

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 16 February, 2010. - minute of meeting of the HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Malone, Convener; Councillor McDonald, Vice Convener; and Councillors Clark (from article 26), Collie, Cooney, Corall, Donnelly (substitute for Councillor Milne), Dunbar, Fletcher, Graham (substitute for Councillor Young), Hunter, Noble, Robertson, Kevin Stewart and Yuill.

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. The Convener requested that item 9.3 of the agenda (Contractual Arrangements with Aberdeen Cyrenians Ltd) be taken in public on this day, due to the information contained within the report already being within the public domain.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree to consider item 9.3 of the agenda (Contractual Arrangements with Aberdeen Cyrenians Ltd) in public, at an appropriate point in the meeting; and
- (ii) 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 (paragraphs 8 and 10); and article 32 (paragraph 8 and 10).

WELCOME

2. The Convener welcomed Nicola Hendry, Jennifer Yeats and David Gardiner, who were post graduate diploma students at Aberdeen University studying Public Administration, and were attending the meeting as part of their course work.

MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

3. At this juncture the Head of Environmental Services advised the Committee that two members of staff had recently passed away, Robert Johnston who had been an Environmental Driver, and Susan Forsyth who had been an Investigations Officer. Mr Steed continued that both Mr Johnston and Ms Forsyth had been highly dedicated members of staff, and would be greatly missed by their colleagues. The Convener intimated that her thoughts were with the families of Mr Johnstone and Ms Forsyth at this sad time, and requested that Mr Steed pass on the Committee's sentiments to both families.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 11 January, 2010.

In relation to article 18 of the minute, it was noted that Council had requested at its meeting of 10 February, 2010 (article 8 of the minute refers) that two amendments be made to this article, namely:- (1) that on page 16, the Committee enquiry relating to Victoria House be amended to Culter House; and (2) that Councillor Robertson's amendment state Aberdon House not Aberdon Court.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record subject to the above amendments.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT

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

The Head of Housing Management provided an update with regard to item 27 of the list (HRA Tied Tenancies) wherein he advised that four cases had been considered by the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee to date, and two cases were still to be submitted to the Sub Committee for consideration. Mr Stirrat further advised that a full report on this matter would be submitted at the next meeting.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to remove items 1 (Deferment of Housing Applications) and 24 (Properties Off Charge);
- (ii) to remove items 8 (Croft House Care Home – Future Use) and 9 (Aberdon Care Home – Future Use) should the Committee approve the recommendations contained within the reports which were to be considered at a later point in the agenda;
- (iii) to note that a report would be submitted at its next meeting of 13 April, 2010 on items 2 (Property Management – Mixed Tenure), 3 (Control of Commercial Waste Storage), 6 (Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2009 - 12), 10 (Achieving Our Potential – Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Aberdeen City), 11 (Bulk Items Uplift from HRA Properties), 12 (Initiatives Adopted to Improve Rent Collection), 14 (Shared Services Agenda – Trading Standards), 15 (Implementation of the Approved Recommendations of the Best Value Options Appraisal of the Public Analyst Service), 16 (Housing for Varying Needs), 20 (Housing Capital Programme – Review of Outcomes - Shower Cubicles), and 30 (St Fitticks Farmhouse Site – Torry);
- (iv) in relation to item 27 (HRA Tied Tenancies), to note (1) the update provided by the Head of Housing Management; and (2) that a report would be submitted at its next meeting of 13 April, 2010 on this item;
- (v) to note that a report would be submitted at its meeting of 25 May, 2010 on item 28 (Garden Maintenance Scheme);
- (vi) in relation to item 29 (Modernisation of the Housing Service) to note that a comprehensive report on this matter including a proposed new modernised

- structure would be submitted to the Committee at its next meeting of 13 April, 2009; and
- (vii) to otherwise note the updates as contained within the Business Statement.

MOTIONS LIST

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to item 1 (Councillor Allan – Repairs and Maintenance Work), to note that a full report on this motion would be submitted at its next meeting of 13 April, 2010; and
- (ii) in relation to item 2 (motion by Councillor Ironside – Greenfern School) to note that this motion had now been transferred to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, and that a report on the motion would be considered at the next meeting of that Committee of 18 February, 2010.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE HOUSING CASES REVIEW SUB COMMITTEE

7. The Committee had before it the minute of meeting of the Housing Cases Review Sub Committee of 2 November, 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the minute.

MOTION BY COUNCILLOR GRAHAM

8. With reference to article 12 of the minute of meeting of Council of 10 February, 2010, the Committee had before it a motion in the following terms by Councillor Graham:-

“That this Council consults with the residents of former sheltered housing complexes, with a view to revising its policy to return them to sheltered housing, and not to housing for varying need.”

The Head of Housing Management advised that officers would be submitting a report to the meeting of 25 May, 2010 which would make reference to a range of properties that Housing for Varying Needs represented, including sheltered housing.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that a report on Housing for Varying Needs was due to be reported back to the Committee at its meeting on 25 May, 2010, and therefore to agree that the terms of the motion be explored within the aforementioned report.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Kevin Stewart declared an interest due to a discussion that took place throughout consideration of the following article by virtue of his membership on the NEM SITA Management Board. Councillor Stewart did not consider it necessary to withdraw from the meeting.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE

9. With reference to article 7 of the minute of its meeting of 11 January, 2010, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented key management information and performance indicators for the Housing and Environment Service which consisted of two sections, namely:- (1) a progress report by the Director; and (2) a summary in the format of a Performance Indicator Balanced Scorecard, with detailed information supporting those indicators being considered this cycle.

At this point the Head of Housing Management advised that the Director of Housing and Environment was not available to attend this meeting due to ill health, and so continued to speak to the report.

In relation to page 50 of the report, Councillor Hunter intimated that he had been made aware by a number of City Wardens in the Urquhart Road/Park Road area that they had been provided with uniforms that did not fit them, and that not all members of staff had been provided with waterproof uniforms. The Head of Housing Management suggested that the members of staff concerned contact their supervisors or line managers in this regard. The Committee queried as to whether the Council currently had a full complement of City Wardens, and the Head of Housing Management advised that the Council was in the process of appointing ten City Wardens which would take the Council to a full complement. Mr Stirrat further explained that the closing date for applications had been extended to allow for the former Police Wardens to apply for these positions should they wish to. A number of members intimated that they were aware of occasions when City Wardens had acted above and beyond the call of duty, and requested that officers pass on the Committee's thanks to the staff concerned.

With further reference to page 50 of the report, the Committee commended the Bethany Christian Trust, its volunteers and the churches who had opened their doors for this project, for providing this service, especially due to the adverse weather that had been prevalent in Aberdeen over the past weeks.

