

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 19 November, 2009. - minute of meeting of the HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Malone, Convener; Councillor McDonald, Vice Convener; and Councillors Collie, Cooney, Corall, Dunbar, Fletcher, Hunter, Milne, Noble, Robertson, Kevin Stewart, Young and Yuill.

WELCOME

1. The Convener welcomed members to the meeting, and introduced Thomas Ross, Roxana Mironescu, Anna-Sophie Krader and Nancy Zang who were students at Robert Gordon University studying journalism and were in attendance as part of their course work.

ORDER OF AGENDA

2. The Convener intimated that she would like the Committee to consider items 11.1 (Proposal to Disestablish a vacant permanent Support Assistant Post and convert an existing fixed term post to permanent), 11.2 (Rent Management Restructure) and 11.3 (Post within Supporting People Team) as one single item; to consider item 10.1 (Update report on the progress of the "Growing Our Own" Pilot for Environment Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers) with the press and public in attendance; and to accept a tabled paper "Request to Attend SURF Awards Dinner".

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree to consider items 11.1, 11.2 and 11.3 of the agenda as one single item;
- (ii) to agree to consider item 10.1 (Update report on the progress of the "Growing Our Own" pilot for Environment Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers) with the press and public in attendance; and
- (iii) to agree to consider the tabled paper.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 6 October, 2009.

With reference to article 2 of the minute, the Convener advised that thirteen members had responded to Committee Services' email regarding the commencement of future meetings of the Committee; and that four members had intimated a preference for a 10.30am start; three members had intimated a preference for a 2pm start; and six members had intimated that they did not have a preference in this regard. She suggested that the next meeting commence at 2pm, and that this be considered again in the New Year, should future agendas prove to be lengthy.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree that the next meeting should commence at 2pm;
- (ii) to approve the minute as an accurate record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT

4. The Committee had before it a statement of pending and outstanding committee business, which had been prepared by the Head of Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to remove items 1 (Bird Proofing/Gulls in the City), 2 (Progress on the Housing Service Improvement Plan), 4 (Review of the Aberdeen City Waste Strategy – Progress), 13 (Progress with Approved Savings for the Countryside Ranger Service and Hazlehead Golf Course for 2009/10), 14 (Review of Lettings to Other Council Services, External Agencies and Properties Offcharge), 15 (Application for Renewal of a Licence to Operate a House in Multiple Occupation. Premises: 165 Crown Street, Aberdeen) and 16 (Auchmill Golf Course Business Plan, Transitional Licence and draft long term lease to maintain Golf Course);
- (ii) to request that item 7 (St. Fitticks Farmhouse Site, Torry), be transferred to the Business List for the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee;
- (iii) to note that reports would be submitted in January on items 17 (Croft House Care Home – Future Use/Disposal) and 18 (Aberdon Care Home – Future Use/Disposal);
- (iv) to note that item 26 (Proposed Tendering of Local House Condition Survey) would be subject to the budgetary process, and therefore a report would be submitted in April, 2010; and
- (v) to otherwise note the updates as contained in the business statement.

MOTIONS LIST

5. The Committee had before it a list of outstanding motions which had been prepared by the Head of Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to item 1 (Councillor Allan – Policy Allowing Door Entry Systems and Mutual Repairs) to note that an update report on this matter would be submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 11 January, 2010, with a final report to be submitted at the meeting on 13 April, 2010; and
- (ii) in relation to item 2 (Councillors Kevin Stewart and John Stewart – doorstep collections of household batteries) to request officers to provide a briefing to all members, by email, on the current position regarding the implementation of the Battery Directive.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor McDonald declared an interest due to the nature of discussion that took place during consideration of the following article concerning the contractor RPS, due to a member of his family being employed by this contractor. Councillor McDonald did not feel it necessary to withdraw from the meeting.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the key management information and performance indicators for the Housing and Environment Service which consisted of the following four sections:- (1) a progress report from the Director; (2) a summary in the format of a performance indicator balanced scorecard and detailed information supporting those indicators being considered this cycle; (3) a report on properties removed from charge; and (4) a progress report on the Housing and Community Safety Improvement Plan.

Concern was intimated at the difficulty in reading some of the figures, and a request was made that colour copies be provided to members in future. Members were reminded that they could print coloured copies from the Councillors' shared drive, and that colour copies were not provided due to the financial implications involved. At this point the Director offered to provide individual members with coloured copies of the performance report, should they request this.

With reference to page 60 of the report, the Committee intimated its thanks for the very generous donation that had been made from the estate of the late Mrs Lorna Doreen Russell of £834,000, and noted that this would go a great way in maintaining the very high standards that the public were accustomed to in the Winter Gardens. Members enquired as to whether Mrs Russell had any surviving relatives that a letter of thanks could be communicated to on behalf of the Committee. The Director undertook to ascertain if this would be possible.

With further reference to page 60 of the report, the Director highlighted the great success of the Environmental walkabouts that had been lead by the Environmental Services Team recently, and extended an invitation to members of the Press to attend one of the walkabouts in the future. Particular thanks were paid to Steven Shaw (Environmental Manager) and his Team for the time that they had invested in this initiative.

The Director advised that as of next cycle, the format of the performance report would change slightly, with the Improvement Plan being presented as a separate report and coming forward every second cycle; and the 'properties removed from charge' section also being presented as a separate report. He continued that if there were any areas where members would like further information, a detailed report could be provided on any item detailed within the performance report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that members could view colour versions of all reports on the new shared drive prior to the Committee, and that individual members of the

- Committee should contact the Director of Housing and Environment's office directly to arrange to receive a printed colour version of the report;
- (ii) to thank the Late Mrs Lorna Doreen Russell for the sum of money bequeathed to the Council for the David Welch Winter Gardens, and to request officers to send a formal letter of thanks to surviving relatives, should this be appropriate;
 - (iii) to commend the Service and partners for the successful environmental walkabouts, and to recommend that all members attend a walk and to extend this invite to the press;
 - (iv) to note that the Improvement Plan progress report included to date within the performance report would now be reported separately to the Committee every second cycle, and also that the list of all properties removed from charge would now also be reported separately from the performance report;
 - (v) to note that members could highlight performance areas where they wished to receive further detailed information and that this information would be reported to the Committee;
 - (vi) to request that officers submit a detailed report on the homelessness performance indicators, to include information on:- a comparison of homeless tenancy sustainment with mainstream tenancy sustainment; benchmarking the Council's homelessness performance with other local authorities; and the strategies the Service was implementing to improve performance, to a future meeting of the Committee;
 - (vii) in relation to HOUSPIHS7aⁱⁱⁱ (Statutory Homeless Lets) to request that officers provide Councillor Hunter with the numbers for 2008 in comparison with the numbers for 2009 rather than percentages;
 - (viii) to request officers to circulate to all members, by email, the updated master list of all off charge properties;
 - (ix) with reference to page 63 of the report, to request that members be advised of the number of fixed penalty notices that had been paid out of the 26 that had been issued;
 - (x) with further reference to page 63 of the report, to congratulate officers involved in the Best Bar Non Scheme for their hard work in this regard;
 - (xi) with reference to properties off charge, to request that in future, if any target date has passed that the Committee be provided with an explanation in this regard; and
 - (xii) to otherwise note the content of the report.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the following item of business be considered as a matter of urgency due to the invitation for this event being received on 17 November, 2009 and the event taking place on 3 December (prior to the next meeting of the Committee).

