

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of special meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 19 January 2022

Chair:

Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors Present:

Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Janine Calikes (Depute), Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor George Greenshields, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Martin Grant Hose (*substitute for Councillor Richard Nelson*), Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor John Ross (ex officio), Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Jared Wark

Councillor's Apology:

Councillor Richard Nelson

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

H Calley, Administration Officer; J Davitt, Public Relations Officer; H Goodwin, Finance Manager (Resources); P MacRae, Administration Adviser; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; L Wyllie Administration Assistant

Housing and Technical Resources

D Lowe, Executive Director; A Finnan, Head of Housing Services; F McCafferty, Head of Property Services; C Mitchell, Strategy and Support Manager

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair extended his thanks to the members of the Budget Scrutiny Group and the Tenant Participation Consultation Group for their contribution to the budgetary process.

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget 2022/2023

A joint report dated 10 January 2022 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ the Revenue Estimate proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2022/2023 which had been prepared in line with the 30-year Business Plan
- ◆ the 2022/2023 Housing Capital Programme totalling £52.230 million

The HRA revenue budget submission for 2022/2023 had been prepared in line with the 30-year HRA Business Plan, developed to reflect investment priorities of maintaining and improving the housing stock to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the updated Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2). The programme also included projects to increase the supply of Council housing as well as environmental works and legislative compliance programmes, to ensure that all safety requirement standards were met.

The movement, as compared to the existing 2021/2022 revenue budget, was outlined in Appendix 1 to the report. The movements were summarised in the report.

The proposals took account of a bad debt provision of £3.405 million to continue to provide for the potential impact on rent collection and arrears, which included contingency for the ongoing uncertainty on the impact of COVID-19 on rental collections in the coming year and an allocation of £0.150 million for tenancy sustainment mitigation measures. Although this was an overall reduction from previous years' contingency levels, it was considered prudent within the current operational environment.

During the consultation process for 2022/2023, tenants had expressed support for continuing the temporary move away from the established approach of setting rents on a multi-year basis. To reflect the uncertainty of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a 1-year rent increase of 2.2% had been proposed for 2022/2023. To achieve this level of rent increase, a re-profiling of the long-term investment priorities had been undertaken. Short-term investment priorities and current service levels would be maintained.

In line with the HRA Business Plan, a reduction of £0.268 million for efficiencies had been included within the Resources' Supervision and Management budget which would not affect the delivery of services to tenants.

Details of the proposed Housing Capital Programme, totalling £52.230 million, were provided in Appendix 2 to the report and information on how the Programme would be funded was summarised in the report.

A wide-ranging consultation had been carried out with tenants and other stakeholders and details of the consultation process and associated outcomes were provided in the report.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:

- (1) that the proposed rent increase of 2.2% to all Council houses, Gypsy/Traveller sites, lockups and garage sites and the revenue estimate proposals for the HRA, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be endorsed; and
- (2) that, based on the rent increase of 2.2%, the 2022/2023 Housing Capital Programme of £52.230 million, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be endorsed.

[Reference: Minutes of South Lanarkshire Council of 24 February 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

3 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair advised that this would be the last Committee meeting that Frank McCafferty, Head of Property Services, would be attending as he was leaving the Council for a new role. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr McCafferty for his many years of public service and wished him well in his new position.

Councillor Ross echoed the Chair's sentiments.