Page 51 of the report explained that the Building Services Team had encountered a high demand for emergency assistance from Council tenants and Grampian Police during recent weeks, due to the adverse weather conditions experienced, predominantly for burst and frozen pipes and consequential damage of this. Contingency plans had been put in place, extra trades resources had been brought in, and overtime worked to cope with this demand. The report continued that from 5 January, 2010 onwards, the Building Services Team had taken the unprecedented step of deploying twenty three trades staff on pavement gritting duties around multi storey buildings and paths surrounding sheltered housing cottages in order to assist Roads and Grounds colleagues during the exceptional

weather conditions. The Committee requested that officers pass on their thanks to all of the staff involved during this difficult period.

With regard to the update provided in relation to the New Build Council Housing, Councillor Graham enquired as to whether there were any drawings or sketches available for the new build associated with the former Marchburn School site. The Head of Housing Management undertook to circulate a copy of this illustration to members. The Committee conveyed their thanks to the contractors involved in the demolition of Marchburn School, and asked that these comments be passed on by officers.

With regard to the update provided on the environmental walkabouts that officers were undertaking, Councillor Collie enquired as to how issues identified on the walkabouts were followed up. The Head of Environmental Services advised that during subsequent walks conducted by officers, there were checks undertaken in order to ascertain whether previous actions had been undertaken, but Mr Steed did suggest that this system may require to be refined.

The Committee highlighted the Loo of the Year Awards as a particular achievement for the staff involved, and noted that the staff themselves had also received awards, in addition to the actual buildings, and commended staff in this regard.

With reference to page 65 of the report (rent loss due to voids as a percentage of gross rent due), the Committee noted that this indicator was under target at the present time. The Head of Housing Management advised that this was primarily due to properties within the central area of the city (generally multi storey properties) being difficult to let, and advised that officers were reviewing this to see if there was still a requirement for these properties to be categorised as Housing for Varying Needs, and also if the properties required to be refurbished.

With reference to page 72 of the report (percentage of statutory homeless applicants housed who have sustained their tenancies for more than 12 months), the Committee noted that this was well above target and thanked all staff involved in this regard.

With reference to page 92 of the report (percentage of waste recycled and composted), the Committee enquired as to why the last update for this indicator had been provided in August. Officers explained that there was a two month lag with information being presented to them from SITA, and thereafter officers were required to ensure that the figures provided were robust. Officers further advised that the figures for the present period did look to be on target. Councillor Kevin Stewart undertook to raise, on behalf of the Committee, the issue of SITA's reporting mechanisms.

With reference to page 94 of the report (period for completing analysis process relating to target expectation), Councillor Cooney enquired as to why this indicator seemed to have a variable outturn. The Head of Environmental Services advised that this was a composite statistic which was formed from a range of different indicators. Mr Steed further undertook to provide details of this to Councillor Cooney.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank the City Wardens for their work, which was noted as often being above and beyond the call of duty; and to request an update at the next meeting on the progress being made with regard to the recruitment process being undertaken;
- (ii) to thank the Bethany Christian Trust for running the night shelter for homeless persons;
- (iii) to thank the Building Services staff for their hard work during the recent period of adverse weather;
- (iv) in relation to the Council's New Build Phase 1 project, to:- (a) request officers to provide illustrations of the development to all members; and (b) to thank the contractors who demolished the former Marchburn School for their work in this regard;
- (v) in relation to the Environmental Walkabouts, to request that officers refine the report circulated to local members following the walks to include details of the actions which had been identified and completed, and those which were still outstanding;
- (vi) to request that in future, coloured copies of the scorecard indicator report be emailed to members of the Committee for ease of reference;
- (vii) to thank the staff involved in sustaining the "homelessness tenancies";
- (viii) to note that Councillor Kevin Stewart would raise with SITA, on behalf of the Committee, the issue their reporting mechanism;
- (ix) to note that the Head of Environmental Services undertook to provide Councillor Cooney with a detailed explanation as to why the "period for completing analysis process relates to target expectation" indicator was so variable; and
- (x) to commend and congratulate the staff involved in the Loo of the Year awards.

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

10. With reference to article 8 of the minute of its meeting of 11 January, 2010, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which presented an update on the key improvement work which was taking place within the Housing and Environment Service.

By way of background the report advised that the Housing and Environment Improvement Plan incorporated the key improvement work to take place across the Service between April, 2009 and March, 2012, and was a key outcome from the approved Service Plans, which aimed to contribute to the Council's wider Corporate Plan.

A progress summary of the major projects within the Improvement Plan was appended to the report. The progress summary provided a project description, as well as detailing key dates, progress and latest status updates for each project. In addition further project documentation had been or was being produced for each project in the plan; this required lead officers to complete a project proposal, project plan and identify any risks in this regard. In conjunction with introducing a Housing and Environment Service Plan, work was also ongoing to update and add to the environment projects within the Service Plan.

In terms of overall progress, it was advised that to date the Service Plan had shown a steady and consistent increase month on month, and that given the short time it had been in progression, this was encouraging and the Service was well on course to achieve the improvement works set out in the Service Plan.

The Committee noted the slight alteration to the format of the Improvement Plan and thanked officers for amending the report format to include more comprehensive information and to make it easier reading.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information provided within the report.

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING – CONFERENCE REQUEST

11. The Committee had before it a request for up to three elected members to attend the Chartered Institute of Housing Annual Conference, which was to be held at Glasgow SECC on 16 - 18 March, 2010.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree that due to budget constraints, that no elected members would attend this conference;
- (ii) to note (1) that the tenant participation budget would provide funding for three tenants to attend; and (2) that officers would also be in attendance to represent the Council; and
- (iii) to instruct that officers submit a summary report on the conference at a later date.

SURF ANNUAL CONFERENCE REQUEST

12. The Committee had before it a request for up to three elected members to attend the next SURF Annual Conference, which was due to take place in Edinburgh on 24 - 25 March, 2010.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree that due to budget constraints, no elected members would attend this conference; and
- (ii) to instruct that officers who attend the conference on behalf of the Council, (1) request that SURF consider Aberdeen for the destination of its next annual conference; and (2) submit a summary report on the conference to a future meeting of this Committee.

CONSTRUCTION LICENSING EXECUTIVE – REQUEST FOR MEMBERSHIP

13. The Committee had before it a request from the Chief Executive of the Construction Licensing Executive (CLE), for a member of Aberdeen City Council to become a representative on the CLE.

By way of background the Committee were advised that the CLE had been established in 2002 to operate a licensing scheme for construction trades in Scotland, which would deliver through five trade associations. The CLE now had almost 2000 business registered, with 250 of those based in the Aberdeen postcode area.