REQUEST – SURF AWARDS

7. With reference to article 2 of this minute, the Committee had before it a request for up to three Councillors or officers to attend the SURF awards in Glasgow on 3 December, 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the attendance of one Member and one officer at the above event.

**ORDERS OF REFERENCE FOR HOUSING CASES REVIEW SUB COMMITTEE
– CG/11/130**

8. With reference to article 2 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which requested approval for the Orders of Reference for the new Housing Cases Review Sub Committee.

By way of background the report advised that at the last meeting of this Committee, the decision had been taken to rename the Housing and Social Work Cases Review Panel the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee. The report advised that due to the Committee restructuring that had taken place over the summer recess that it would not be appropriate for the Sub Committee of the Housing and Environment Committee to have powers to consider matters in relation to the Social Work Service and it was therefore proposed that the Orders of Reference for the new Housing Cases Review Sub Committee omitted the reference to the Social Work Service.

The report continued that the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee had referred its only live Social Work case to the Adult Services Sub Committee for its consideration and future action, at its inaugural meeting.

The report concluded that the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee may still require input from the Social Work Service on certain housing cases that come before it.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the Orders of Reference for the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee to read as follows:-

“that the Sub Committee acts with delegated powers to deal with all matters relative to the allocation and management of individual Council houses including the leasing and management of pitches at Clinterty Caravan Site and any similar site, with the exception of matters which have already been delegated to the Director of Housing and Environment”.

2009/10 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME – H&E/09/107

9. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a joint report by the City Chamberlain and the Director of Housing and Environment, advising on the status of the Housing Capital Programme for the financial year 2009/10 as at 30 September, 2009, including information on both income and expenditure.

Appended to the report as appendix 1 was a financial monitoring statement which outlined the original budget for the current year and expenditure and income as at 30 September, 2009, which advised that as at 30 September, 2009 the Council had paid £21.992m for the budgeted £51.74m.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed the categories of spend in the Housing Capital Programme and spend to date against each category, which indicated there had been an internal fees to date of £676,520 charged to the Housing Capital (these had been charged to the relevant categories therefore the actual fees had been added to the revised budget for each category and the corresponding removal had been made from the corporate fees). The report continued that no further revisions had been made to the programme since the last meeting, however, the actual internal fees had been allocated over the relevant projects. A review of the programme was underway and would be reported to the next cycle.

With reference to page 133 of the report (Energy Efficient), Councillor Hunter advised that he had been made aware that some owners within blocks were being charged for lift replacement programmes, and that the costs they were being charged differed between owners. The Head of Service – Housing (Asset Management) advised that within each block every owner should have incurred exactly the same costs, but the costs between blocks may indeed differ. The Head of Service undertook to circulate the information on the charges being made to owners in this regard.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that Councillor Hunter provide the Head of Service – Housing (Asset Management) with details of the differing charges levied to owners within multi storey blocks in his ward, and that the Head of Service – Housing (Asset Management) investigate this matter, and circulate the information to all members of the Committee;
- (ii) to note the financial information contained within this report; and
- (iii) to instruct the City Chamberlain to continue to update the Committee in consultation with the Director for Housing and Environment on the forecast and actual outturn position for 2009/10.

CAPITAL BUDGET PROGRESS REPORT – H&E/09/057

10. With reference to article 10 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a joint report by the City Chamberlain and the Director of Housing and Environment, which provided an update on the progress which had been made on the various projects within the Non Housing Capital Programme, which were now aligned to the Housing and Environment Service.

Appendix A to the report outlined the Non Housing Capital Programme projects aligned to the Housing and Environment Services and provided for each project the budget for 2009/10; spend to the end of September, 2009; and forecast outturn. Comments on particular projects, where appropriate, were included in the narrative.

The report advised that the spend to the end of September, 2009 only reflected payments made and processed, and therefore excluded any commitments that had been made and were due to be paid by the year end.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) with reference to page 140 of the report (762 multi-occupancy/tenemental paper recycling), to congratulate officers involved in this project for their hard work in this regard; and
- (ii) to note the content of the report in relation to the project outlined at appendix A.

2009/10 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – H&E/09/109

11. With reference to article 11 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a joint report by the City Chamberlain and the Director of Housing and Environment, which advised of the current year Revenue Budget performance to date for the services which related to this Committee.

Appendix A to the report provided the Service report and associated notes, and advised that the position reflected that there would be an anticipated overspend of £105,000 on the total Housing and Environment budget (excluding the Housing Revenue Account) and that the Capital financing costs had been replaced with a more accurate budget since the previous report to this Committee. The Housing Revenue Account was still anticipated to have a balanced budget with a potential increased of the Capital from the current Revenue due to the overall favourable position principally the result of reduced Capital financing costs.

The report concluded that there were no significant areas of risk that members should be aware of, however, the budget was being constantly refined based on the trends of expenditure and income.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the report and the information on management action and risks that was contained therein; and
- (ii) to instruct that officers continue to review budget performance and report on service strategies as required to ensure a balanced budget.

PROGRESS WITH APPROVED SAVINGS FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE RANGER SERVICE AND HAZLEHEAD GOLF COURSE FOR 2009/20 - H&E/09/083

12. With reference to article 7 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on progress towards making the approved budget savings for 2009/10 in respect of the Ranger Service and the Hazlehead Golf Transfer.

The report advised that the current savings made for the Ranger Service stood at £85,695. This was £3,695 in excess of the required savings for 2009/10, which further to the decision taken at the previous meeting of this Committee would be used to help fund the unforeseen savings required for the Hazlehead Golf Course.

The report continued that the required savings for 2009/10 for the Hazlehead Golf Course were £268,000 and that to date a total of £168,000 had been identified,

£100,000 of which would be generated by the recently agreed contract for Roundabout Sponsorship and £68,000 from the continued vacancy for an Interim Lead Environment Manager. The report continued that a further £25,000 had been allocated from the cleansing budget, and that together with the savings generated by the Ranger Service and a staff vacancy within the current structure that would not be filled, this would amount to a further £40,000 savings.

The report concluded that the remaining saving of £35,000 would be achieved through continued careful weekly monitoring of the grounds maintenance and street sweeping labour costs.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the steps being taken to achieve the required savings;
- (ii) to note that the required savings for the Ranger Service had been achieved; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director for Housing and Environment to report back with a further progress report on achieving the savings for Hazlehead Golf Course at the next meeting of this Committee.

