

## **Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee**

ABERDEEN, 30 May 2024. Minute of Meeting of the COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Radley, Convener; Councillor Henrickson, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Bouse (for items 5 to 15) , Cross (for all items except 5 and 6), Davidson, Graham (for all items except 5 and 6), Kusznr (as substitute for Councillor Cross for items 5 and 6), Malik (as substitute for Councillor Tissera for items 1 to 4), McLellan, Mrs Stewart, Tissera (for items 7 to 15), Watson (as substitute for Councillor Tissera for items 5 and 6) and Yuill (as substitute for Councillor Bouse for items 1 to 4).

**The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found [here](#).**

**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 THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 28 MARCH 2024**

1. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 28 March 2024, for approval.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the minute as a correct record.

### **COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER**

2. The Committee had before it the planner of committee business, as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal).

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to agree to remove item 7 (Public Engagement);
- (ii) to note the reason for the delay for item 6 (Busking Code of Practice); and
- (iii) to otherwise note the information contained in the business planner.

### **DEPUTATION REQUEST FOR ITEM 11.2 - ANTI MODERN SLAVERY REPORT**

3. The Committee received a deputation request from Professor Muhammad Azizul Islam and he addressed the Committee in the following terms:-

Professor Islam explained that he was a Professor in Sustainability Accounting and Transparency at Aberdeen University and they were carrying out three research papers. Research paper one was a critical analysis of the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015, research paper two was looking at vulnerability and exploitation of (women) workers in Bangladeshi garment factories supplying goods to the UK Market and the third paper

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was on unfair purchasing practices by retailers for the UK market; inherent reasons for the exploitation of workers.

Professor Islam expanded on the research papers and provided more detail on the aims and also explained the implications and recommendations for local councils. He advised that their findings were relevant to organisations including local councils with supply chain operations and noted that local councils had the following areas that needed attention to tackle modern slavery.

- Procurements – computers and garments for council staff, catering, industrial materials etc. If the council used suppliers that procure products from overseas, to ensure that there was no forced labour and exploitations during production/supply chains;
- Council's policy influence over businesses and partners operating in its jurisdiction and how to assure that businesses were modern slavery/human rights risk free; and
- Recruitment policy and training of staff on modern slavery issues.

Members then asked a number of questions of Professor Islam, based on his deputation.

The Convener thanked Professor Islam for his contribution.

### **ANTI-MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT - CORP/24/147**

4. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the meeting of 6 July 2023, the Committee had before it a report by the Interim Chief Officer – People & Citizen Services, which provided an update on the development of an Anti-Modern Slavery statement for Aberdeen City Council.

#### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee approve the Anti-Modern Slavery statement as contained in Appendix 1.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to agree that a report be brought back to this Committee in 2 years' time, to provide an evaluation of the implementation of the statement; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendation.

### **DEPUTATION REQUESTS FOR ITEM 11.5 - REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE (RAAC) FUNDING UPDATE**

5. The Committee received two deputation requests from Ms Paula Fraser and Ms Hannah Chowdhry and they addressed the Committee in the following terms:-

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Ms Fraser explained that she was representing Torry Community RAAC Campaign and she was concerned about the amount of people who were being asked to move to unsuitable places, which was causing severe distress to the community. Ms Fraser indicated that the Council's housing stock was insufficient and asked what was going to be done about the lack of suitable housing.

Ms Fraser advised that displacement payments had been delayed and noted that people should not have to pay to move. Ms Fraser also explained she was not previously aware of a lack of housing stock and felt that there had been no planning for family houses with a lack of 3 to 4 house properties available. Ms Fraser noted that individuals did not want to have to move to one bedroom properties and indicated that individual needs had to be taken into consideration.

Members then asked a number of questions based on the deputation and the information presented.

**At this juncture, the Committee agreed to suspend Standing Order 14.13 in order to allow more time for Members to ask questions.**

The Committee then heard from Ms Hannah Chowdhry, who was supported by Mr Wilson Chowdhry. Ms Chowdhry explained that she was disappointed to have to attend the Committee to make another deputation on this issue and felt that private owners had been left in the dark in regards to support.

Ms Chowdhry felt that the Council should be resourceful, noting that the capital budget was under strain and no money was forthcoming from the UK or Scottish Governments.

Ms Chowdhry highlighted the financial strain home owners were now under, having to potentially pay to rent a property whilst repairs were carried out, as well as the cost of the remedial works to the affected areas. Ms Chowdhry felt that it was disturbing the lack of help and support available for private home owners.

Members then asked a number of questions based on the deputation and the information presented.

The Convener then thanked both Ms Fraser and Ms Chowdhry for their contributions.

**RAAC FUNDING UPDATE - MAY 2024 - F&C 24/154**

6. With reference to article 2 of the minute of the meeting of 28 March 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officers – Housing, Corporate Landlord and Capital, which provided an update in relation to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) roofed properties at Balnagask, and the progress on the engagement activity undertaken with residents.

