 11 March 2014, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on the current level of rent arrears and the actions taken to manage rent management.

The report recommended:

that the Committee note the report.

Councillor Delaney sought information on whether sheltered housing charges could be paid by direct debit, and if not, if this was something that the Service could introduce whereupon the Housing Manager advised that this wasn't available at the moment and that the service were discussing the option to pay by direct debit and that a more detailed response would be provided to Councillor Delaney out with the meeting.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to a question from Councillor Delaney in regards to the use of Direct Debit payments for Sheltered Housing Services, to note that the Head of Housing and Community Safety would provide a response to Councillor Delaney out with the meeting;
- (ii) to congratulate all staff involved with the rent arrears process and the improvements made to date; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the content of the report.

UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF VOID PROCESSES - H&E/14/050

11. With reference to article 6, resolution (i) of the minute of its meeting of 20 May 2014, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided information on the progress of revised practices for the management of void properties.

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The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) note the content of the report, the progress made and the associated challenges;
- (b) note the actions already taken; and
- (c) approve the proposed improvements as listed under Recommendations for Improvement within the report;

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the content of the report, the progress made and the associated challenges;
- (ii) to note the actions already taken; and
- (iii) to approve the proposed improvements as listed under Recommendations for Improvement within the report;
- (iv) to request officers to provide regular updates on the Voids situation and on any future initiatives to improve the performance.

HOUSING FOR VARYING NEEDS REVIEW - H&E/14/059

12. With reference to article 17 of the minute of its meeting of 15 January 2013, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on the progress of the Review of Housing for Varying Needs – A Strategic Review of Our Sheltered and Very Sheltered Housing and in particular to advise on the progress of the changes being introduced at ten locations where sheltered housing developments are progressing to amenity housing.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) note the progress of the implementation plan at ten locations previously approved for transition from sheltered to amenity accommodation;
- (b) approve the recommendations to continue with the transition to amenity standard for all buildings except Berry Moss Court and Parkhill Court;
- (c) approve the amended recommendation for Berry Moss Court and Parkhill Court to be assessed as a single unit and returned to sheltered housing subject to consultation with the tenants; and
- (d) note that Meadow Court and Seaview House continue to have demand issues and will be included in a future report to Committee following completion of a review of all remaining complexes.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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HAUDAGAIN IMPROVEMENT SCHEME - H&E/14/053

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which set out proposals to ensure the timeous re-housing of tenants whose homes would be affected by the Haudagain Improvement Scheme which included information about changes to the allocation policy, clarification on rent management and details on Home Loss and Disturbance payments.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) approves the provision of payments equivalent to a Home Loss Payment and Disturbance Payments to tenants whose homes are required for the Haudagain Improvement Scheme when they move with immediate effect;
- (b) approves that in order to alleviate the issues around mixing of sexes and further rehousing that where mixing of sexes occurs the Council would offer the household larger accommodation if the eldest child had reached the age of 5;
- (c) grants delegated powers in the first instance to the Director of Housing and Environment and the Head of Housing and Community Safety to provide tenants whose homes are required for the Haudagain Improvement Scheme an appropriate level of priority within the housing lists and flexibility in terms of areas of choice, house sizes and number of offers;
- (d) notes that with immediate effect, all void properties across the city will initially be offered to appropriate tenants whose homes are being acquired for Haudagain Improvement Scheme;
- (e) notes that all affected applicants will be placed on the Urgent List and provided with the highest priority and further prioritised by the length of their current tenancy;

Councillor Dickson requested that the following recommendation be included and approved "to note that where tenants from the Middlefield Area wished to remain in the area that every effort would be made to accommodate their needs" whereupon the Committee agreed.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that where tenants from the Middlefield Area wished to remain in the area that every effort would be made to accommodate their needs;
- (ii) to request officers to provide regular updates to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee advising on how the relocation of tenants was progressing; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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PROPOSED EXTENDED USE OF ENFORCEMENT FUNDING - H&E/14/052

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on progress made in property repair and maintenance within the private sector since the introduction of the Enforcement Fund in January 2013 and outlined proposals to increase the effectiveness of the scheme.

The report recommended:

That the Committee authorise the Director of Housing and Environment to extend the use of the current Enforcement Fund to encompass Mixed Tenure Housing as detailed at section 5.2 within the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation in the report.

SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT TO TENANTS

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided details of Aberdeen City Council's performance as required by the Scottish Social Housing Charter and included information on the preparation of the first annual report to tenants as well as key findings from the Tenants Satisfaction Survey.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) note the contents of the report;
- (b) note the work undertaken on the first annual report to tenants; and
- (c) note that a presentation on the Tenants Satisfaction Survey was scheduled for 2 September 2014.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

GRAMPIAN JOINT HEALTH PROTECTION PLAN - H&E/14/061

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval of the draft Grampian Joint Health Protection Plan for the period 2014 to 2016 as required by the Public Health etc (Scotland) Act 2008.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) approves the Grampian Joint Health Protection Plan as appended to the report;
- (b) instructs the Director of Housing and Environment to ensure that the health protection priorities outlined in the plan continue to be resourced; and

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- (c) refer the report and appendix to the Social Care, Wellbeing and Safety Committee for their Information.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

In accordance with the decision recorded under article 1 of this minute, the following items of business were considered with the press and public excluded.

POLICE HOUSES - H&E/14/058

17. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval for the purchase of 20 three-bedroom cottage style properties from Police Scotland which had been leased to the Council for a number of years.

The report recommended:-

That the Committee -

- (a) to approve the purchase of the properties on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and instruct the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to conclude the purchase incorporating whatever terms are required to protect the Council's long term interest including clawback provisions with Police Scotland as identified in the report; and
- (b) to instruct officers to seek the required consent from the Scottish Government for the purchase into the HRA.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

- NEIL COONEY, Convener.

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