PROPERTIES REMOVED FROM CHARGE – H&E/09/102

13. With reference to article 11 of the minute of meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee of 26 August, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which requested authority to grant retrospective approval for properties that had been removed from charge.

Table 1 within the report advised that the following properties had been removed from charge, but remained off charge at this time and therefore required retrospective approval from the Committee:-

- 14b Grampian Road;
- 14d Grampian Road;
- 259 North Anderson Drive;
- 9b Tanfield Walk; and
- 14 Craighton Park.

Table 2 within the report advised that the following properties had been removed from charge, but that their remedial works had been completed and the charge reinstated:-

- 82f Beach Boulevard;
- 41a Esslemont Avenue;
- 283c George Street;
- 28b Hill Street;
- 65h Leadsid Road;
- 36e Richmond Street;
- 29f Roslin Street;
- 20b Summerfield Terrace;
- 1 Parkhill Court;
- 2 Parkhill Court;
- 3 Parkhill Court;
- 4 Parkhill Court;

- 5 Parkhill Court;
- 6 Parkhill Court;
- 7 Parkhill Court;
- 8 Parkhill Court;
- 9 Parkhill Court;
- 10 Parkhill Court;
- 11 Parkhill Court;
- 12 Parkhill Court;
- 13 Parkhill Court;
- 14 Parkhill Court;
- 15 Parkhill Court;
- 18 Parkhill Court;
- 19 Parkhill Court;
- 101a Menzies Road; and
- 101d Menzies Road.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the removal from charge of the properties detailed at table 1.
- (ii) to note the return to charge of the properties detailed at table 2.

HOUSING FOR VARYING NEEDS REVIEW – H&E/09/121

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which requested approval for officers to undertake a review of the current provision of Housing for Varying Needs in Council ownership.

By way of background the report advised that the intention of providing Housing for Varying Needs was that initially these homes may be occupied by mainstream homeseekers and home movers but due to their design would be capable of accommodating occupants with more particular needs at some future date without major adaptation. The report continued that Housing for Varying Needs was broken into three categories:- (1) dwellings in general to suit varying needs were the most basic standard and could include flats; (2) dwellings specifically for older and ambulant disabled people, which required a slightly higher standard of space and access; and (3) dwellings specifically for wheelchair users, which were the highest standard with the most rigorous design criteria.

The report advised that the Council's largest proportion of Housing for Varying Needs properties fell into the category "extra care housing" (previously known as sheltered and very sheltered housing) which described a model of housing where support and care was provided on site. This type of housing was in the main accessed through the Scheme of Allocation by older people, however, would also be suitable for people of a non pensionable age who had disabilities.

The report further advised that the forecast reduction in working age population presented the Council with a challenge and three main themes were emerging in a national and local policy context namely (1) shifting the balance of care agenda, moving further towards independent living for older people and developing services that would focus on prevention, such as the introduction of telecare; (2) creating more flexible services that provide older people with a greater choice; and (3)

developing integrated care at homecare response to meet the needs of older people.

The report continued that in order to meet the needs of older people within Aberdeen, and provide a safe secure environment for them, the Council had to ensure that the housing stock was “fit for purpose”, that there were the right type and number of properties in right areas, with appropriate care at home services where required.

The report concluded that the proposed review would take the form of a desktop analysis which would analyse demographic trends, the outcomes of the current workstreams, future development plans and other relevant material. The involvement of tenants currently within the Housing for Varying Needs properties would be ensured to enable the Council to take account of their views on existing provision. Links had been made with the Extra Care Housing Sub Group, and it was further proposed to involve members of the Older People’s Consultation and Monitoring Group in this regard.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to authorise officers to undertake a review of existing provision, in terms of quality and quantity, and prepare a Housing Need and Demand Analysis to identify the future requirements for the provision of extra care housing;
- (ii) to request officers to report back the outcome of the review for the planning and resource implications of the provision and support required to the meeting of 13 April, 2010; and
- (iii) to instruct that members be copied into any consultation letters being sent to tenants and residents.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Kevin Stewart declared an interest of the subject matter of the following paragraph by virtue of his position as advisor to the Middlefield Community Project; as advisor to the Healthy Hoose; as a resident of the Middlefield area; as Chairperson of NESTRANS; and as employee of the SNP Scottish Parliament office on Great Northern Road which would be affected by the proposals contained within the report.

Councillor Dunbar declared an interest by virtue of her role as advisor to the Middlefield Project and as a resident of the Middlefield area.

Councillor McDonald declared an interest as an employee of the SNP Scottish Parliament office on Great Northern Road which would be affected by the proposals contained within the report.

Finally, Councillor Yuill declared an interest as a substitute member of Nestrans.

None of the Councillors felt it necessary to withdraw from the meeting.

DELIVERING MIDDLEFIELD REGENERATION – HAUDAGAIN PHASE HOUSING RELETS – H&E/09/106

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which identified the initial actions required to successfully integrate the proposed Haudagain junction improvement with delivery of the Middlefield regeneration masterplan.

By way of background the report advised that Council had approved the Middlefield regeneration plan in 2007, and at this point the detailed financial appraisal and identification of the required delivery phases were under development with no individual community or street being prioritised. However the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Service were working with colleagues in Corporate Governance and Housing and Environment Services in delivering distinct new build homes “demonstration” projects in order to highlight the existing commitment to change, support for which was backed by local residents during the masterplan consultation period.

The report continued that the complimentary nature of the physical works outlined by the Haudagain Junction improvement, mirrored to a large extent both the approved Middlefield Masterplan and the initial neighbourhood framework produced as part of the City Regeneration Strategy approved in 2004. Middlefield, and more specifically the Logie area, continued to be Aberdeen’s most deprived community based on Deprivation Index figures published by the Scottish Government. It was not thought that any similar opportunity existed within other priority neighbourhoods on the indicative timescales of Haudagain junction development (which was subject to Ministerial approval) of three to four years.

The report detailed the indicative road programmed, which had not yet been confirmed by Transport Scotland.

The report indicated that it considered that should Ministerial approval be given to proceed with the proposed Haudagain junction improvement, that the following policy areas would require attention to facilitate local regeneration objectives in parallel with the road programme:-

- (1) Ceasing Rellets;
- (2) Tenants Decants;
- (3) Allocations Policy;
- (4) Council Housing – New Build; and
- (5) Planning Use – Local Development Plan.

