

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 20 March 2019

Chair:

Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison (*substitute for Councillor Poppy Corbett*), 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 Maureen Devlin, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor George Greenshields, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Catherine McClymont (*substitute for Councillor Andy Carmichael*), Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Collette Stevenson, Councillor Jared Wark

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor John Ross (ex officio), Councillor Sheena Wardhaugh

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

The following interests were declared:-

Councillor(s)	Item(s)	Nature of Interest(s)
Brown, Fulton and Lennon	Overtoun Park, Rutherglen – Asset Transfer to Grow 73	Lawyer for Overtoun Park Bowling Club, member of organisation and known to organisation respectively

Councillor Callaghan entered the meeting after this item of business

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing and Technical Resources Committee held on 23 January 2019 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 6 February 2019 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 12 March 2019 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 2018 to 1 February 2019.

The budget for 2018/2019 had included an allocation of £4.551 million for Planned Asset Management. Following a review of this programme and the works carried out to date, it had been identified that some of this expenditure could not be classed as capital. A budget of £1.022 million had, therefore, been transferred to Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget.

Work was ongoing to clarify the spend position for this financial year and current estimates suggested an outturn of £6.992 million. This was an underspend of £0.359 million and mainly reflected the anticipated timing of spend in relation to the East Kilbride Civic Centre and Headquarters Fabric Upgrade projects. Funding for those projects would carry forward into the next financial year.

The Committee decided: that Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £7.351 million and expenditure to date of £4.878 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 January 2019 (Paragraph 4)]

Councillor Greenshields entered the meeting during this item of business

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

A joint report dated 12 March 2019 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 2018 to 1 February 2019.

Work was ongoing to clarify the spend position for this financial year and current estimates suggested an outturn of £53.664 million.

The Committee decided: that Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £53.664 million and expenditure to date of £41.037 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 January 2019 (Paragraph 5)]

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

A joint report dated 11 February 2019 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 1 February 2019 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2019.

Following the probable outturn exercise, the financial forecast for the revenue budget to 31 March 2019, was a breakeven position. The outturn position included proposed transfers to reserves totalling £0.899 million.

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 23 January 2019 (Paragraph 6)]

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

A joint report dated 11 February 2019 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 1 February 2019 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2019.

Following the probable outturn exercise, the financial forecast for the revenue budget to 31 March 2019, was a breakeven position.

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; and
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2019 of a breakeven position be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 January 2019 (Paragraph 7)]

8 Housing and Technical Resources – Workforce Monitoring – November 2018 to January 2019

A joint report dated 12 February 2019 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 November 2018 to January 2019:-

- ◆ 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 December 2018

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 January 2019 (Paragraph 8)]

9 Establishment Changes to Support the Implementation of an Integrated Housing and Property Management System

A joint report dated 28 February 2019 by the Executive Directors (Housing and Technical Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on changes to the establishment to support the implementation of the new integrated housing and property management system.

A report to this Committee on 13 July 2016 had outlined the requirement to procure a single integrated housing and property management system and how this should be progressed. To support this process, a project management team had been established to develop the specification and undertake the procurement implementation of a replacement system.

A new supplier had been appointed at the end of 2018 and a projected plan developed for the implementation of the new system.

The project plan clarified the dedicated resources required to successfully implement the new system. A revised project team structure had been developed as detailed in Section 5 of the report.

Given the critical importance of the project to the business and to support effective implementation while ensuring continuity of service, staffing resources were required to be continued until the completion of the implementation of the new system, which was forecast to be by April 2021.

The Committee decided: that the changes to the establishment, as detailed in Section 5 of the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 13 July 2016 (Paragraph 10)]

10 Central Homelessness Service – Establishment Change

A joint report dated 28 February 2019 by the Executive Directors (Housing and Technical Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on a change to the establishment to support the homelessness prevention services within the Central Homelessness Team.

In 2013/2014, an allocation of £46,000 had been made to Housing and Technical Resources from tackling poverty funding to support the provision of a Policy Officer (Homelessness Prevention).

