

Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee

ABERDEEN, 28 March 2024. Minute of Meeting of the COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Radley, Convener; Councillor Henrickson, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Bouse, Brooks (as substitute for Councillor Cross for articles 4 to 12), Cross (for articles 1 to 3), Davidson, Graham, McLellan, Mrs Stewart (for items 1 to 3), Tissera and Watson (as substitute for Councillor Tissera for articles 1 and 2) .

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.

DEPUTATION REQUEST FOR ITEM 11.4 - REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE (RAAC) UPDATE

1. The Committee received a deputation from Ms Hannah Chowdhry who was supported by her father Mr Wilson Chowdhry.

Ms Chowdhry, in her presentation, outlined that she had purchased a house in Torry, unaware of any issues or concerns in regards to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), and believed there was a systematic failure from the Council as RAAC was known to be a concern in the 1990's. She believed that the Council had a moral duty to support those who had purchased formal Council properties, which were affected by RAAC and the oversight from the Council had led to many people purchasing faulty properties. She highlighted that the safety and wellbeing of constituents was paramount.

Ms Chowdhry requested that action be taken now to support those who had purchased Council properties affected by RAAC, and highlighted the human toll the situation was having on a lot of individuals. She also asked Members to remember that real people were involved and to remember this when taking budget decisions.

Mr Wilson Chowdhry then spoke to the Committee and advised that he and his daughter were representing the community, who were affected by RAAC properties and highlighted the financial distress many individuals were facing. He explained that some homeowners had paid off their mortgages, only to have to then fund the repairs to the roofs due to RAAC, leaving them in debt. He highlighted that this issue fell under the Council's jurisdiction and urged Members to support homeowners affected negatively by RAAC.

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

At this juncture, Councillor Watson, seconded by Councillor Graham, moved a procedural motion:-

to suspend Standing Order 14.4 in order to allow more time for questions to the deputation.

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On a division, there voted – for the procedural motion (8) – the Convener, the Vice Convener and Councillors Cross, Davidson, Graham, McLellan, Mrs Stewart and Watson - against the procedural motion (1) – Councillor Bouse.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the procedural motion and to allow another ten minutes for questions for the deputation.

Members then asked further questions based on the deputation and the information presented.

The Convener then thanked both Ms Chowdhry and Mr Chowdhry for their contribution.

REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE (RAAC) UPDATE - RES/24/103

2. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, Chief Officer – Capital and Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, which provided an update in regards to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC).

The report explained that at the meeting of the Urgent Business Committee (UBC) on 29th February 2024 a report (RES/24/086) was considered in relation to the presence of RAAC roofing within properties at Balnagask. In light of the range of recommendations within that report officers considered there was benefit in sharing regular updates on activities undertaken with Committee members, progress with engagement and highlights of key issues arising from engagements.

The Committee heard from the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, Mr Booth, and the Chief Officer- Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, Mrs McKenzie, who provided a verbal presentation to members. Mrs McKenzie outlined the various actions officers were currently undertaking for tenants who were affected by properties with RAAC, and highlighted that they understood that this was a hugely emotional time for those affected.

Mrs McKenzie outlined the cross service approach that was underway for affected tenants and indicated that a variety of support was on offer for individuals and for people to reach out for support and guidance.

Mr Booth also explained that in terms of the buildings, they were currently looking at various options, which included complete roof replacement for affected properties and also demolition. He highlighted the requirement to consult with all tenants and that officers were also liaising with other local authorities. Mr Booth also indicated that they did not hold a Compulsory Purchase Order, therefore could not buy back sold Council properties.

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The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report; and
- (b) instruct that a verbal update as indicated in paragraph 3.2 should be provided to each meeting of the Committee and that such an update should be included as a standing agenda item until the Committee otherwise instructs.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree that, in the event that the recommended option arising from the future options appraisal resulted in remedial works to the impacted homes, any existing Council tenant rehomed due to the impact of RAAC, should have first refusal of returning to one of the homes with the remedial works completed that met their housing needs;
- (ii) to agree that, in the event that the recommended option arising from a future options appraisal resulted in demolition of the impacted homes and future rebuilding on the same sites, recognising that this would take several years, any existing Council tenant rehomed due to the impact of RAAC should have first refusal of returning to one of the replacement homes that met their housing needs;
- (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, Chief Officer – Capital and Chief Officer - Housing, to explore any available funding opportunities to support private owners and report back to the next Committee meeting; and
- (iv) to approve the recommendations.

POLICE SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE REPORT - POL/24/104

3. The Committee had before it a report by Police Scotland, which presented the Police Scotland Interim Performance Report for Committee scrutiny.