Appended to the report were (1) a proposal map; (2) a financial statement outlining the impact on the Housing Account; and (3) a communications plan.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) subject to and immediately upon the Transport Minister’s approval of the Option 5 Haudagain proposal, approve this Regeneration Business Case and thus, the removal from charge of all Council Housing impacted (circa 276 units) by the proposed new link road at the Haudagain junction and cessation of relets of same, following tenancy terminations during the project delivery period;

- (b) approve the retention (on charge) of up to 30 'contingency' properties from the available voids created by the above recommendation as a short term measure for the provision of temporary Homelessness accommodation options;
- (c) subject to the Transport Minister's approval of the Option 5 proposal, instruct officers to include the estimated eight owners potentially impacted by the scheme proposals in the communication strategy going forward as part of the ongoing commitment to community engagement; and
- (d) press the Scottish Government for further detail regarding Government commitment to the issues relating to Council Housing loss and project finance should the roads scheme proceed, and to recognise the constructive way in which officers of the Council have integrated infrastructure, economic and regeneration outcomes.

Further to discussion, the Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener moved:-
that the recommendations be approved; and to suggest that the Scottish Government fully fund replacement facilities for the Middlefield Community Project, Middlefield Youth Project, Pathways and the Healthy Hoose.

Councillor Hunter, seconded by Councillor Young moved as an amendment:-
that this Committee takes no action until the Scottish Government agrees to fully fund a replacement of the 276 properties which would be affected by these proposals; and to suggest that the Scottish Government fully fund replacement facilities for the Middlefield Community Project, Middlefield Youth Project, Pathways and the Healthy Hoose.

On a division there voted:- for the motion (10) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillor Corral, Dunbar, Fletcher, Milne, Noble, Robertson, Kevin Stewart and Yuill; for the amendment (4) – Councillor Collie, Cooney, Hunter and Young.

The Committee resolved:-
to adopt the successful motion.

UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL NEW BUILD PROGRAMME

16. With reference to article 27 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update of the key technical elements of the delivery programme and the tender process to date for the development of the three new build Council housing sites at Rory Hall, Byron Park and Hayton Road.

The report advised that design briefs for the three sites were complete and that each site would be tendered separately, following the process set out in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) regulations. The report continued that the prequalification period had ended in July, and that eight contractors had been shortlisted as a result of this process, and had been issued with an invitation to tender on 9 October, 2009. Tenders were due to be returned on 8 December, 2009, and this would be followed by a tender evaluation and interview process for all qualifying contractors. The awarded contractors would start on the site in March 2010.

The report continued that each site had followed a rigorous programme of works to date from site assembly to formal design layout. The programme plan for the sites was appended to the report as appendix 1; and appendix 2 provided details of the three sites and the design layouts.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the update and ratify the completed actions to date regarding the progress of the new build Council housing sites at Rorie Hall, Byron Park and Hayton Road;
- (ii) to convene an additional meeting of this Committee on 20 January, 2010 at 2pm to evaluate and select from the tenders received; and
- (iii) to instruct officers to report back at this meeting on the outcome of the tender process.

APPEALS ON HMO LICENCE FOR 165 CROWN STREET – TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION UNIT

17. With reference to article 4 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided information on the process for the appeal to the Sheriff Court in relation to the Licensing Committee refusing the application for renewal of a licence to operate a Housing in Multiple Occupation at the Council's temporary accommodation unit at 165 Crown Street.

By way of background the report advised that annually, the Crown Street premises would accommodate up to 200 people, who stayed for an average of 33 days and consequently the decision to refuse, unless reversed, would have major implications for the Council's ability to deliver its duty to provide temporary accommodation to statutory homeless persons. The report further advised that the Council had appealed to the Sheriff against this refusal by way of summary application in terms of paragraph 18 of schedule 1 to the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

The report advised of estimated legal costs, and the estimated timescale of the legal action.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the content of the report.

CHANGE OF NAME OF THE "LABORATORY OF THE PUBLIC ANALYST" – H&E/09/101

18. With reference to article 25 of the minute of the meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee of 6 October, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which requested a change of name for the Council's "Laboratory of Public Analyst" service to "Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory" so as to ease the marketing of the service to the private sector.

By way of background the report explained that the role of Public Analyst Laboratories (PAL) throughout the UK had changed in recent times and advised that the excellence in expertise and practice utilised by PAL's had resulted in the service being in high demand by the private sector as a source of information and advice as well as a potential contracted scientific service. PAL's who had embraced this policy by offering their services beyond the scope of their traditional roles had benefited in a number of ways namely:- by advancing their knowledge base, skill set and technical expertise, as well as secondary revenue stream from the private sector, all whilst continuing to serve their core public interest clients.

With regards the future of the laboratory of the Public Analyst for the Council, members were reminded that as part of the recent option appraisal of the Public Analyst, conducted in March 2009, it was identified that the Service, should take a more active approach in making the transition from the traditional PAL service to one of that described above. Efforts had already been made in this regard to identify operational and organisational requirements to facilitate the transition. To assist in this transition and to make the service more appealing to the private sector it was important to change that sectors traditional perception of the service. To address this issue many PAL's, had adopted a naming structure of a place name followed by the suffix "Scientific Services". It was therefore recommended that the Public Analyst service for Aberdeen be identified as "Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory".

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that the name "Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory" be adopted with immediate effect as an alternative to the current " Laboratory of the Public Analyst"; and
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to work with colleagues in Corporate Communications, to ensure that all Council Services, existing clients and the public at large was made aware of the new name for the service.

REPLACEMENT CREMATORS – PROGRESS REPORT – H&E/09/094

19. With reference to article 20 of the minute of the meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee of 6 October, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which provided an update on progress with regard to the replacement of the cremators at Hazlehead Crematorium.

By way of background the report advised that this project was being undertaken to replace outdated, worn and unreliable cremators which were costing increasingly high amounts to maintain, year on year. The unreliability of the cremators and their operating and monitoring equipment had caused undue stress to bereaved families and the staff at the Crematorium, and had also as well as put the Council at risk of contravening environmental protection legislation on a regular basis. The new system would have appropriate backup systems as well as being reliable and more energy efficient.

The report reminded members that the work at the Crematorium had started on schedule and that a full briefing on all aspects of the works had been provided to Funeral Directors well in advance of the commencement of works. To date no

complaints had been received and this was a testament of the successful process followed and the excellent job undertaken by staff at the crematorium during considerable upheaval.

To date, the following progress with the implementation of the new system had been made, namely:-

- the contractor's site establishment was complete;
- all topsoil had been removed and stored for reinstatement works at the conclusion of the contract;
- foundations had been laid and steel work commenced on 14 September, 2009;
- the steel frame to the main extension was complete and the works to complete the foundations and preparations for pouring the concrete floor were progressing; and
- works to the link area had been delayed for a short period whilst awaiting relocation of electric cables and removal of a redundant LPG gas pipe however, these activities were not on the critical path and were completed by 10 October.

Overall, at present the programme of works was on schedule.