During 2015, the Executive Committee approved the transfer of Tackling Poverty monies direct to the Council Resources responsible for delivering the programme. This resulted in £46,000 mainstream funding being transferred to Housing and Technical Resources for the ongoing funding of the Policy Officer's (Homelessness Prevention) post.

Supported by temporary funding from the European Social Fund in 2016, the Policy Officer post became part of a temporary team aimed at providing financial advice and support direct to homeless persons. The temporary funding ended in December 2018.

Homelessness prevention remained a core function within the Central Homelessness Service and continued to provide advice and support to homeless and potentially homeless persons. The Policy Officer (Homelessness Prevention) role would play a key part in the further development of the Service. It was, therefore, proposed that the post of Policy Officer (Homelessness Prevention), Grade 3, Level 2-4, SCP 61-74 (£29,161 to £35,311) be added to the Resource establishment on a permanent basis.

The Committee decided: that the post of Policy Officer (Homelessness Prevention) be added to the Housing and Technical Resources' staffing establishment on a permanent basis.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 11 March 2015 (Paragraph 21)]

11 Housing Allocation Policy

A report dated 28 February 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the introduction of the revised Housing Allocation Policy.

The current Housing Allocation Policy was introduced in June 2009 and had been subject to a number of amendments to reflect changes in legislation and to address particular local circumstances.

In accordance with Housing and Technical Resources' Policy Review Schedule, the Housing Allocation Policy had been subject to a full review during 2018/2019. A key focus of the review had been to ensure that the policy was fully compliant with the legislative requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. This Act introduced key changes to the legal framework for the allocation of social rented housing in Scotland which would become effective on 1 May 2019.

In addition, the review also considered local and national policy developments which were likely to impact on the Housing Allocation Policy, including:-

- ◆ regulatory requirements
- ◆ the priorities set out within the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017 to 2022
- ◆ the Council and its partners' priority objectives to significantly reduce homelessness as detailed within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)

During the pre-consultation stage, to support the development of the consultative draft Housing Allocation Policy, a focus had been placed on ensuring the effective involvement of tenants, other customers and key stakeholders in the co-production of the consultative draft Housing Allocation Policy. A particular focus had also been placed on engagement with elected members.

The consultative draft Housing Allocation Policy had been published on the Council's website for a 12 week formal consultation period from 21 November 2018 to 11 February 2019. Consultation events had taken place with specific interest groups, such as homelessness service users, sheltered tenants and residents in the Council's Gypsy traveller sites.

The proposed policy amendments, which required to reflect legislative requirements, were detailed in the report and included under occupancy and owner occupation

In addition to the amendments required to reflect legislative requirements, a number of other amendments were proposed in relation to the mainstream policy. Those took account of local needs and circumstances as well as local and national policy developments.

The revised Housing Allocation Policy remained fundamentally based upon meeting housing needs and key amendments included:-

- ◆ points categories
- ◆ offers of housing
- ◆ suspension of applications
- ◆ local letting plans

Proposed amendments to the sheltered housing aspect of the policy were also detailed in the report and included qualifying criteria and assessment of needs

Given the change in approach to the assessment of sheltered applicants and in order to carry out an effective assessment of an individual's needs, it was proposed that the sheltered aspect of the Housing Allocation Policy be implemented from 1 February 2020.

The revised Housing Allocation Policy document was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Following discussion, it was agreed that an awareness session be arranged, for all Members, on the amended Housing Allocation Policy.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:

- (1) that the amendments to the Housing Allocation Policy arising from the statutory provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, as detailed in Section 6 of the report, be approved effective from 1 May 2019;
- (2) that the mainstream housing aspects of the revised Housing Allocation Policy, as detailed in Section 7 of the report, be approved and implemented from 1 May 2019; and
- (3) that the sheltered housing aspects of the Housing Allocation Policy, as detailed in Section 8 of the report, be approved and implemented from 1 February 2020.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 5 November 2008 (Paragraph 16)]

12 Housing Allocation Policy – Local Letting Plans 2019/2020

A report dated 14 February 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the:-