The Committee were further advised that the CLE had recently become a registered charity, and that there would now be two categories of membership, namely:- (1) Scottish Local Authorities; and (2) Trade Associations, with a significant number of construction traders in Scotland. It was reinforced that there would be no cost associated with the Council joining the CLE.

The Committee resolved:-

to agree that Councillor McDonald be the Council's representative on the Construction Licensing Executive.

2009/10 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - H&E/10/016

14. With reference to article 11 of the minute of its meeting of 11 January, 2010, the Committee had before it a joint report by the City Chamberlain and the Director of Housing and Environment, which advised of the status of the Housing Capital Programme for the financial year 2009/10 as at 31 December, 2009, and included information on both income and expenditure in this regard.

Appended to the report at appendix 1 was a financial monitoring statement which outlined the original budget for the current year and expenditure and income as at 31 December, 2009, which advised that as at this date, £35.750 million of the approved budget had been spent. However, of the initial approved programme, £48.5 million of the available funds were committed through accepted tenders or tenders which were in the process of being accepted. It was currently estimated that the forecast outturn would be in line with the funded programme of £51.747 million.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed the category spends in the Housing Capital Programme and spend to date against each category.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the financial information contained within the report; and
- (ii) to instruct the City Chamberlain to continue to update the Committee in consultation with the Director of Housing and Environment on the forecast and actual outturn position for 2009/10.

2009/10 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - H&E/10/017

15. With reference to article 12 of the minute of its meeting of 11 January, 2010, 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, and advised on any areas of risk and management action being taken in this regard.

Appendix A to the report provided the Service report and associated notes, and advised that the position reflected that there was an anticipated underspend of £405,000 on the total Housing and Environment budget (excluding the Housing Revenue Account), which reflected a favourable decrease of £545,000 since the last report. This was principally as a result of the inclusion of income from the Zero Waste Fund and additional income identified within refuse collection. The Housing Revenue Account was still anticipated to have a balanced budget, with a potential increase of the capital from current revenue due to the overall favourable position principally the result of reduced capital financing costs.

The report identified Supporting People as an area of risk, and advised that a review was currently underway to establish a year end outturn, however it was anticipated any likely overspend could be funded within the Housing and Environment Service principally, and through underspend within Homelessness Strategy.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the information on management action and risks that were 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.

CAPITAL BUDGET PROGRESS REPORT - H&E/10/015

16. With reference to article 10 of the minute of its meeting of 11 January, 2010, 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 which related to this Committee, and provided for each:- (1) the total approved project costs; (2) the previous year's project spend; (3) the total budget for 2009/10; (4) the total spend as at 31 December, 2009; (5) commitments for 2009/10; (6) the forecast outturn for 2009/10; (7) the future years' budget profiles for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13; (8) the total forecast costs; and (9) project forecast variance. Comments on particular projects, where appropriate, were included in the narrative.

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

In relation to project 720 (Gully Waste Recycling - Reed Bed at Ness) the Committee enquired as to why the reed beds did not seem to be performing as anticipated. The Head of Asset Management and Operations advised that adjustments had been made and that the reed beds seemed to be working as anticipated now.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the content of the report in relation to the projects outlined at appendix A.

ST MACHAR PRIMARY SCHOOL - PROPOSED TRANSFER OF SURPLUS SCHOOL ESTATE PROPERTIES FROM THE GENERAL SERVICES ACCOUNT TO THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

17. With reference to the minute of meeting of Council of 12 November, 2008 (article 9 refers), the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided the Committee with an explanation as to why St Machar Primary School had not been transferred to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for redevelopment as part of the Housing Capital Programme for 2009/10.

At the previously mentioned meeting of Council, members agreed to transfer the site of St Machar Primary School from the General Services Account to the Housing Revenue Account for the sum of £820,000; and instructed the Head of Resources Development and Delivery to proceed with the demolition of the existing buildings at the earliest opportunity.

The report before members today advised that the capital funding for this purchase was allowed for in the Housing Capital Programme for 2009/10, but that it had not been possible for the Council to transfer the St Machar School to the HRA during 2009/10 due to the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service and The Portal Community Learning and Development Centre still being based at St Machar School.

The report continued that there was ongoing consultation between the Education, Culture and Sport Service and the local community on the relocation of services undertaken at The Portal Community Learning and Development Centre as part of the development of community learning hubs, and advised that a report would be presented to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee of 15 April, 2010 in this regard. The EAL was due to transfer to Sunnybank School after the Easter break, but due to the fact that it was unlikely that the HRA could obtain vacant possession of the whole St Machar Primary School site, it was not thought that the site could be programmed into the Housing Capital Programme for transfer to the HRA until 2011/12.

The report concluded that the Council Budget meeting of 11 February, 2010 had made an allowance of £1 million in the Housing Capital programme for the next 3 years (2010/11 to 2012/13) for the purchase of land for the Council Housing New Build programmes. It was therefore suggested that the property should be revalued, and that the outcome of the re-evaluation be reported back to this Committee in due course.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that it had not been possible to comply with the previous Council decision to transfer St Machar Primary School from the General Services Account to the Housing Revenue Account during 2009/10 since the property was still being used operationally for education purposes;

- (ii) to agree that the property should be revalued before a decision is taken to fund the transfer the site to the HRA from the 2011/12 Housing Capital Programme;
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to submit a report to the next meeting of 13 April, 2010 with a full explanation as to why the Council's instruction of 2009/10 was not complied with within the appropriate timescale; and
- (iv) to instruct officers to submit a report to this Committee at the earliest opportunity should the potential arise for the site to be transferred at an earlier date.

DEFERMENT OF COUNCIL HOUSING APPLICATIONS FOLLOWING REFUSAL OF OFFERS - H&E/09/058

18. With reference to the minute of meeting of the former Policy and Strategy Committee of 9 June, 2009 (article 16 refers) the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided an update on the policy that had been retained at the aforementioned meeting of the former Policy and Strategy Committee.

By way of background the report explained that the Council currently deferred, for a period of six months, the applications of home seekers and home movers who unreasonably refused two offers of accommodation. The deferment policy was intended to encourage applicants to be clear about their choices and expectations in relation to the properties available. The report advised that staff making offers obtained feedback from applicants to ensure that future offers met the applicants' requirements, and confirmed that the possibility of a future deferment where an applicant refused their first offer, had encouraged applicants to be clear about where they wanted to live. The report further explained that when two unreasonable refusals were recorded against an application, the computer system automatically deferred the application for six months.

The report continued that the impact of the policy had been monitored over a six month period, which had revealed that a total of 2,287 offers of housing had been made, and of these offers 911 had been refused with 395 of these being deemed for unreasonable reasons.