With regard to finance for the project, it was advised that at present the actual spend against the current financial year was £178,227, or 9% of the projected total figure. The report continued that this would not be a linear spend throughout the rest of the financial year, but would increase as the work progressed. The anticipated spend for 2009/2010 on the project was still on target to be £1.9 million.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the progress made to date on replacing the out of date and unreliable cremators at Hazlehead Crematorium ;
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to report back on progress with the replacement programme to the housing and Environment Committee at its meeting on 11 January, 2010; and
- (iii) to commend the crematorium staff for the continuation of a professional service to the public throughout the considerable upheaval.

BRITAIN IN BLOOM (FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR 2010/2011) – H&E/09/096

20. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which advised of Aberdeen's involvement in Britain in Bloom 2010 and the potential involvement in International Communities in Bloom 2010; and of the levels of the funding required to enable the city to meet the full demands and expectations of entering such events.

The report provided an overview of the aims of the In Bloom initiatives, as well as the overall benefits which were attributed to the initiative. The report reminded members that in 2009 Aberdeen did extremely well in both the Beautiful Scotland and International Communities in Bloom Awards, gaining awards and recognition at both city and neighbourhood community levels. In particular, it was highlighted that

the city's resounding success in the Beautiful Scotland Awards had resulted in the city being chosen by the Royal Horticultural Society to represent Scotland in the 2010 Britain in Bloom Campaign.

With regards the financial implications, it was advised that the 2009/2010 revenue budget allocation for In Bloom projects and initiatives was £100,000. To date, the cost of the 2009 In Bloom Campaign was approximately £20,000. This had allowed for the remaining budget, of approximately £80,000, to set against service savings, and also to progress outstanding In Bloom projects; these projects would form the basis of the city's 2010 campaign. In terms of the 2010/2011 In Bloom budget, it was anticipated that £100,000 would be allocated to spent on presenting Aberdeen at its best in order to participate in the prestigious Britain in Bloom and International Communities in Bloom competitions.

Finally, the report explained that the current In Bloom Working Group held regular meetings throughout the year to plan and promote the campaign as well as establishing funding and 'in kind' support. Details of the current membership and meeting arrangements for the Working Group were detailed.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the financial implications outlined in the report;
- (ii) to formalise the In Bloom Working Group, with the following composition, 1+1+1+1 (one elected member from each political party), and that the membership be Councillors Cormie (SNP), Clark (Liberal Democrats), Hunter (Labour) and Milne (Conservative); and
- (iii) that the remit for the Group be "to act as an advisory group; and to plan and promote the 'In Bloom' campaigns".

REVIEW OF PUBLIC TOILETS – PROGRESS REPORT – H&E/09/098

21. With reference to article 24 of the minute of the meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee of 6 October, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which provided an update on the progress of the full public toilet review which would report on the long term plans for Aberdeen's public toilet.

The report advised that the Public Toilet Review had been delayed and that Environmental Services had apologised to the Committee for being unable to provide a final report at this point. However, members were assured that work on the review had started and would continue through 2010, culminating in a final report to the Housing and Environment Committee at its meeting on 24 August 2010, which would be in good time to inform the 2010/2012 budget preparation process.

The report advised that the review would be undertaken in two phases, the first of which had already been completed. The first phase had begun in 2007 and included refurbishment work on the toilets at Footdee, Upperkirkgate, Spa Street and Chapel Street (completed in the summer of 2008) as well as the installation of new Automatic Public Convenience (APC) units for parks had been sited at Duthie Park, Victoria Park and Seaton Park (completed by the end of March 2008).

With regards phase 2, it was advised that this phase had commenced in September, 2009, and would report on the long term strategy for Aberdeen's public toilets. It would look in detail at the following aspects:-

- (1) Current facilities that were not well used and the possible alternatives;
- (2) Recently closed facilities and the impact on the communities involved;
- (3) City Centre, night time provision required by Aberdeen;
- (4) Long term strategy of providing public toilets, linking to long term plans and proposals for public toilet facilities in parks, libraries and other public buildings; and
- (5) Funding required for the necessary menu of improvements to public toilet facilities required for Aberdeen.

In terms of finance, it was advised that further budgetary implications and potential capital investment would not be known until the long term public toilet review had been completed. The outcome of the review would set out the capital and revenue consequences on future years' budgets and would be submitted for the Committee's consideration at a future date. Consideration would also have to be made as to where the outcome of the review would sit as a priority and how many additional costs resulting from the review would be met. There was no direct financial implication on the 2010 / 2011 budget. At present an underspend on the 2009/2010 revenue budget for public toilets was anticipated. Following completion of phase 1, a total of £87,000 remained against capital monies to be spent on public toilets; this money had been earmarked for a new facility on Torry.

Further to considering the report, the Committee emphasised its concern that the review was long awaited; highlighted that this matter had huge revenue and capital implications for the Service budgets; and agreed that this matter needed to be addressed prior to the Committee's meeting on 24 August, 2010.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the details of the budgetary implications; and
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to report back with a final report on the Public Toilet Review to the Housing and Environment Committee at its meeting on 25 May, 2010.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAND AUDIT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LAMS) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR GROUNDS MAINTENANCE – H&E/09/097

22. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update of progress in the implementation of the Land Audit Management System (LAMS) Performance Management System for grounds maintenance.

By way of background the report advised that members of the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) had recognised that there was a lack of formal monitoring systems from a Government and Local Authority perspective for grounds maintenance activities, and therefore were pursuing the adoption of the LAMS. LAMS would ensure contract management information was formatted and delivered in a manner that was seen as innovative and responsive to the needs and

requirements of Local Authorities and Government. Details of other monitoring systems used by the service were outlined.

The report explained that LAMS was designed to introduce a similar type of monitoring system to grounds maintenance service provision to the methodology that was used for other street cleanliness PAC (percentage of streets achieving cleanliness) and the Local Environmental Audit and Monitoring System (LEAMS). Adoption of the same methodology within this contract would provide a targeted approach to service provision as well as providing best value relating to contact management information. A sample of the LAMS methodology was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

Finally, with regards to the Implementation of LAMS, it was advised that the system was still being developed and that Environmental Services staff were currently trialing the methodology and training staff. The target was to have LAMS operational and being reported one of the service's key performance indicators before the end of the year. Details on the trial run of LAMS would be reported back to the next meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee.

The Director advised that Keep Scotland Beautiful had released its benchmarking report, and that Aberdeen had recorded a 76. This was the highest score ever achieved by the city.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the progress made to date on the implementation of LAMS;
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to report back with a further progress report to the Housing and Environment Committee at its meeting on 11 January, 2010;
- (iii) to request officers to provide further details of the financial implications on the implementation of LAMS in comparison with the operating costs of the current system; and
- (iv) to congratulate staff on the Keep Scotland Beautiful score achieved.

DRAFT ABERDEEN CITY WASTE STRATEGY 2010-2025 – EPI/09/029

23. With reference to article 15 of the minute of the meeting of the former Policy and Strategy Committee of 2 December, 2008, the Committee had before it a report by the Director Housing and Environment, which sought approval for the release of the Draft Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2010-2025 for public consultation.

