

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 23 January 2019

Chair:

Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison (*substitute for Councillor Colin McGavigan*), Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Jackie Burns, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Stephanie Callaghan (Depute), Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor George Greenshields, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Mark Horsham (*substitute for Councillor Collette Stevenson*), Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Catherine McClymont (*substitute for Councillor Andy Carmichael*), Councillor Mark McGeever (*substitute for Councillor Richard Nelson*), Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Sheena Wardhaugh

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor John Ross (ex-officio), Councillor Collette Stevenson

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

J Burke, Administration Assistant; M M Cairns, Legal Services Manager; H Goodwin, Finance Manager (Resources); C Lyon, Administration Officer; E McPake, Human Resources Business Partner; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy)

Housing and Technical Resources

D Lowe, Executive Director; A Finnan, Head of Housing Services; J Forbes, Property Manager (Assets and Estates Services); F McCafferty, Head of Property Services

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing and Technical Resources Committee held on 31 October 2018 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Minutes of Special Meeting

The minutes of the special meeting of the Housing and Technical Resources Committee held on 21 November 2018 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2018/2019 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 20 December 2018 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of progress on the capital programme for Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA) for the period 1 April to 9 November 2018.

The Committee decided: that Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £8.373 million and expenditure to date of £1.682 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 October 2018 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Capital Budget Monitoring 2018/2019 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 20 December 2018 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of progress on the capital programme for Housing and Technical Resources (HRA) for the period 1 April to 9 November 2018.

The Committee decided: that Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £53.664 million and expenditure to date of £29.294 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 October 2018 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2018/2019 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 5 December 2018 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 9 November 2018 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2019.

Funding had been allocated by the Scottish Government for temporary accommodation within the Homeless Service. The Resource had identified that £0.188 million of that funding would not be required within the current year as a result of the proposed implementation timescales. It had been identified that the current levels of Bad Debts on homelessness were significantly better than expected, therefore it was anticipated that a higher underspend on the specific funding would be seen this year. The underspend would be transferred to reserves to meet costs associated with homelessness in future years.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2019 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 October 2018 (Paragraph 5)]

7 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2018/2019 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 6 December 2018 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 9 November 2018 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2019.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2019 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 October 2018 (Paragraph 6)]

8 Housing and Technical Resource Plan: Quarter 2 Progress Report – 2018/2019

A report dated 5 December 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Housing and Technical Resource Plan for 2018/2019. Details were provided on progress made at the end of quarter 2, covering the period 1 April to 30 September 2018, in implementing the priority projects identified in the draft Resource Plan.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 26 September 2018 (Paragraph 9)]

9 Housing and Technical Resources – Workforce Monitoring – September to November 2018

A joint report dated 12 December 2018 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Housing and Technical Resources for the period September to November 2018:-

- ♦ attendance statistics
- ♦ occupational health statistics
- ♦ accident/incident statistics
- ♦ discipline, grievance and Dignity at Work cases
- ♦ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ♦ staffing watch as at 8 September 2018

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 October 2018 (Paragraph 7)]

10 Kirktonholme Playing Fields and Pavilion, East Kilbride – Asset Transfer to East Kilbride United

A report dated 13 December 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the community asset transfer of Kirktonholme Playing Fields and Pavilion, East Kilbride to East Kilbride United.

The Kirktonholme sports facility in East Kilbride consisted of 2 playing fields and a pavilion. The pavilion was currently leased to South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture (SLLC) who also managed the bookings for the adjoining pitches on behalf of the Council.

Over the past 3 years, the bookings for the pavilion and the pitches had primarily been to East Kilbride United (EKU) football teams.

A formal application for asset transfer by lease, under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, had been received from EKU and validated on 22 August 2018.

EKU was seeking to create a hub for the organisation which could be the focus of their activities, including training, matches, meetings and community engagement. The facility would be available for other community lets outwith the hours that it was required by EKU and the organisation had consulted with local schools and community organisations on the opportunities that the hub could provide.