The introduction of the current deferment policy was having a positive impact on the percentage of refusals compared to the 2006/7 baseline refusals rates which were over 60%, compared with 39.8% for the period 1 May, 2009 to 31 October, 2009.

Appended to the report was a list of refusal reasons (1) which would count towards deferment of an application; and (2) which would not count towards deferment of an application.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the information contained within the report, and retain the deferment policy and the refusal deferment reasons as listed in appendix A to the report.

Councillor Cooney, seconded by Councillor Hunter, moved:-

that the Committee approve the recommendations.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved as an amendment:-
that the Committee agree (1) that the policy of deferring housing applications (currently for a period of six months), where a home seeker/mover has refused a second offer of housing for any inappropriate reason, be extended to a period of twelve months; and (2) to retain the refusal deferment reasons as listed in appendix A to the report.

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

The Committee resolved:-
to adopt the successful amendment.

PROPERTIES OFF CHARGE

19. With reference to article 17 of the minute of its meeting of 11 January, 2010, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which provided detailed information, including firm completion dates, on all of the properties which had been off charge for a period of six months or longer.

Appended to the report was a list of properties which were either unable to be relet (UTBR) or not to be relet (NTBR) and details as to why they had been removed from charge.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the new format on the UTBR and NTBR off charge list and note the information provided within this list; and
- (ii) to request a report back at the next Committee on any options that could be associated with the properties 49a and 49b Beattie Avenue.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Prior to consideration of the following item the Convener declared an interest in relation to the subject matter by virtue of her being the Council's representatives on the Board of Care and Repair Initiative Scotland. The Convener left the meeting prior to any consideration of this item, and the Vice Convener took the chair for this item of business only.

PROVISION OF A CARE AND REPAIR SERVICE FOR 2010/11

20. With reference to article 33 of the minute of its meeting of 19 November, 2009, and article 15 of the minute of meeting of the Finance and Resources

Committee of 28 January, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which advised on the outcome of discussions with Castlehill Housing Association in relation to the provision of the Care and Repair Service (incorporating Aberdeen Affordable Warmth) within Aberdeen for the financial year 2010/2011.

By way of background the report advised that the Aberdeen Care and Repair Service had been launched by Shelter (Scotland) in 1987 and had been fully funded by them until 1993, when the responsibility for funding was jointly taken over by Aberdeen District Council and Communities Scotland. The introduction of the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) in April, 2003 saw the Council take over full responsibility for funding the Aberdeen Care and Repair Service through the PSHG budget.

The report explained that the service assisted older homeowners (aged 60 and over) and those with a disability or long term illness, to repair, maintain and adapt their homes to allow them to remain living within the community; and that this service consisted of (1) a property repair and maintenance service; (2) an advice service; (3) a small repairs service; and (4) Aberdeen Affordable Warmth.

In addition, the Care and Repair service managed the Aberdeen Care and Repair Group charitable fund, which was launched in 1987 to provide funding assistance for the client group who were unable to finance necessary works for themselves. This work could raise around £50,000 per annum. The report advised that the current service value was £338,000 (£280,000 excluding Aberdeen Affordable Warmth).

The report explained that the report submitted to the aforementioned meeting of this Committee contained the latest information available to officers at that time in relation to the PSHG grant being capital funding only. Since this meeting, the Scottish Government had agreed to split the former PSHG funding as follows:- 40% revenue and 60% capital, which would allow local authorities to review their revenue budgets. At the previously mentioned meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee the PSHG budget had been approved.

The report outlined three possible options for the provision of a Care and Repair Service and described the possible ramifications and risks associated with each option.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree to enter into a new Service Level Agreement with Castlehill Housing Association for the delivery of the Aberdeen Affordable Warmth Service for the period from 1 April, 2010 until 31 March, 2011 inclusive; and
- (ii) to agree to enter into a new Service Level Agreement with Castlehill Housing Association for the delivery of the Aberdeen Care and Repair Service for the period from 1 April, 2010 until 31 March, 2011 inclusive, as per option 1 as detailed within the report, namely:- to retain all elements of the service (handyman, advice and assistance on repairs and maintenance, and assistance for disability improvements) but achieve a cost saving by reducing staff numbers to two officers, three handymen, one part time finance officer and one part time administrative assistant at the cost of £167,844 for the Care and Repair Service and £58,000 from Aberdeen Affordable Warmth, with the requirement of £225,844 of funding from the

PSHG, based on Castlehill Housing Association recuperating £60,000 of income through recharging clients for works carried out through the handyman service; and to note that in the event that they failed to do this, Castlehill Housing Association would have to make good the shortfall.

At this point Councillor Malone resumed the Chair.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Yuill declared a pecuniary interest in relation to the subject matter of the following article by virtue of his employment and left the meeting prior to its consideration.

FURNISHINGS CONTRACT – REQUEST FOR DELEGATED POWER

21. With reference to article 29 of the minute of its meeting of 26 August, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which requested that delegated powers be given to the Director of Housing and Environment, in conjunction with the Director of Corporate Governance, to accept the most economically advantageous tenders for the supply and installation of various items of furniture and other goods, and following the current procurement process, to award a place on the proposed Framework Agreement to the preferred bidders.

The report reminded members that the Committee had agreed to the purchase of furnishings for homelessness services by way of a tender exercise. The procurement exercise had now commenced and the closing date for the submission of tenders was 30 March, 2010. In light of this timescale it was not envisaged that it would be possible for tenders to be evaluated and recommendations to be provided in a report to the Committee at its meeting on 13 April, 2010, seeking approval to accept tenders. Therefore the Committee was requested to approve the delegated powers as detailed above.

Finally, the report advised that in taking forward the procurement, officers had developed a Framework Agreement which would allow Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils together with five local RSLs to use the Framework Agreement to enter into individual contracts on a call off basis. This had extended the time frame for the development of the specification and contractual documentation but would ensure that partner organisations were able to access the Framework Agreement thus ensuring that they were also achieving value for money in their procurement.

Members discussed the Council's existing procurement process and the possibility of the current procedure being amended to take consideration of social enterprises.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to delegate to the Director of Housing and Environment, in conjunction with the Director of Corporate Governance, the powers to accept the most economically advantageous tenders for the supply and installation of various items of furniture and other goods and to award a place on the proposed

Framework Agreement to the preferred bidders following the current procurement process; on the proviso that such delegated powers would only be used after consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of this Committee;

- (ii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to submit an information bulletin report to this Committee at a later date on the outcome of the tendering and evaluation process and with details of any exercise of delegated powers to award places on the Framework Agreement; and
- (iii) to request officers to submit a report to the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee exploring the possibility of the overall amendment of the Council's procurement procedures to take account of social enterprises.