- ◆ performance of the Housing Allocation Policy measured against the 2018/2019 letting targets
- ◆ mainstream letting targets for 2019/2020
- ◆ sheltered housing letting targets for 2019/2020
- ◆ Local Letting Initiatives for 2019/2020
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Letting Initiatives

As previously reported to this Committee and in accordance with the Housing and Technical Resources' Policy Review Schedule, the Housing Allocation Policy had been subject to a full review during 2018/2019. A report detailing the outcome of this review, along with the new Housing Allocation Policy, had been presented in a separate report to this Committee. This report confirmed that, subject to approval, Local Letting Plans (LLPs) would continue to feature within the revised Housing Allocation Policy when it was introduced in May 2019.

During 2018, work had taken place with key partners to produce a Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan (RRTP) for South Lanarkshire. The RRTP had been approved by this Committee on 23 January 2019 and set out the Council and its partners' priority objectives over the next 5 years to significantly reduce homelessness.

The development of LLPs and the approach taken by the Council to set local letting targets for each of the housing lists, along with a range of other actions, would contribute towards achieving the actions set out within the RRTP.

The planning process had been brought forward to allow letting targets and letting initiatives to be fully implemented from the start of the financial year 2019/2020. Consequently, the information provided in relation to letting targets had been projected to the end of the financial year based on actual data collected during the period 2 April 2018 to 6 January 2019.

Performance information, which was set against targets for 2018/2019 for both mainstream and sheltered properties and detailed in appendices 1 and 2 to the report, had confirmed that the housing management areas were projected to meet their targets. In terms of the individual local office targets, there were some minor variations which, in general, could be attributed to variations in demand for housing within specific areas.

In relation to sheltered properties, local variations were mainly due to the low number of lets and also differences in supply and demand within certain areas.

The proposed letting targets for mainstream properties for 2019/2020 for each of the housing management areas were also detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The letting targets proposed for sheltered properties were set out in Appendix 2 to the report and details of the proposed Local Letting Initiatives (LLIs) for 2019/2020 were set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

An internal review, which had been undertaken in relation to LLIs, had confirmed the need to retain all 6 LLIs and concluded that the current criteria should be applied in 2019/2020.

In addition, it was proposed that a new LLI be introduced in the Kelvin Gardens area of Hamilton. The LLI was detailed in Appendix 3 to the report and aimed to address issues relating to low tenancy sustainment within Kelvin Gardens by providing housing support and money advice to new tenants.

Details of the South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative (SLLI), introduced to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform in South Lanarkshire on tenants affected by the under occupancy provisions of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, were provided in Appendix 4 to the report. The impact of the Initiative had been limited in terms of mitigating the impact of under occupancy provisions, however, it remained a useful tool to help affected tenants and would be retained for 2019/2020, together with the current eligibility criteria.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the performance achieved through the Housing Allocation Policy against the 2018/2019 letting targets be noted;
- (2) that the 2019/2020 mainstream letting targets, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (3) that the 2019/2020 sheltered letting targets, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;
- (4) that the Local Letting Initiatives, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved; and

- (5) that the South Lanarkshire Letting Initiatives, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 January 2019 (Paragraph 13) and 7 March 2018 (Paragraph 10)]

13 Scottish Government's Consultation on 'Local Connection and Intentionality Provisions in Homelessness Legislation'

A report dated 15 February 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Scottish Government's Consultation on 'Local connection and intentionality provisions in homelessness legislation'.

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 had produced a final report in June 2018, with 70 recommendations to address strategic changes at local and national levels, which informed the 'Ending Homelessness Together High Level Action Plan' published by the Scottish Government and COSLA on 27 November 2018.

A specific recommendation on taking forward a joint commitment to address barriers for people facing homelessness was to commence the Local Connection and Intentionality provisions in the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. The Scottish Government had produced a consultation paper and was looking for views to be submitted by 25 April 2019.

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

At its meeting on 23 January 2019, this Committee approved South Lanarkshire's first Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019 to 2024, which set out an ambitious vision and priority objectives for preventing and reducing homelessness.