The car park was considered to fulfil a wider parking function than simply to the pavilion and sports pitches and it had been agreed with EKU that this would be excluded from the asset transfer and would remain in Council control.

The application had been placed on the Council's Planning Portal and a notice placed on the property and details delivered to the surrounding properties. No representations had been received.

The Community Asset Transfer Assessment Panel had considered the matter on 3 December 2018.

The principal terms and conditions of the lease were detailed in the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Kirktonholme Playing Fields and Pavilion, East Kilbride be leased to East Kilbride United, subject to the principal terms and conditions outlined in Section 5 of the report; and
- (2) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, be authorised to conclude all matters in respect of the lease and enter into necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

11 Policy and Strategy Review Schedule

A report dated 7 December 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on a revised Policy and Strategy Review Schedule.

A formal Policy Review Schedule, to support the ongoing systematic service improvement process, had been formally approved by this Committee in October 2011. Regular updates had been provided over the years, with the most recent being reported in December 2017.

The scope of the policy areas covered by the Schedule reflected key service areas which were considered by the Scottish Housing Regulator's regulatory framework.

The revised Schedule, which also included a timeline for the review of policies and strategies for which the Resource had lead responsibility, had been developed to reflect changes at a local and national level in policy development and also reflected the implementation of other legislative and regulatory changes.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the revised Policy and Strategy Review Schedule, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- (2) that the outcome of Policy and Strategy Reviews be reported to future meetings of the Committee in accordance with the Schedule.

[Reference: Minutes of 13 December 2017 (Paragraph 9)]

12 Scottish Housing Regulator – Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland

A report dated 17 December 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Scottish Housing Regulator's consultation on regulation of social housing in Scotland.

In January 2018, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) launched a discussion paper on the future of housing regulation in Scotland to generate ideas and debate on regulation. The SHR then developed detailed proposals which they had circulated for consultation.

As the timescale for providing a response to the SHR did not allow for a report to Committee ahead of the submission date, the Council's submission had been made subject to approval by this Committee.

A summary of the consultation response was provided in the report and a copy of the full response attached as an appendix to the report.

The most significant addition to the regulatory requirements was the introduction of Annual Assurance Statements. This required all social landlords to confirm that they were compliant with the relevant regulatory standards and, specifically for Registered Social Landlords, that they must meet the standards for governance and financial management.

The Annual Assurance Statement required to be submitted by the landlord's governing body or, in the case of local authorities, the relevant committee. In the case of the Council, this would be Housing and Technical Resources Committee. The first Annual Assurance Statement would require to be prepared between May and October 2019.

The consultation paper also sought views on proposed changes to the Scottish Social Housing Charter Indicators. There were currently 74 indicators, of which 32 were contextual. This would reduce to 44, of which 12 would be contextual. A number of Homelessness indicators would also be removed as the information was collected and reported by the Scottish Government.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the overview of the Scottish Housing Regulator's consultation on regulation of social housing in Scotland be noted; and
- (2) that the response submitted by the Council be approved.

13 South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

A joint report dated 21 December 2018 by the Executive Directors (Housing and Technical Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

South Lanarkshire's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017 to 2022 'Affordable Homes, Sustainable Places' was approved by the Executive Committee on 30 August 2017. 4 out of the 9 priority outcomes within the Strategy focused on addressing homelessness and were closely aligned with the emerging national policy agenda.

In October 2017, the Scottish Government set up the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to produce short and long term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping.

The HARSAG produced a final report in June 2018 with recommendations that included local authorities developing Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTP). 'Rapid rehousing' was defined as a housing led approach for people who experienced homelessness, with a focus on making sure they reached a settled home as quickly as possible and limited the amount of time spent in temporary accommodation.

In June 2018, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning wrote to all Scottish local authorities advising of the requirements to prepare a RRTP for submission to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018.

To meet the timescales set by the Scottish Government, South Lanarkshire's RRTP was submitted on 21 December 2018, subject to approval by this Committee. A copy of the Plan was attached at Appendix 1.

