

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 29 October 2013. 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, Taylor (as substitute for Councillor Young for item 4.1 (article 6 refers) and item 7.2 (article 13 refers)), 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=2911&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.

URGENT MOTION BY COUNCILLOR FINLAYSON

1. The Committee had circulated an urgent motion by Councillor Finlayson in the following terms:-

“In order to assist in complying with the current Council Policy to reduce (recyclable) waste going to landfill that Officers be instructed to investigate the feasibility of providing a recycling collection to Community Centres and all other Council premises not currently in receipt of this service and report back to the next meeting of the Committee”.

Councillor Finlayson spoke to his motion, during which he explained the rationale behind his request.

The Committee resolved:-

to request officers to submit a report on the terms of the motion to the meeting of this Committee on 14 January 2014.

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2. 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 (Request for Approval of Expenditure for a Cleaning Service for 39 Multi Storey and 3 Low Rise Blocks) (article 16 refers) and 8.2 (Provision of Public Space CCTV) (article 17 refers) on the agenda so as to avoid disclosure of information of the class described in the following

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paragraphs of Schedule 7(A) to the Act:-article 16 (paragraphs 6 and 8) and article 17 (paragraphs 8 and 10).

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MINUTE OF 27 AUGUST 2013

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 27 August 2013.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT

4. 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 8 (Preventing Trade Access to Recycling Centres), item 10 (Private Sector Housing – Enforcement Funding Issues Report), 11 (Local Authority Mortgage Scheme) and 13 (Aberdeen In Bloom); and
- (ii) to otherwise note the business statement.

MOTIONS LIST

5. The Committee had before it a list of motions prepared by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to remove motion 2 (Review of Collection and Charging of Tenant Rents) subject to the decision at article 11 to this minute; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the motions list.

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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 Rent Management, the Convener advised that he had requested detailed analysis to be provided in order for the Committee to scrutinise the levels of debt.

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In relation to Void Management, the Housing Manager advised that a report would be submitted to this Committee in January 2014 outlining the improvements that had been undertaken for assisting with the re-letting void properties.

In relation to Homelessness Prevention Activities, Councillor Jackie Dunbar raised concerns relating to when a homeless person who is on benefits is allocated temporary accommodation that is deemed to be larger than their needs that they are automatically penalised by the under occupancy charge through no fault of their own. The Head of Service advised that the issue was being looked at, that there was an Independent Review being undertaken on the issue of under occupancy charges and that the Service were still awaiting the outcome for temporary accommodation.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to Rent Management, the Committee noted that the Convener had requested that a report containing detailed analysis be submitted to the meeting on 14 January 2014;
- (ii) in relation to Void Management, the Committee noted that a report would be submitted to its meeting on 14 January 2014 providing detailed information on the measures being undertaken to improve the letting of Void properties including changes to the re-letting standards;
- (iii) in relation to Homelessness Prevention Activities, the Committee noted (1) the concerns raised from Councillor Dunbar relating to people being in arrears if they are allocated a property bigger than their needs and (2) the update provided from the Head of Service relating to temporary accommodation; and agreed that the Committee be kept informed of any progress in this area; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the content of the report.

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME (H&E/13/072)

7. With reference to article 8 of the minute of its meeting of 27 August 2013, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Housing and Environment and the Acting Head of Finance which provided a status report for the 2013/14 Housing Capital Programme as at 31 August 2013 and summarised both income and expenditure in this regard.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) notes the financial information contained within the report;
- (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; and
- (c) approves the virements outlined in Appendix 2 to the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING (H&E/13/073)

8. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its meeting of 27 August 2013, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Housing and Environment and the Acting Head of Finance which advised on the current year revenue budget performance to date for the services which relate to this Committee and any areas of risk and management action.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) consider and note the report and the information on management action and risks that was contained therein; 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/13/151)

9. With reference to article 10 of the minute of its meeting of 27 August 2013, 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 within 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.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING - ENFORCEMENT FUNDING UPDATE (H&E/13/066)

10. With reference to article 12 of the minute of meeting of 15 January 2013, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on progress made in carrying out enforcement works in the private housing sector.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) notes the content of this report and the progress made to date on Private Sector Housing Enforcement and the proposals to develop further packages of assistance; and
- (b) requests that the Director of Housing and Environment brings further annual reports to committee, on future developments, (or earlier as required).

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The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

RENT COLLECTION DATES - MOTION BY COUNCILLOR JACKIE DUNBAR (H&E/13/051)

11. With reference to article 13 of the minute of its meeting of 27 August 2013, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which was prepared in response to the following motion by Councillor Jackie Dunbar:-

That this Council request the Housing and Environment service to undertake a review on the way that the service currently charges and collects rent due by our tenants, to try and end the cycle of some tenants who face being in arrears every month due to the difference in dates of when they are paid and the date that their rent is due, by giving more flexibility to our tenants so that they can start paying monthly instead of four weekly as is the practice at present.