INCENTIVE TO ENCOURAGE TENANTS TO DOWNSIZE

22. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval to introduce a policy to provide assistance and a financial incentive to Council tenants occupying 3+ bedroom family homes in high demand areas, to move to smaller or more suitable housing, in order to increase the supply of large family housing.

By way of introduction the report advised that in order for the Council to manage its housing stock effectively it needed to provide additional properties for overcrowded and larger families; and explained that reducing the under occupation of Council houses would help to reduce overcrowding and homelessness in Aberdeen, and therefore the Council needed to develop initiatives which would increase the supply of available houses that were suitable for these household types.

The report explained that at present there were currently around 4,192 properties with 3 or more bedrooms within the Council stock and that it was likely that some of those tenants, were living in family houses which were now too large for their needs, however might be reluctant to move due to the cost implications or because they required help or assistance to do so. In addition it was possible that some might also be struggling financially to heat and maintain these larger houses or have a medical issue which made climbing stairs and cleaning a house difficult. As such these tenants might be encouraged to downsize to a more manageable home with the assistance of a suitable financial package. Therefore, it was proposed that a financial incentive based on an incremental scale of payments (£1,000 per bedroom surrendered rising to a maximum of £3,000) be implemented as part of the scheme. An additional like for like payment would also be made if a qualifying tenant was prepared to move to an area of less demand permitting an earlier house move. It was intimated that to enable the scheme to be successful the Council would need to make the proposal financially attractive and also to make an early offer of smaller more suitable property.

The report went on to advise that given the current pressure of demand for smaller properties from the statutory homeless, the Council would need to offer those downsizing some form of priority and the best way currently to achieve this was through the discretionary transfer mechanism. The report detailed the implications for the Council and tenants of a change in tenancy through transfer or exchange.

Details of the arrangements for the introduction of the proposed initiative were outlined as was the main criteria for tenants to qualify for the scheme, namely:-

- the applicant must be a tenant of Aberdeen City Council and live in a 3+ bedroom property designated as high demand and must wish to move to a smaller Aberdeen City Council tenancy;
- the tenant must have no Aberdeen City Council housing debt;
- the current property occupied by the tenant must be left in a good condition which was satisfactory to the Council;
- the tenant must accept an offer of alternative accommodation from the Council (excluding sheltered housing);
- the tenant must not have previously been awarded a downsizing grant;
- there had to be sufficiently high demand for the qualifying tenants property; and
- funding for the scheme was cash limited and would be allocated on a first come first served basis.

The report recommended:-

- (a) to grant approval for officers to implement a scheme of assistance to help under occupying Council tenants to downsize to a smaller more suitable accommodation;
- (b) to approve the criteria for Council tenants to access the grant as detailed above;
- (c) to grant Committee priority to qualifying Council tenants of two offers of smaller accommodation;
- (d) to offer financial incentives to a maximum of £3,000 to qualifying Council tenants, and an additional like for like payment in accordance with appendix 1;
- (e) to allocate a budget of £76,000 to this initiative from the former Tenant Reward Scheme budget; and
- (f) to grant delegated powers to Heads of Service to assess and approve as necessary, on a case by case basis, applications from council tenants occupying 3+ bedroom family homes in high demand areas as designated by the housing service, who wished to downsize to smaller accommodation.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve recommendations (a) to (e) as contained in the report;
- (ii) to grant delegated powers to Heads of Service to assess and approve as necessary, on a case by case basis, applications from council tenants occupying 3+ bedroom family homes, who wished to downsize to smaller accommodation; and
- (iii) to instruct officers to report back to the Committee, following three months of the implementation of scheme, providing an update on progress with the implementation and uptake of the scheme as well as the financial implications to that date.

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 Committee consider the following item as a matter of urgency to enable

the Committee to consider homeless accommodation options following the Council's decision in relation to Aberdon House.

HOUSING ACCESS CENTRE – HOMELESSNESS OPTIONS

23. With reference to article 18 of the minute of the meeting of this Committee of 11 January, 2010, and article 8 of the minute of the meeting of Council of 10 February 2010, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which highlighted the conclusions and findings of the Homelessness Accommodation feasibility study by property consultant, Robinson Low Francis (RFL), on four different properties under Council ownership to determine the property or properties best meeting the Council's needs to provide temporary accommodation to persons presenting themselves as homeless.

By way of background the report advised that the Council required to increase the provision of temporary accommodation to meet the 2012 deadline for the abolition of priority need, and to reduce its reliance on unsuitable Bed and Breakfast accommodation. To this end, officers had embarked on a review of the asset management of temporary accommodation provision. Also, in this regard the report highlighted that Council on the 10 February 2010 approved the use of Aberdon House as a temporary accommodation unit for persons who had experienced the loss of accommodation subject to the necessary statutory permissions being secured (Houses in Multiple Occupation - HMO Licence). Council had also agreed that relets to homeless households would be increased to 75% for a three month period.

With regards the feasibility report produced by the consultants (attached as appendix 1 to the report) it was highlighted that the study had recommended the use of Aberdon House as a short term solution and the redevelopment of Victoria House as a long term solution to meet the statutory requirements of the Homelessness service by increasing the supply of temporary accommodation for people who find themselves homeless in the city.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee-

- (a) approve the recommendations in the Feasibility Study by Robinson Low Francis (RLF) which would develop the preferred short term and long term options outlined in the executive summary: -
 - Short term option - Provide a temporary accommodation unit at Aberdon House pending redevelopment of the property for new build housing;
 - Long term option - Provide a purpose built Housing Access Centre on the site of the existing property at Victoria House;
- (b) make provision in the Housing Capital Programme for 2010/11 for the acquisition of Aberdon House and execute the minor repairs to meet the Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence requirements as highlighted by Robinson Low Francis (RLF); and
- (c) make provision in the Housing Capital Programme for 2011/12 for the acquisition and development of the Victoria House option, and to request officers to bring forward detailed costs, conceptual plans, and funding mechanisms to the Housing and Environment Committee at its meeting on 25 May 2010.