The report advised that Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2010-2025 provided a statement of the key outcome for all waste management in the city for the next 15 years and provided a framework for the development of the next generation of waste infrastructure services. It was highlighted that in the last decade Aberdeen had made significant strides in managing waste more sustainably, especially in the areas of municipal, construction and demolition waste however, despite the progress to date, much remained to be achieved in this area. Details of the development of the strategy, and the key themes, targets and delivery objectives identified within the strategy were outlined. An overview of the consultation process to be undertaken following approval of the draft waste strategy was set out wherein it was advised that the consultation would close on 25 February, 2010, and that

thereafter the draft would be amended prior to being submitted to the appropriate Committees for approval and adoption. The draft Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2010-2025 was appended to the report.

In terms of financial implications, it was advised that waste management costs had significantly increased in recent years due to the introduction of additional recycling collection services and landfill tax payments increasing annually. Future costs would increase with the landfill tax for the Council set to increase from the £3.4 million in 2007/8 to approximately £7.2 million in 2013/14, unless changes were made. The strategy proposed new facilities, which would require major capital investment through the existing Waste Management Services Contract, the expected capital cost and funding mechanisms were detailed. The funding mechanisms adopted would be determined following the adoption of the strategy. In terms of revenue impact from implementation of the strategy, it was advised that it was difficult to assess this impact across the life of the strategy, however, it was clear from the cost of increase in landfill tax that alternative treatment methods for residual waste and organic waste would become cost comparable within 2-3 years and less expensive thereafter. Furthermore, the reduction in recycling collection costs followed the introduction of commingled collections which would close the current gap between recycling cost and landfill and result in cost savings in the medium term.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that the draft Aberdeen City Waste Strategy (attached as appendix 1 to the report) be released for public consultation; and
- (ii) that the results of the consultation process be incorporated into the final draft strategy which was to be submitted to the Housing and Environment Committee for approval and the Corporate Policy Performance Committee for adoption.

RESPONSE TO SCOTLAND'S ZERO WASTE PLAN – CONSULTATION – EPI/09/060

24. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented the proposed Council response to the Scottish Government's consultation exercise on the draft national waste management plan 'Scotland's Zero Waste Plan'.

The proposed draft response to the consultation, which was based upon twenty two questions relating to the content of the Plan, was attached as an appendix to the report. The deadline for consultation formally closed on 13 November, 2009, however, Scottish Government officials had indicated that late responses would be accepted, up to 27 November, 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

that the proposed response (attached as appendix 1 to the report) be submitted to the Scottish Government.

BIRD PROOFING/GULLS IN THE CITY CENTRE - H&E/09/047

25. With reference to (1) article 12 of the minute of the meeting of the former Area Committee North of 18 November, 2008; (2) article 13 of the minute of the meeting of the former Area Committee Central of 19 November, 2008; and (3) article 12 of the minute of the meeting of the former Area Committee South of 20 November, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which provided (a) an update on the progress of bird control in the city and the herring gull action plan, following the herring gull nesting and fledgling season of 2009; and (b) a detailed account of the nature of complaints received following the herring gull nesting and fledgling season 2009.

The report provided an overview of bird control/proofing measures undertaken within the city during the nesting season of 2009. Appended to the report were:- (1) a list of the 2009/2010 programme of nest and egg removal from all public buildings; (2) a list of the 2009/2010 programme of nest and egg removal and netting of balcony areas from residential Council properties; (3) the number of gull related complaints received since 1994; (4) details of the complaints broken down by category from January to September, 2009; and (5) the Nuisance Bird Action Plan.

The report advised that the most recent herring gull census was undertaken in 1998 - 2002 by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) had counted 3,350 breeding pairs of herring gulls in Aberdeen city. The next census was scheduled to take place in 2015 – 2018, and until this further census was carried out it would be difficult to determine whether the Herring Gull population in Aberdeen was declining or increasing

The report provided an overview of the aims of the Aberdeen Airport Working Group and advised that Working Group had agreed to undertake a six month study commencing January, 2009, to identify the over-riding factors that were sustaining the population of urban gulls in the Aberdeen area. Evaluation of these factors could be used to provide a baseline from which efforts to reduce the overall problems associated with birds throughout the region could be targeted. The preliminary study would be published in January, 2010.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to continue to progress bird control measures on the Council's residential and public buildings that had been identified as being affected by nuisance birds;
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to provide an update regarding the outcome of the bird control measures undertaken citywide following the herring gull nesting season 2010; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to report on the findings of the Aberdeen Airport Gull Action Group Study 2009 once it had been completed and the details documented; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the contents of the report

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

During consideration of the following item Councillors Noble and Robertson declared interests by virtue of being the Council's representatives on Aberdeen Heat and Power. Also, Councillor Kevin Stewart declared an interest as Chair of Nestrans, and Councillor Yuill as a substitute Board member of Nestrans. Finally, Councillor Fletcher declared an interest by virtue of his position as Vice President of COSLA. None of the Councillors felt it necessary to withdraw from the meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009 – EPI/09/040

26. With reference to article 19 of the minute of the meeting of the former Policy and Strategy Committee of 28 October 1999, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which presented the annual update report on the implementation of the Council's Environmental Strategy; and sought approval for the updated Environmental Services Action Plan for 2009/2010 and the Environment Management Policy Statement.

The report advised that the annual report outlined the significant progress made and the high impact initiatives undertaken and challenges faced during the period October, 2008 to September, 2009, in implementing the Environment Strategy and in response to the 2008/2009 Action Plan. The eight priority areas covered by the strategy were detailed.

Appended to the Environmental Strategy was (1) the Environmental Services Action Plan for 2009/2010; and (2) the Environment Management Policy Statement.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note and endorse the progress made on the Environmental Strategy during the period of October 2008 to September 2009;
- (ii) to approve the 2009/2010 Environmental Strategy Action Plan, (attached as appendix 1 to the strategy), and to request that progress on the Action Plan be reported to the relevant Committee; and
- (iii) to approve the revised Environment Management Policy Statement, (attached at appendix 2 to the strategy), and to authorise the Chief Executive to sign it.

RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP UPDATE – H&E/09/84

27. With reference to article 23 of the minute of the meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee of 6 October, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which provided an update on the progress of the work which was undertaken by the Dog Wardens and Environmental Health staff in respect of responsible dog ownership.

The report provided members with background and information about the various activities, both in enforcement and education terms that were undertaken by the

Dog Warden Service working with Environmental Health staff and partner organisations.

Appended to the report were:- (1) stray dog statistics for the period 2004 to 2008; (2) dog warden patrol statistics for the period 2004 to 2008; (3) the number of dog fouling fixed penalty notices issued since 2004; (4) the number of dog related complaints received since 2004; (5) the number of dogs microchipped since 1992; and (6) the number of dog warden dog talks to Primary 5 school children across the city.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to provide an annual update report on responsible dog ownership to the Housing and Environment Committee; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP – ELECTED MEMBER REPRESENTATION – EPI/09/044

28. With reference to article 13 of the minute of the meeting of the former Policy and Strategy Committee of 7 October, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure, which requested that the Housing and Environment Committee nominate one elected member to provide Council representation on the new officer facilitated Allotment Working Group.