The Scottish Government had committed £21 million towards RRTPs as part of the 'Ending Homelessness Together Fund', which would be available until 2021. A particular focus was on promoting a transition towards 'Housing First' approaches. While initial funding had been released to support the development and co-ordination of RRTPs, the basis upon which the funding would be distributed to local authorities was currently determined by the Scottish Government. It was anticipated, however, that the submitted RRTP, including the Resource Plan, would provide an important base for consideration.

The RRTP would be implemented on 1 April 2019 and reviewed annually, as required by the guidance, aligned with the annual review of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP).

Additional work had been required to develop the RRTP, the cost of which had been met from the Housing Revenue Account. The work had been undertaken within existing staffing resources. It was recognised, that over the lifetime of the Plan, significant additional work would be required to co-ordinate its development and implementation. In recognition of this, the Scottish Government had provided the Council with initial funding of £105,000.

It was proposed that this funding be partially used to appoint 1 FTE additional post of Strategy Co-ordinator at Grade 3, Level 8, SCP 77-80 (£36,881.23 to £38,614.88) within the Strategy and Support section of Housing and Technical Resources to project manage the Plan. The post would be established for an initial 18 month period from April 2019.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the background, strategic context and core requirements for the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan be noted;
- (2) that the finalised South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, as detailed in Appendix 1, be approved;
- (3) that the future monitoring, review and reporting arrangements be noted; and

- (4) that the 1 FTE post of Strategy Co-ordinator, as detailed above, be added to the Resource establishment for a fixed period of 18 months.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 30 August 2017 (Paragraph 10)]

14 Council House Open Market Purchase to Support Regeneration Activity in East Whitlawburn

A report dated 14 January 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising on action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c), in view of the timescales involved, by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to approve the purchase of 2 properties, on the open market exceeding the authorised £100,000 limit for each property, to support the implementation of the Master Plan proposals for East Whitlawburn.

In September 2018, the Estates Service had been asked to identify suitable properties on the open market to facilitate decants and/or permanent transfers for residents affected by the East Whitlawburn Regeneration Master Plan. It was necessary to purchase properties due to the shortage of available Council housing stock within the Cambuslang and Rutherglen area. 2 potentially suitable properties were identified, however, the value of each property exceeded the maximum financial limit of £100,000 as set out in the current delegated authority for acquisition of land and property.

The properties were a 1 bedroom mid terrace in the Spittal area of Rutherglen and a 2 bedroom end terrace in the Gallowflat area of Rutherglen. The properties purchased would be added to the Council's operational housing stock.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c), by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to progress the purchase of 2 properties on the open market with a value in excess of the authorised £100,000 limit for each property, to meet the urgent housing needs of applicants who required to be rehoused due to regeneration activity within East Whitlawburn; and
- (2) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, be authorised to conclude all matters relating to the purchase of the properties and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 July 2015 (Paragraph 9) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 26 August 2015 (Paragraph 12)]

15 Update of the Housing and Technical Resources' Risk Register and Risk Control Plan

A report dated 5 December 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ systems and controls in place within Housing and Technical Resources to control risks
- ◆ details of Housing and Technical Resources' current Risk Control Register

The Resource had followed Council guidance in developing, monitoring and updating its Risk Control Register on an ongoing basis. The Register had been developed to ensure that the Resource was fully aware of the main risks that it had, was able to prioritise those risks and had appropriate controls in place to eliminate or minimise the impact of the risk.

The risks were scored in accordance with the Council's scoring mechanism which scored risks based on the likelihood and impact of the risk. This resulted in risks being scored between 1 to 9 (low to high). Risks were scored on their inherent risk (risk if nothing was done) and their residual risk (risk after applying controls).

The Risk Register for the Resource had been developed and monitored on a quarterly basis to add new risks and review the scores of existing risks. The register was maintained and updated by the Resource Risk Management Group.

Details of risks which had scored 7 to 9 were provided in the appendix to the report.

The Committee decided: that the systems and controls in place to monitor risks within Housing and Technical Resources be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 13 December 2017 (Paragraph 17)]

16 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.