The Committee heard from the Convener who indicated that she would be moving a revised set of recommendations as follows:-

that the Committee -

- (i) note the Feasibility Study;
- (ii) agree to provide an allocation from the Housing Capital Programme for 2010/2011 (a) for the acquisition of Aberdon House at a cost of £550,000; and (b) in order to undertake minor repairs to fulfil the HMO licence requirements at an appropriate cost of £100,000;
- (iii) instruct officers to bring forward a report which would include detailed costs, conceptual plans and funding mechanisms in relation to the new build option to provide 35 units at the Victoria House site, to this Committee at its meeting on 25 May, 2010; and
- (iv) request officers to report back at every committee cycle to the progress of Croft House, 74-78 Spring Garden, Aberdon House, Victoria House and with options for future alternative uses for these sites

In terms of the findings and recommendations of the feasibility study, the Committee expressed concern regarding the paragraph detailing that the development costs would be reduced by the acquisition and release of assets following the closure of obsolete/surplus temporary accommodation either at 95 Bon Accord Street, 77/79 Bon Accord Street, and/or 165 Crown Street at a future date, as no decision had been taken on this matter. It was however noted that the Committee at this stage were just noting the study and were not making any decisions related to the findings or recommendations contained therein. Also, at this point in the discussion the Convener made reference to Victoria House and in particular to the Council's planning policy which encouraged the retention of granite buildings such as Victoria House, and that should demolition of such a building be granted to enable the site to be used for a new build facility; it would still be expected that the principal elevations of the new build would be formed with granite, either new or old.

Members also discussed extensively and asked questions of officers regarding the future management arrangements of Aberdon House and also of the consultation process to be undertaken with local residents prior to and throughout the operation of Aberdon House as a temporary accommodation unit for persons who had experienced the loss of accommodation. During this discussion members highlighted the importance of all local members being involved in and updated on the consultation arrangements (where appropriate).

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the revised recommendations as moved by the Convener.

CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH ABERDEEN CYRENIANS LIMITED (ACL)

24. With reference to article 4 of the minute of the meeting of the Urgent Business Committee of 5 August, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval to extend the housing element of the current time limited contract with Aberdeen Cyrenians Limited until 31 July, 2010 (or such earlier date as required); and also sought delegated powers

to award contracts to the preferred bidder as a result of the current procurement process.

The report advised that the Urgent Business Committee of 5 August, 2009, in addition to issuing a temporary contract to Aberdeen Cyrenians to 31 March, 2010, had also agreed that the Council disengage from the Cyrenians on a phased basis ending on 31 March, 2010 with an open and competitive procurement process for new services to be taken forward. The procurement service was now well underway, covering both the Social Care and Wellbeing and Housing and Environment requirements. The closing date for submissions was 16 February, 2010. As a result it would not be possible for tenders to be assessed, contracts entered into and services to be operational from 1 April, 2010. It was, however, envisaged that the new contracts would be operational in June, 2010. For this reason the Committee were asked that the contracts for the Community Supported Accommodation Service, Community Resettlement, Advice and Support Service and Margaret House could be extended beyond 31 March, 2010. It was proposed that 31 July, 2010 was the final date to ensure sufficient time to have the new contracts operational. This should be done before 31 July but until such time as the tender submissions were received and scrutinised it was requested that some flexibility around the date was provided.

With regards the tender submissions due to be received on 16 February, 2010, it was advised that thereafter tender evaluation and interviews would then be undertaken with the outcomes to be reported to the Committee on 13 April, 2010. It was anticipated that the time line to achieve this was in place, however in case this could not be achieved approval for delegated powers to the Director of Housing and Environment, in conjunction with the Director of Corporate Governance to award the contract to the preferred bidder was sought. Such power would only be used after consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of the Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree to the extension to 31 July, 2010, or such earlier date as required, the housing element of the contract for housing support services with the Aberdeen Cyrenians Limited; and
- (ii) to delegate to the Director of Housing and Environment, in conjunction with the Director of Corporate Governance, the powers to award a contract to the preferred bidder as a result of the current procurement process if it was not possible to report to the Committee at its meeting on 13 April, 2010, on the proviso that such delegated powers would only be used after consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of the Committee.

ABERDEEN'S ANIMAL POLICY – H&E/10/006

25. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought approval to instigate a review of the Council's Animal Policy.

The report advised that the Council's existing Animal Policy (attached as appendix A to the report), was adopted in 1998. This set out the Council's policy on a range of animal welfare issues and aimed to provide elected members, council officials and the general public with information and guidance on these issues.

Thereafter in 2006 the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act was implemented, this Act signified a major change in the legislative controls on animal welfare. The Council's policy had not been updated to incorporate the principle of the Act, and therefore it was considered that a review of the Council's Policy was long overdue. It was anticipated that the most significant change would be the incorporation of the following principles of the Act:-

- enhancing the ability to respond to exotic disease outbreaks;
- making provision to minimise the risk of disease spread;
- introducing a duty of care on keeping animals; and
- allowing animals either suffering or in danger of suffering to be seized.

Suggested additional contents for the revised animal welfare policy were outlined at appendix B, however it was highlighted that these could very well be expanded upon as a result of consultation.

Details of proposed process for the review were provided wherein it was advised that an online consultation exercises involving interested parties, animal welfare charities and other enforcement agencies would be undertaken before the revised policy was presented to the Committee for adoption. This process would also include canvassing the views of services of Services within the Council to ensure that the Policy aligned with housing policies regarding pet ownership and purchasing guidelines on cruelty free, 'animal friendly' products, for example.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the existing Policy; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to report back with a draft updated Animal Policy at the earliest opportunity.

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 Committee consider the following item as a matter of urgency to enable the Committee to consider the policy in light of legal advice regarding the potential charging element to the policy.

HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING CONTAINERS POLICY - H&E/10/001

26. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which sought to clarify Council policies relating to household waste and recycling containers and sought approval to bring all existing Council policies relating to waste and recycling containers into one document.

By way of background the report provided a detailed overview of the current waste infrastructure provided by the Council as well as advice given to residents in relation to general refuse, kerbside cycling, and garden and food waste collections. It was highlighted that whilst some information regarding the waste services provided was made available on the website and information leaflets, there was no

single policy document that set out what residents with individual wheeled refuse bins, kerbside recycling and the garden and food waste collections could expect to receive from the Council and how the Council required these waste containers to be presented. However, it was explained that the significant changes to the waste collection regime due to be implemented in the near future, had presented an opportunity for the Council to bring together all existing practices and policies relating to household waste and recycling containers into one clear and simple document. Therefore, it was proposed that in order to improve customer services that all existing practices and expectations be compiled into one document. The proposed Household Waste and Recycling Containers Policy was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

In terms of the proposed Household Waste and Recycling Containers Policy it was advised that the document represented a consolidation of Council policies relating to household and waste recycling containers. The only exceptions to this related to the Additional and Replacement bins section. It was explained that since these policies had been approved by the former Policy and Strategy Committee in 2008 (article 16 of the minute of meeting of 4 March, 2008 refers), it had become apparent that several procedural amendments and clarifications were required before they could be successfully implemented and at present, neither represented existing practice. Firstly, in relation to additional bin policy, it was advised that the majority of amendments to the policy did not fundamentally change the policy but rather provided clarity and simplified procedural issues which would allow for successful implementation. However, the one substantive change was the removal of the £60 annual collection charge due to the possible conflict with the Environmental Protection Act (1990) as had been advised by the Council's legal team. There was a nominal loss of revenue associated with this change, however there would be no actual loss experienced in comparison with existing practice as no annual collection charge was currently levied.