The report advised that on approval of the Allotment Management Policy, the former Policy and Strategy Committee also agreed to instruct officers to coordinate development of the longer term management proposals. This aspect included objective 1 of the policy which stated “that the Council would establish an Allotments Working Group to direct and ensure delivery on the policy”.

In terms of the Working Group, the report advised that officers would hold an inaugural meeting in early 2010, to discuss the exact workings of the Group. Thereafter, it was envisaged that the Working Group would meet quarterly, and that membership would include an Elected Member, Council operational and strategic officers, representatives of allotment user groups, i.e. Associations, and other stakeholder bodies, for example the Scottish Allotment and Garden Society. The Group would be administered by Environmental Services.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that the Vice Convener, Councillor Mark McDonald sit as the elected member on the Allotment Working Group; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information contained in the report.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50 (B) (4) (b) of the Capital Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the following item of business be considered as a matter of urgency (a) as

the report was requested to be submitted to the November, 2009, meeting of the Committee following the Housing and Environment budget scrutiny meeting on 4 November; and (b) to enable the Committee to consider the subject matter which had financial implications for both 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

TRADE WASTE CHARGING MECHANISMS

29. With reference to article 28 of the minute of the meeting of the former Resources Management Committee of 4 December, 2007, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which proposed a set of increases in the charges for the collection of residual commercial waste through to the end of March 2013. The initial increase was to be introduced from 1 January, 2010, with two further increases being levied from 1 July, 2010, and 1 April, 2011 until 2013.

By way of background the report advised that in 2007 the former Resources Management Committee agreed to increase charges, due to the Council having to accommodate over-inflationary increases in Landfill Tax charges and potential penalties through the Scottish Government Landfill Allowance Scheme (LAS). The current charging escalator was set out in table 1 of appendix 1.

The report provided a detailed overview of the recent changes experienced by the service (which could not have been foreseen in 2007), which had led to the requirement to replace the current charges levied with the revised set. The two main changes were Equal Pay and Modernisation (EP&M) and commercial recycling. Details of the additional costs experienced by the service as a result of EP&M were outlined, and it was advised that increased charges were required to assist the service in recovering the additional costs incurred. The proposed new charging escalator was:-

Size of Bin (litres)	Present Charges	Charges From 1 January 2010	Charges From 1 July 2010	Charges From 1 April 2011
120	£2.50	£2.58	£2.70	£2.82
240	£3.75	£3.83	£4.02	£4.21
330	£4.65	£4.74	£4.98	£5.22
400	£5.39	£5.48	£5.76	£6.04
660	£8.70	£8.85	£9.29	£9.75
750	£9.90	£10.03	£10.54	£11.07
940	£11.78	£11.92	£12.54	£13.17
1100	£13.45	£13.60	£14.31	£15.03
1280	£15.26	£15.43	£16.23	£17.05

In terms of commercial recycling, it proposed that the charges for the recycling of waste paper/card and glass be frozen for the financial year 2010/2011, to encourage more customers to take the required steps to have their waste collected for recycling. The current charges for recycling were set out in table 3 of appendix 1.

With regards the proposed new charging escalator, it was advised that the new charges would continue until the end of the financial year 2011/2012, to coincide with the closure of the Hill of Tramaud landfill site in the summer of 2011. On closure of this site there was a possibility that the gate fee per tonne of waste handled by SITA, the Council's waste disposal contractor, could rise. This would have to be reflected in the charges made to the Council's commercial waste customers.

Finally, in terms of financial implications, it was highlighted that the increased charges could result in customers sourcing an alternative service provider, and ultimately leading to a loss of income for the service. To reduce this potential impact, it was proposed that the increase in charges for 2010 be introduced on 1 January and 1 July 2010. It was believed that this would be more acceptable to the Council's customers than two price increases within a three month period if increased in April, 2010. A further charge would be levied from 1 April, 2010 which would remain to the end of the financial year 2013.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to recommend that the Finance and Resources Committee apply the charges set out in the table above;
- (ii) to recommend that the Finance and Resources Committee agree to freeze the current charge for recycling collections for the financial year 2010/2011, with a review not considered until the financial year 2011/2012, to encourage businesses to recycle more of their waste;
- (iii) to request officers to benchmark the charges for the collection of residual commercial waste with other local authorities and report back to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (iv) to refer the report to the Finance and Resources Committee for its consideration.

UPDATE REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE "GROWING OUR OWN" PILOT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS AND TRADING STANDARDS OFFICERS

30. With reference to article 6 of the minute of the meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee of 6 October, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment Committee, which provided an update on the three year pilot "Growing Our Own" project adopted to address the recruitment and retention difficulties with Environmental Health Officers (EHO) and Trading Standards Officers (TSO) within the Service.

By way of background the report provided a detailed description of the retention and recruitment difficulties experienced by the two services. The main reason for the difficulties was a national shortage of professional staff, exacerbated by an ageing population of professionals and a reduction in the number of people in these professions. An overview of the project and its aims was provided wherein it was advised that the intention of the project was to offer Environmental Health Authorised Officers the opportunity to convert to Environmental Health Officers via one or two routes, and to offer Trading Standards Authorised Officers the opportunity to convert to Trading Standard Officers via the DCATS modular

training. The benefits and risks of the initiative were highlighted, as were the outcomes achieved to date.

In terms of finance, it was advised that the initiative would be funded through the existing training budgets and if this was insufficient, money would be vired from vacant posts in the staffing budget of the service. Trainees would also be supported by providing them with a laptop pc and a home broadband connection to the Council's network to assist them in their studies. Details of the costs of these aspects were outlined.

Appended to the report were:- (1) a table outlining the costs of the conversion of an Authorised Officer to and EHO over a five year period; (2) two charts detailing the changes in staffing levels in commercial premises (Environmental Health); and (3) the equalities and human rights impact assessment undertaken for this matter.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree that the Service should continue the 'Grow Your Own' project for a further two years by:- (a) commencing EHO training for a member of staff in the 2010/2011 financial year and another in 2011/2012; and (b) commencing TSO training for a member of staff once the Service was deemed to have the capacity for additional training;
- (ii) that a further review and report on the progress of the initiative be made to the Housing and Environment Committee during the budget setting process for the 2012/2013 financial year; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the progress to date.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the following paragraphs of Schedule 7(A) to the Act:- article 31 (paragraph 2); article 32 (paragraphs 6, 8 and 10); article 33 (paragraphs 6, 8 and 10); article 34 (paragraph 6); and article 35 (paragraph 1).