The report recommended:

that the Committee note the report and make no changes to the way in which rent is currently charged.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

To approve the recommendation as contained in the report.

Councillor Jackie Dunbar moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Delaney:-

- (a) to approve the recommendation contained in the report; and
- (b) in regards to helping the tenants and the council in addressing the problem currently experienced with "technical arrears", that the direct debit payment dates be expanded to include any date between the 1st and 28th of each month, taking into account that any tenant wishing to choose their direct debit date must address any short term arrears that this may cause.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (8) – The Convener, the Vice Convener and Councillors Lesley Dunbar, Finlayson, Lawrence, Milne, Thomson and Young. For the amendment (7) – Councillors Delaney, Dickson, Jackie Dunbar, McCaig, Noble, Samarai and Jennifer Stewart.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the terms of the successful motion.

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ABERDEEN IN BLOOM (H&E/13/070)

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which advised on the successful achievement by Aberdeen in this year's Beautiful Scotland campaign.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) acknowledges Aberdeen's awards in this year's In Bloom campaign and give thanks and congratulations to all those that took part and helped make Aberdeen's campaign such a successful one; and
- (b) agrees that Aberdeen should take part in the 2014 Beautiful Scotland campaign.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Convener requested members to encourage constituents to enter the In Bloom competition for future years; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

AIR QUALITY UPDATE (H&E/13/067)

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the 2013 Air Quality Progress Report and advised members of a feasibility study into a City Centre Low Emission Zone, grant funding and progress in the implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) note the 2013 Air Quality Progress Report;
- (b) instructs relevant officers with the Environmental Health and Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Services to continue to review and assess air quality, implement the Air Quality Action Plan, progress the Low Emission Zone feasibility study and report annually on progress on all three; and
- (c) refers the report to the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure bulletin for information.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

PREVENTING TRADE ACCESS TO RECYCLING CENTRES (H&E/13/074)

14. With reference to article 18 of the minute of its meeting of 28 August 2012, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update in relation to trade waste disposal at Recycling Centres and to address an anomaly in control of charitable waste at Recycling Centres.

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The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) notes the progress made on preventing trade waste being illegally deposited at Recycling Centres; and
- (b) instructs the operators of the Recycling Centres to apply the following policy on charity waste from 1 January 2014:
 - (i) Charities producing consistent waste streams are not able to dispose of this waste at Recycling Centres
 - (ii) One-off applications from community groups (e.g. Scouts) will be referred to Council officers for verification and approval to dispose.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

WASTE COLLECTION CHARGES REVIEW 2014/15 (H&E/13/071)

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval for charges for the collection and disposal of trade waste and associated chargeable services for the financial year 2014/15, with the commercial food waste service charges applying from the point of implementation of the service, which would occur this financial year.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) agrees the schedule of charges detailed in Tables 1 and 2 of the report; and
- (b) instructs officers to implement the food waste charges from the commencement of the service and other charges from 1 April 2014.

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.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE FOR A CLEANING SERVICE FOR 39 MULTI STOREY AND 3 LOW RISE BLOCKS (H&E/13/065)

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval for delegated powers to be given to the Director of Housing and Environment in consultation with the Convener of Housing and Environment on the basis of best value to (1) tender for a new contract for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for a further 24 months or (2) to extend the current

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cleaning service for a maximum period of a further 12 months after which a full procurement will be carried out to enable a new tender to be put in place, again for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) approve the estimated expenditure for the provision of a cleaning service, in accordance with SO1(3) of the Councils Standing Orders relating to contracts and procurement as detailed in the report;
- (b) approve estimated expenditure for a 1 year extension to the current contract as detailed in the report;
- (c) agree that the expenditure should be built into the budget coming before council in December; and
- (d) give delegated powers to the Director of Housing and Environment in consultation with the Convener of Housing and Environment to make the final decision on the procurement process on the basis of best value.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations in the report.

PROVISION OF PUBLIC SPACE CCTV (H&E/13/075)

17. With reference to article 22 of the minute of its meeting of 12 March 2013, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on the development of a shared in-house public space CCTV model with Police Scotland, as per the committee decision on 12th March 2013.

The report recommended:

That the Committee -

- (a) note the progress made in terms of the in-house delivery model; and
- (b) confirm whether they wish to proceed with the full market testing exercise and put out the tender or
- (c) to approve the further development of the in-house model by producing a detailed business case that outlines long term funding and staffing requirements.

The Committee discussed recommendations (b) and (c) above and agreed to pursue the in-house delivery model.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve recommendations (a) and (c) contained in the report.

- **NEIL COONEY, Convener.**

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