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The report also acknowledged that there were no obvious funding solutions to address mitigations to the RAAC risk in privately owned properties, the cost and financial implications of which would develop as the Options Appraisal to mitigate the RAAC risk for the affected properties progressed.

The Committee then heard from the Chief Officer – Housing, Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord and Chief Officer - Capital who provided a verbal update to the Committee.

Jacqui McKenzie, Chief Officer – Housing, explained that they were currently engaging with the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership as well as the Red Cross and were looking to see what other support people required, including support for mental health.

Mrs McKenzie outlined that they understood and recognised the challenges individuals were facing by being re-housed, noting that safety was really important for everyone involved. Mrs McKenzie also advised that

- A dedicated Housing and Support Team, supported by the Education Department and the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership had been set up
- A leaflet had been produced for private owners;
- Families/individuals had been supported on a 1 2 1 basis to understand their needs;
- Meetings had been organised with private tenants and owners to discuss their individual options
- There had been signposting to Mental Health and Wellbeing support
- Online FAQ's had been frequently reviewed and updated
- A briefing for Torry Community Council had been organised and ongoing schedule of engagement agreed.

It was noted that as of 29 May 2024, 293 offers had been generated and 26 of these were with registered social landlords. 70 offers had been accepted and there was an increase in the number of offers refused due to the area and housing type.

Mrs McKenzie also explained that the Housing & Support Officer advised individuals of their entitlement to a disturbance payment and home loss payment at the time the tenants confirmed they were accepting the offer and the lease signing was arranged.

The Committee then heard from John Wilson, Chief Officer – Capital who explained that they were potentially looking at four options:-

- Option 1 – bearing distance extension
- Option 2 – install passive fail-safe support
- Option 3 - RAAC roof replacement
- Option 4 – demolition

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Mr Wilson advised that there were 366 Council properties affected, 138 privately owned properties and 27 privately leased, all affected by RAAC.

In terms of progress, the following was noted.

- The indicative cost of the options for remedial works/demolition would be presented when the appraisal work was completed;
- Officers were seeking indicative quotes from several contractors;
- The expected cost for each option would be significant;
- The Council did not have an obligation to meet these costs for private owners; and
- Approaches had been made to both the UK and Scottish Governments for financial assistance.

The Committee then asked a number of questions in regards to the update provided.

### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note that approaches had been made to both the Scottish and UK Governments and their responses are included in Appendices 3 and 4;
- (b) note that the Chief Officers – Corporate Landlord, Housing and Capital would continue dialogue with both Governments as the Options Appraisal for the affected properties progresses; and
- (c) note that the Options Appraisal to be reported to Council on 21 August 2024 would include consideration of the impact of any preferred option on private owners including the financial impact on them.

### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that Cllr Miranda Radley, Convener of Housing, Communities and Public Protection had written to both the Scottish Government and UK Government to seek assistance;
- (ii) to instruct the Chief Executive to write to both the Scottish Government and UK Government reiterating the points raised by the Convener to seek assistance to ease the burden from the Housing Revenue Account and/or the General Revenue Account;
- (iii) to agree any Option Appraisal must include the consideration of options available to support private owners, including the potential of compulsory purchase orders and their implications;
- (iv) to explore availability of Council stock within Torry and Balnagask area and ask the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to consider whether Council buy back policy may be a vehicle that could be considered to support the rehoming programme where there was a need;
- (v) to instruct the Chief Officer – Housing to recirculate information on the options available to Council tenants when relocating, including support available from the Council towards relocation costs;

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- (vi) to instruct the Chief Officer – Housing to continue their engagement with the Health and Social Care Partnership and Third Sector Organisations to explore opportunities to widen mental health and wellbeing support for the community;
- (vii) to request that the Chief Officer – Housing, (1) explore the possibility of responding in writing to tenants/home owners following meetings with what was discussed and (2) make paper copies of the information leaflet which was produced available to private owners; and
- (viii) to request that the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, circulate to members by way of email, available areas of green space in the Torry area for residents.

### NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR KUSZNIR - REFERRED FROM COUNCIL ON 17 APRIL 2024

7. Councillor Kuznir withdrew his Notice of Motion at the meeting, following the earlier decision at item 5 in regards to the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete.

### SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE PERFORMANCE REPORT APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024 - SFR/24/177

8. The Committee had before it the performance report for Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for April 2023 to March 2024, against the objectives contained within the Aberdeen City Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

#### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee note the performance report.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to request that the clerk recirculate the information on the consultation being undertaken by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to all Elected Members; and
- (ii) to note the performance report.

### PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOOD REGULATORY SERVICE PLAN 2024/2025 - CORP/24/156

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal) which stated that the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) 2019 required Local Authorities to prepare an annual Service Plan which detailed the intended activity of the service based on the resources allocated and that this plan must be approved by Committee.

#### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee -

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- (a) approve the Protective Services Food Regulatory Service Plan 2024/2025 as detailed in Appendix A; and
- (b) note the review of performance against the Protective Services Food Regulatory Service Plan 2023/2024 contained within Appendix 2 of the Service Plan 2024/2025.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

### PROTECTIVE SERVICES OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2024/25 - CORS/24/153

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal) which outlined the Protective Services proposals for delivering the occupational safety and health regulatory service for year 2024/2025.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee approve the Occupational Health and Safety Service Plan for 2024/25 at Appendix 1.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendation.

### GRAMPIAN JOINT HEALTH PROTECTION PLAN - CORS/24/158

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal) which sought to update the Committee on any changes to the Joint Health Protection.

The report noted that the Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008 (“the 2008 Act”) placed a duty on health boards and local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the 2008 Act, to co-operate with any relevant person (e.g. health board, special health board, local authority, integration joint board, common services agency, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Scottish Ministers) who appeared to have an interest in or a function relating to the protection of public health and produce a Local Health Protection Plan.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the updates and achievements in relation to the Grampian Joint Health Protection Plan (“the Plan”); and
- (b) note that the Plan will be reviewed again in 2026.

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**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**PERFORMANCE REPORT - CORS/24/144**

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Data Insights, which presented Committee with the status of appropriate key performance measures relating to certain Operations and Customer services.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee note the information contained in the performance report.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to note the report.

**BUILDING STANDARDS ACTIVITY REPORT - CR&E/24/155**

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, which provided assurance and an overview of the Council's responsibilities in relation to securing dangerous buildings and protecting public safety, as well as activity on unauthorised building work and unauthorised occupation of buildings.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee -

- (a) note the contents of the report and appendix; and
- (b) agree to receive a further Building Standards Activity Report at the meeting of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on 21st November 2024.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**ABERDEEN CITY LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE - F&C/24/142**

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Housing, which sought approval of a timeline and the associated vision and strategic outcomes which would guide the development of the Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy. The report also sought approval for the prioritisation methodology to be utilised for the affordable housing supply programme and a hybrid model of care and support at Provost Hogg Court.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the timeline for the review of the Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy at 3.2;

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- (b) approve the vision and strategic outcomes for the revised Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy outlined at 3.3 and 3.4;
- (c) approve the prioritisation methodology for the affordable housing supply programme at 3.7; and
- (d) approve implementation of the hybrid model of care and support at Provost Hogg Court as detailed at 3.11 – 3.15.

### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to approve the recommendations;
- (ii) to note that the Chief Officer – Housing, in collaboration with the Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership would engage with tenants in Provost Hogg Court to understand details of the likely impact on existing and prospective sheltered housing and very sheltered tenants of the implementation of the proposed hybrid model of care and support at Provost Hogg Court;
- (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Housing in collaboration with the Chief Officer – Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, to report back to the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee within 12 months on the implementation of the hybrid care and support model at Provost Hogg Court to evaluate the effectiveness before considering potential implementation in other parts of the city; and
- (iv) to instruct the Chief Officer – Housing to liaise with the Chief Officer – Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership to ensure the hybrid care and support model at Provost Hogg Court provided the best possible outcome for tenants from a care perspective as well as a housing perspective and report back to the relevant committee.

### **COUNCIL HOUSING IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY – MAY 2024 - F&C/24/176**

**15.** The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officers - Housing and Corporate Landlord, which implemented a previous committee instruction to look at ideas to improve planned maintenance and capital improvement works to Council homes along with providing an update on the improvement activity being progressed within the Housing Improvement Group/ Housing Board.

The report also aimed to consolidate all activity within the one report to ensure consistency across all improvement activity.

### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) notes that the Housing Improvement Group was replaced by the Housing Board, established on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to oversee all improvement activity relating to Housing, including capital works;
- (b) instructs the Executive Director Families and Communities to bring back to this Committee bi-annual reports providing oversight on Housing Improvement Activity; and

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- (c) instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to pause any new applications under the Council House buy-back scheme in light of wider resource pressures and the funding and voids impact and bring a report on the Acquisition and Disposal policy and buy-backs progress to a future meeting of this Committee, no later than 21 November 2024.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to approve recommendations (a) and (b);
  - (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to pause any new applications under the Council House buy-back scheme (with the exclusion of any properties in Torry that may meet the requirements of RAAC affected tenants) in light of wider resource pressures, accelerated by RAAC in Torry, and the funding and voids impact and bring a report on the Acquisition and Disposal policy and buy-backs progress to a future meeting of this Committee, no later than 21 November 2024; and
  - (iii) to request that the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, let members of the Committee know by way of email, how many buy back properties there were currently in the void stock.
- **Councillor Miranda Radley, Convener**