REVIEW OF LETTINGS TO OTHER COUNCIL SERVICES AND AGENCIES

31. With reference to article 20 of the minute of the meeting of the Housing and Environment Committee of 26 August, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which provided further information on lettings to three external organisations, as requested by the Committee.

The report advised of the current activities of the Council lettings to Tullos Training, the Middlefield project and the Printfield Tenants Association.

The Committee resolved:-

that the current letting arrangements, to the three organisations detailed above, be continued, and to instruct officers to monitor and review these arrangements on a regular basis.

STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) 2009 – H&E/09/056

32. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which informed of the Council's submission to the Scottish Government for the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2009.

By way of background the report advised that completion of the SHIP was a statutory requirement by the Scottish Government on all local authorities. The SHIP would provide an indication of the possible future affordable housing provision in the city, and would include proposed housing developments by the Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) covering the period 2010 to 2015. The Scottish Government had issued guidance on preparing SHIP in August 2009. Since that date, the Council had consulted extensively with RSLs in preparing the SHIP. The SHIP, and would be submitted to the Scottish Government by the 30 November 2009.

The report explained that the documentation had to be submitted to the Scottish Government in two sections, namely:- the contextual background and completion of the Scottish Government's templates (both documents were attached as appendices to the report). Details of the process undertaken to complete the documentation were provided, and the outputs from the SHIP were detailed.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the contents of this report and to approve the Council's SHIP 2009 to be submitted to the Scottish Government as a planning document.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Convener intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50 (B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the following item of business be considered as a matter of urgency (a) as the tendering process did not provide a suitable outcome and thus required a change of reporting from what was agreed at the outset of the tender process; and (b) to enable the Committee to consider the outcome of the tender process and make a decision on the future of the Aberdeen Care and Repair service for 2010/2011.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Prior to consideration of the following item the Convener declared an interest in the following article by virtue of being the Council's representatives on the Board of Care and Repair Initiative Scotland.

The Convener left the meeting prior to the Committee's consideration of the matter.

At this juncture the Vice Convener took the Chair for the following item of business only.

PROVISION OF A CARE AND REPAIR SERVICE

33. With reference to article 49 of the minute of the meeting of the former Resources Management Committee of 16 June, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which advised of the outcome of the recent tendering exercise for the future provision of a care and repair service within the city; and sought approval for a reduction in the scope of the service in the financial year 2010/2011 with a view to developing alternative service delivery options by 1 April, 2011, as well approval to proceed with securing the service for the financial year 2010/2011 by extending the existing Service Level Agreement with the current provider with a reduced service.

The report provided an overview of the service and highlighted that other than separating Aberdeen Affordable Warmth from the Care and Repair Service no other significant changes to the specification of Care and Repair had been made in this tender exercise. It was advised that only one tender return had been received, and that despite the exclusion of the Aberdeen Affordable Warmth project, the submission received was at a significantly higher price than the current service. Details of the submission received were outlined. In light of this position, the following options for the future provision of the care and repair service were now available to the Council, namely:-

- (a) Re-tender for the Service immediately with no changes to the specification.
- (b) Re-draft the specification and re-tender a reduced service.
- (c) State the maximum value of the contract and seek submissions which detail which services potential bidders could deliver and to what volume.
- (d) Stop the existing service at the end of the current SLA (31 March 2010) and then re-tender at a later date.
- (e) Continue the Service by extending the current SLA for a further year with a view to ceasing the Service as of 1 April 2011.

The impact on the service and the Council, as well as the advantages and disadvantages, of each of the above options were outlined in the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) not to award a contract following the recent procurement exercise on the basis that no acceptable tender was received;
- (ii) to approve the extension of the existing Service Level Agreement with Castlehill Housing Association for a one year period from 1 April 2010 until 31 March 2011 with a reduced service;
- (iii) to approve the reduction of the Service within the next financial year 2010/2011 with a view to the Service ceasing in its current format as of 1 April 2011;
- (iv) to instruct officers to continue to assess the various options for the future delivery of a Care and Repair Service, in conjunction with colleagues from the Central Procurement Unit and the City Solicitor; and

- (v) to instruct officers to provide a further update on the cost to provide the reduced service for the financial year 2010/11 to the Housing and Environment Committee at its meeting on 11 January 2010.

PROGRESS IN FINDING SAVINGS PROJECTED FOR THE CESSATION OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE OF THE AUCHMILL GOLF COURSE IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2009/2010

34. With reference to article 25 of the minute of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee of 17 September, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which provided information on current progress with correcting the deficit against projected savings on grounds maintenance of the Auchmill Golf Course in the current financial year.

The report provided a detailed background wherein it outlined all previous Committee decisions in relation to this matter, and advised that the transfer of the licence to occupy and maintain the Auchmill Golf Course by the Management Committee of Auchmill Golf Club, had not taken place until 1 September, 2009, five months later than the anticipated. As a consequence, the savings projected to be made from the start of April 2009 to the end of August 2009 had not been realised. The reasons for the delay were outlined in the report.

With regards identifying alternative savings to make up for the deficit, the report advised that significant efficiencies had been generated as a result of reorganising the way in which the Service operated the "In Bloom" work and proposed to set £30,000 from that fund against the saving, leaving a total of £36,000 to find in the rest of the financial year. In terms of the remaining savings required, it was anticipated that the Service would have to make the saving balance from continued carefully weekly monitoring of labour, fuel and other resource costs. It was expected that his area of cost would be within budget before the end of the financial year and would be able to meet the remaining £36,000 grounds maintenance costs.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the progress being made to cover the deficit against projected savings for the current financial year;
- (ii) to approve the steps being taken to achieve that deficit;
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to report back with a further update on progress to the Housing and Environment Committee at its meeting on 11 January, 2010; and
- (iv) to request officers to provide a detailed breakdown of the central costs incurred in grounds maintenance of Auchmill Golf Course between 1 April and 31 August, 2009, to each of the Group Leaders.

PROPOSAL TO DISESTABLISH A VACANT PERMANENT SUPPORT ASSISTANT POST, AND TO CONVERT AN EXISTING FIXED TERM POST TO PERMANENT; RENT MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE; AND POST WITHIN THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE TEAM

35. With reference to article 1 of this minute, the Committee had before it three business cases by the Director of Housing and Environment which requested

approval (1) to disestablish a vacant permanent post and to convert the existing fixed term post to permanent; (2) for the Rent Management team be restructured by creating five fixed term positions and redesigning three positions within the team, to improve and maximise the rent collection performance; and (3) for an additional post within the supporting people team, and that a job title be amended also within this team.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to defer all of the business cases until after the budget process; and
- (ii) to request that officers amend the business case template for all Committees to include the table which was previously used to detail cost of the post, where this was to be funded from, and the additional costs or savings that were to be achieved by creation or extension of the post.

- COUNCILLOR AILEEN MALONE, Convener.