The report, provided an update on Police Performance in Aberdeen City in support of agreed priorities, and noted that much of the content of the report reflected on the collaborative methods in which Police Scotland operated across the City.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee discuss, comment on and endorse the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the report;
- (ii) to note many within the public and the media had great concerns that the implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 would criminalise freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of belief; and request the Chief Superintendent Graeme Mackie, North East Division, Police Scotland bring forward a thematic report to the meeting on 21 November 2024 on the implications to the media and the public from this new Act;

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- (iii) to request that Police Scotland report back to the meeting on 30 May 2024, in regards to a previous action which was to look at breaking down the figures in relation to crimes committed and victim numbers to highlight the percentage of men and women who carried out the crime/were victims of the crime rather than an inclusive figure;
- (iv) to request that Police Scotland feed back to the next meeting of the Committee, with details of the engagement that was previously undertaken with 200 members of the public, to include details on issues that people may require help or assistance with, as well as the new various locations where anti social behaviour had taken place;
- (v) to request that Police Scotland provide details of the Scottish Government website, which had been set up to provide guidance in regards to the new Hate Crime Act, which could be shared with Elected Members; and
- (vi) to note that work was underway with Police Scotland and Community Safety Partnership in regards to the new Hate Crime Act and to request that the Executive Director – Corporate Services, liaise with Elected Members in regards to the new Act.

POLICE SCOTLAND - PROPORTIONATE RESPONSE TO CRIME PILOT - POL/24/105

4. With reference to article 3 of the minute of this Committee of 5 September 2023, the Committee had before it a report by Police Scotland, which presented the Police Scotland Proportionate Response to Crime Evaluation Report for Committee scrutiny.

The report was an evaluation of the Proportionate Response to Crime project which was piloted in North East Division. The evaluation report was presented at the Scottish Police Authority Police Performance Committee on 12 March 2024.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee discuss, comment on, and endorse the report.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

that the Committee note the report.

Councillor Graham, seconded by Councillor Tissera, moved as an amendment:-

that the Committee:-

1. notes the Report;
2. agrees that the Response to Crime detailed in the report encourages crime to THRIVE and weakens Police Scotland's ability to apply the Laws of Scotland in order to protect the public; and
3. agrees that if Police Scotland were to decide before investigating what constitutes a proportionate response to crime rather than investigate all crime it sends out the wrong message to the public.

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On a division, there voted (5) for the motion - the Convener, the Vice Convener and Councillors Bouse, Davidson and McLellan – for the amendment (3) – Councillors Brooks, Graham and Tissera. – absent from the vote (1) – Councillor Mrs Stewart.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion and therefore note the report.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN REVIEW 2023 - SFR/24/106

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, which presented the outcomes of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Aberdeen City Area Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review for 2023.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee agree that the following priorities be taken forward in the new Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeen City area:

- 1: Domestic Fire Safety and Unintentional Harm in the Home Priority
- 2: Non-Fire Emergencies and respond to the impact of Climate Change Priority 3: Deliberate Fire Setting Priority
- 4: Non-Domestic Fire Safety Priority
- 5: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Priority
- 6: Operational Preparedness and Community Resilience.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 23 JANUARY 2024

6. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 23 January 2024, for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

to note the planner.

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PERFORMANCE REPORT - COM/24/076

8. 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.

CLUSTER RISK REGISTERS AND ASSURANCE MAPS - COM/24/087

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Director – Customer Services, which presented the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps in accordance with the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee Terms of Reference to provide assurance that risks were being managed effectively within each Cluster.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps set out in Appendices A and B.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

RESILIENCE ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - COM/24/063

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Assurance), which provided the annual assurance report on the Council's resilience arrangements in fulfilment of its duties as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made in further embedding the Council's resilience arrangements during another busy year for emergency response;
- (b) note the updated Generic Emergency Plan which had received minor alterations under the relevant delegated powers; and
- (a) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to submit a response to the Rule 8 request from the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry, following consultation with the

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Convener of the Education and Children's Services Committee and the Interim Chief Officer - Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

NEW HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME DELIVERY PROJECTS UPDATE - RES/24/096

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Capital, which summarised the general progress of delivery of key capital expenditure projects identified within the approved Capital Programme from the Housing Revenue Accounts.

The report also highlighted matters considered worthy of particular note in relation to Council led new build housing sites at Summerhill, Craighill, Kincorth, Tillydrone, Kaimhill, Greenferns and Greenferns Landward and the Developer led new build housing site at Cloverhill.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the progress to deliver the programme of social housing sites across the city.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that the Chief Officer – Capital, liaise with the contractor for the works at 206 Union Street into possible advertising on the scaffolding; and
- (ii) to note the report.

RENT ASSISTANCE FUND 2024-25 - RES/24/100

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Finance and Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, which sought approval for the criteria and management of a £500,000 Rent Assistance Fund pilot funded from the 2024/25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the criteria and management procedure of the Pilot Rent Assistance Fund detailed in Appendix 1;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to make any changes to the criteria and management procedure of the Pilot Rent Assistance Fund as appropriate during the pilot phase and inform Members of any such changes through a Service Update;

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- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Finance to present an evaluation of the impact of the Pilot Rent Assistance Fund as part of the 2025/26 HRA Budget Report to Council in December 2024; and
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer – Finance to present a further evaluation covering the full 12 months of the pilot to the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee after one full year of operation.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank officers for their efforts with the Rent Assistance Fund; and
 - (ii) to approve the recommendations.
- **Councillor Miranda Radley, Convener**