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 Committee decided: that the proposed Council response to the Scottish Government's consultation on Local Connection and Intentionality Provisions in homelessness, as detailed in Appendix 1, be approved for submission to the Scottish Government by the due date of 25 April 2019.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 January 2019 (Paragraph 13) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 30 August 2017 (Paragraph 10)]

Councillor Buchanan left the meeting after this item of business

14 Overtoun Park, Rutherglen – Asset Transfer to Grow 73

A report dated 26 February 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the community asset transfer of 3 dormant bowling greens at Overtoun Park, Rutherglen to Grow 73.

The Council currently leased land at Overtoun Park, Rutherglen to Overtoun Bowling Club. The bowling club had been on this site for a considerable period of time, however, its current lease ran on a year to year basis at a rental of £1 per annum, if asked. In recent years, the bowling club had concentrated its activity on only 1 of the 4 available greens.

Grow 73, a local community group who already delivered weekly community gardening sessions within the park, entered into discussion with the bowling club regarding the possible use of the unused greens for a community growing project.

A formal application for asset transfer, by a 15 year lease at a nominal rent, under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 had been received from Grow 73 and validated on 24 August 2018. The deadline for the Council to make a decision in respect of the application was 24 February 2019, however, with the agreement of Grow 73, that period had been extended to 20 March 2019.

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

The Community Asset Transfer Assessment Panel had considered the application on 10 December 2018 and 6 February 2019, and the key matters it had taken into account were detailed in the report.

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the 3 dormant bowling greens at Overtoun Park, Rutherglen be leased to Grow 73 subject to the principal terms and conditions outlined in Sections 4 and 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 any necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

Councillors Brown, Fulton and Lennon, having declared an interest in the above item of business, withdrew from the meeting during its consideration

15 Delegated Authority Report - Update

A report dated 28 January 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the level of transactions processed by Property Services during the period 1 July to 31 December 2018.

The Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), under delegated powers, had authority to deal with various transactions including:-

- ◆ leases up to the value of £50,000 per annum and a maximum period of 20 years
- ◆ rent reviews up to an increase of £20,000 per annum
- ◆ disposals up to a value of £200,000
- ◆ acquisitions up to a value of £100,000

Details of the transactions undertaken during quarters 2 and 3, 1 July to 31 December 2018, were as follows:-

	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
Number of transactions	44	69
Total value of lease transactions	£88,410 per annum	£164,824 per annum
Total value of capital transactions	£1,050,383	£1,538,554

The Committee decided: that the transactions processed by delegated authority during the period 1 July to 31 December 2018 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 October 2018 (Paragraph 14)]

16 Notification of Contracts Awarded - 1 August 2018 to 31 January 2019

A report dated 26 February 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ contracts awarded by Housing and Technical Resources, Project Services, valued in excess of £50,000, in the period 1 August 2018 to 31 January 2019
- ◆ contracts awarded by Procurement Services
- ◆ sub-contacts awarded by Building Services

Details of the contracts and projects were provided in the appendices to the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 22 August 2018 (Paragraph 12)]

17 Update on Welfare Reform Legislative Changes

A joint report dated 20 February 2019 by the Executive Directors (Housing and Technical Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the key aspects of the Welfare Reform Programme on landlord and homelessness services.

An update was provided on the following activities:-

- ◆ Universal Credit (UC)
- ◆ under occupancy provisions
- ◆ benefit cap

The wider roll-out of the UC full service model had been completed across the UK in December 2018.

The process of moving remaining legacy benefit and tax credit claimants on to UC was termed "Managed Migration". The UK Government recently announced that this would initially be progressed on the basis of a small scale pilot, involving 10,000 people, in July 2019. It was expected, that following evaluation of the pilot, further evaluation would be undertaken prior to a revised programme for completing the managed migration across the UK being presented to Parliament. The UK Government had confirmed that it still anticipated full roll-out of UC by 2023.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the update on the impact of the key aspects of the Welfare Reform Programme be noted; and
- (2) that the ongoing management and services arrangements be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 October 2018 (Paragraph 12)]

18 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.