Secondly, with regards the replacement bin policy, it was highlighted that there was one significant change proposed, namely that the revised policy did not require the levying of a charge for issuing replacement bins. This amendment was required due to significant difficulties experienced in implementing and administering such a charge, not least establishing a fair mechanism to identify fault for the loss of the bin. Again there was a nominal loss of revenue associated with the change, however there would be no actual loss experienced in comparison with the existing practice which was to replace bins free of charge.

Appended to the report were (1) the proposed Council's Household Waste and Recycling Containers Policy; (2) the Council's current Additional Wheeled General Refuse Bin application form; (3) the Council's current Additional Bins Policy; and (4) the Council's current Replacement Bins Policy.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the Household Waste and Recycling Containers Policy, attached at appendix 1 to the report, and to refer to the report to the Finance and Resources Committee for consideration of the financial issues arising from the Policy; and
- (ii) to instruct officers to undertake a full review of enforcement policy and practice relating to all waste issues including:- litter, fly tipping and issues arising from the policy including side waste; and to present full and costed

proposals for the implementation of enforcement policy to this Committee at its meeting on 24 August, 2010.

BIOMASS HEATING AT DUTHIE PARK WINTER GARDENS – H&E/10/012

27. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which proposed that the existing oil and gas heating systems at Duthie Park Winter Gardens be replaced with a biomass system, and, to include the use of surplus wood from the Council's local parks, in the biomass fuel supply contract with a view to developing in the future a wood fuel production base in Aberdeen, as an income generating project, managed by the Council Arboricultural Service.

The report provided an overview of the current heating system for the Duthie Park Winter Gardens, and outlined the findings and recommendations of a detailed Feasibility Study regarding the potential installation of a biomass system which was carried out in November, 2009 by David Palmer of The Campbell Palmer Partnership Ltd, an acknowledged expert in the biomass field, and was arranged and funded by The Carbon Trust. The executive summary of the study was attached as appendix 1 to the report. The study had concluded that technically there were no constraints on changing the heating system to biomass.

With regards financial implications it was advised that the estimated total capital cost would be £423,000, with estimated annual savings on running costs of £65,090. It was recommended that the capital costs be covered through a combination of grant, expected to be around £126,700, a non housing capital contribution of £125,000 from the Council, plus funding from the Central Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) of the balance which would be expected to be around £171,300. The savings would be repaid to the CEEF over the first 3 years, after which the savings would accrue to the Council. Further details regarding the loan fund provided by the Central Energy Efficiency Fund were provided.

Details of the actions which would be taken if the recommendations were approved were provided wherein it was advised that officers would apply for grant funding, with an initial application to the Community and Renewable Energy Scotland (CARES) scheme; with the fall back position of applying to the Scottish Biomass Support Grant or a Low Carbon Buildings Fund. In addition officers would also issue tenders for the supply and installation of the biomass boiler; the necessary works to link the two exiting heat circuits into one; the required changes and additions to the control systems; the supply and installation of the biomass store; and the supply of woodchip for a five year period, with performance reviews built in to enable the contract to be ended earlier if performance standards were not met.

Finally, in relation to the inclusion of the use of surplus wood from the Council's local parks, it was proposed that the Council use its purchasing power to enter into a contract with a biomass supplier for Duthie Park to ensure the surplus woody material from the Council's parks is fed into the biomass supply chain. This would involve the successful biomass supply company agreeing to buy this surplus woody material from the Council, chip it within a location in Aberdeen such as the Hazlehead Nursery, and sell it locally, potentially as part of their supply to Duthie Park. It was further proposed that this could be built up to become an income

generating scheme, managed by the Council's Arboricultural Service. A separate report on this proposed development of a woodfuel production base in the city would be submitted to this Committee for consideration at a later date.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approve a tender to be issued for the installation of a biomass heating system at Duthie Park Winter Gardens at an estimated capital cost of £423,000, based on the recommendations in the Feasibility Report, subject to the full capital funding having been secured;
- (b) instruct the Director of Housing and Environment Services to arrange for the preparation of a non housing capital bid for £125,000 in respect of the biomass heating system;
- (c) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment Services to submit the aforesaid non housing capital bid to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee with a recommendation that they approve said bid; and
- (d) approve a tender being issued for the supply of biomass fuel at an estimated annual cost of £58,340, subject to the full capital funding having been secured for the biomass heating system, and to include in the tender a requirement that surplus wood from the Council's parks would be purchased by the successful company for inclusion in the biomass supply chain.

The Committee then heard from the Convener who advised that since publication of the above report, the Council at its meeting on 11 February, 2010, had agreed its budget for 2010/2011, within which the funding of £125,000 for the biomass heating system had been approved, therefore recommendations (b) and (c) within the report had been superseded and could be removed from consideration. For clarity she confirmed that recommendations (a) and (d) only were to be considered by the Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve recommendations (a) and (d).

PROGRESS WITH APPROVED SAVINGS FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE RANGER SERVICE AND HAZLEHEAD GOLF COURSE FOR 2009/2010 – H&E/09/083

28. With reference to article 22 of the minute of its meeting of 11 January, 2010, 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 2009/2010, 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 2009/2010, which further to the decision taken at a previous meeting of this Committee, would be used to help fund the unforeseen savings required for Hazlehead Golf Course.

The report continued that the required savings for 2009/2010 for the Hazlehead Golf Course were £236,000, this had reduced from the original budget previously reported of £260,000, as a result of budgets and accounts being corrected. To

date a total of £233,000 had been identified, £100,000 of which would be regenerated by the contract for Roundabout Sponsorship, and £68,000 from the continued vacancy for an Interim Lead Environment Manager. In addition a further £25,000 had been allocated from the cleansing budget, and that together with the savings generated by the Ranger Service and the staff vacancy within the current structure that would not to be filled, this would amount to a further £40,000 saving.

The report indicated that the remaining saving of £3,000 would be achieved through continued careful weekly monitoring of the grounds maintenance and street sweeping labour costs.

The report concluded by advising that the overall labour costs were well within budget and it was possible to manage staff numbers and vacancies so as to allow a saving against budget, and that the non filling of staff vacancies for a four week period would allow the remaining saving to be met.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the steps being taken to achieve the required savings; and
- (ii) to note that the required savings for the Ranger Service have been achieved; and
- (iii) to thank officers for their efforts in achieving the savings.

STREET CLEANLINESS REPORT: STREET CLEANLINESS IN DEPRIVED AND BETTER OFF NEIGHBOURHOODS – CLOSING THE GAP

29. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which (a) updated the Committee on the findings of recent research completed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which explored why affluent neighbourhoods tended to have higher levels of street cleanliness than deprived neighbourhoods and how local authorities could close this gap, improve performance and achieve desired standards in all areas; and (b) provided an update on the progress made since 2004 by the Council's street cleaning service in closing the gap and comparing the recommendations of that report with the strategies and actions already in place by the Council.

The report provided a detailed overview of the current position regarding street cleanliness in Aberdeen city wherein it was highlighted that through the adoption of planning and targeting resources relative to needs, the service had not only led to a dramatic narrowing of the gap in street cleanliness levels between the more affluent and less affluent areas of Aberdeen, but a high absolute level of performance had also been achieved. Over this period, Aberdeen's street cleanliness statutory performance indicators (LEAMS) had also shown continued improvement over the last few years, leading to the most recent peer review score of 76, well above the Scottish benchmark of 67 and in fact the Council's best score to date. In addition the services own internal PAC rating had also shown continuous improvement in recent years improving from an average of 82 in 2004 to the present average score of 94 as of December 2009. The PAC rating scores over the last five years were attached as appendix 1 to the report.

Thereafter the report highlighted the strategies and actions already in place in the city which met the recommendations outlined in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

report, and outlined the next steps for the service. It was also advised that work had begun on a route and branch review of where the Council was at the moment, with the aim of building upon what worked well for the service. It would also involve looking at future community involvement to and deciding on what areas of work the Council should be concentrating on in the future. This would necessarily involve a large amount of work which would be completed by the end of 2010. In order that this work had a set of quantitative as well as qualitative parameters, the service was committed to make a further £78,000 of savings in the last quarter of the financial year 2010/11 and £313,000 in the subsequent full financial years.

Appended to the report was (1) the Council's internal PAC rating scores between 2004-2009; and (2) three separate charts detailing the PAC scoring since 2007/2008 and 2009/2010 for both less affluent and affluent areas, as well as the average PAC rating for both areas since 2007.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Street Cleansing Service had made considerable and sustained progress towards reducing the gap in the standard of street cleanliness between less affluent and more affluent areas of the city, whilst continuing to find efficiency savings;
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment Services to provide a further report on progress at the beginning of the calendar year 2011; and
- (iii) to commend the service on the performance scores achieved.

REPLACEMENT CREMATORS – PROGRESS REPORT – H&E/10/002

30. With reference to article 24 of the minute of its meeting of 11 January, 2010, 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.

The report advised that since 13 January, 2010, the copper cladding and waterproof membrane to the roof of the main extension had now been completed and the mechanical and electrical installation in this area was also progressing well. The joinery works of the roof of the linked corridor structure had been delayed due to the recent adverse weather, however these works had recommenced in the week beginning 25 January, 2010. In terms of the cremator delivery and installation, it was advised that the works were originally planned to commence on 9 January, 2010, but again due to the adverse weather this had to be put on hold, however this work had now been satisfactorily completed. Finally the completion of the gas main and the installation of meter had commenced in the week beginning 25 January, 2010.

The report concluded that given the completion of the above works, and as a consequence of the recent adverse weather, works were now one week behind programme schedule.

With regard to finance it was advised that the actual spend against the current financial year was £510,687, or 26.9% of the projected figure. The anticipated spend this financial year was still expected to be around £1.9m.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the progress made to date on replacing the out of date and unreliable cremators at Hazlehead Crematorium; and
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Housing and Environment to report back on progress with the replacement of the cremators at Hazlehead Crematorium at its next meeting on 13 April, 2010.

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

TENDER AWARD – PROVISION OF CLEANING SERVICES FOR MULTI-STOREY BLOCKS

31. With reference to article 18 of the minute of its meeting of 6 October, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which updated members on the recent procurement exercise undertaken in respect of cleaning services for the communal areas of thirty nine multi storey blocks and three low rise blocks, and sought approval on the recommendations for the acceptance of the tender.

The report provided a detailed background regarding the procurement of this service wherein it was advised that as previously reported, the service had been unable to accept any of the tenders received in the initial procurement exercise as they had not been sufficiently competitive and would not provide best value, and as a result the Committee agreed that the contract be retendered.

An overview of the evaluation process undertaken by the Service was provided wherein it was advised that the evaluation criteria had been specifically developed to take account of cost along with a method statement from each bidder detailing how the specified services would be delivered. The relevant aspects were how the contract would be managed, the work programme and the added business value that the bidder would deliver as part of the contract. It was also highlighted that all bidders had been asked to provide details of their contract cost model for three years with year one to include the costs of all applicable TUPE costs. A table containing the individual tendering contractors' total costs and scores was included within the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the progress of the procurement and the conclusion of the tender evaluation process; and
- (ii) to agree to accept the tender that had the highest evaluation score, and therefore to award the contract to company A (ISS), and to instruct officers to agree an anticipated start date for the contract to commence on 1 May, 2010.

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 Committee consider the following item as matter of urgency to enable the Committee to consider the tenders submitted and to award the contract.

TENDER AWARD – MONITORED CCTV AND DOOR ENTRY SYSTEM – H&E/09/133

32. With reference to article 18 of the minute of its meeting of 6 October, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment which advised members of the outcome of the recent tender exercise undertaken in respect of the monitored CCTV and Door Entry system and sought approval to award the contract to the tenderer with the highest evaluation score (Symera Technologies Limited).

An overview of the evaluation process undertaken by the Service was provided wherein it was advised that the evaluation criteria was specifically developed to take account of cost and create a Provisional Method statement as to how the Services would be undertaken. Central to the Provision Method Statement was that the bidders demonstrate how they would deliver the system. It was highlighted that all bidders were asked to provide details of their contract cost model for outright purchase, installation and maintenance costs of the system for a five year period. A table containing the individual tendering contractors' total costs and scores was presented.

With regards the system it was advised that the installation would take place over a 20 week installation period with a phased completion and it was anticipated that the Control Room would be operational from week four of the contract (around 30 April 2010). In terms of finance it was advised that the 480 owners would be asked to contribute to the cost of the security system. Dialogue would continue with legal services and owners as to the level of financing and the extent of charges to be incurred.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the progress of the procurement and the conclusion of the tender evaluation process;
- (ii) to accept the tender with the highest evaluation score (Symera Technologies Limited) and to instruct officers to conclude a contract with the bidder; and
- (iii) to purchase rather than lease the system as that would provide best value to the Council.

- COUNCILLOR AILEEN MALONE, Convener.