

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 7 February 2007

Chair:

Councillor Alan Dick

Councillors Present:

Archie Buchanan, Jackie Burns, Tony Carlin, Sam Casserly (Depute), Russell Clearie, Gerry Convery, Eileen Logan, Billy McCaig, Michael McGlynn, John McGuinness, Alex McInnes (Senior Depute), Brian McKenna, Denis McKenna, Danny Meikle, Alice Marie Mitchell, Patricia Osborne, Bob Rooney, David Shearer, Hamish Stewart, Chris Thompson, Murray Tremble

Councillors' Apologies:

David Baillie, Jim Daisley, Jim Docherty, Joe Lowe, Edward McAvoy, Henry Mitchell, William Ross, Bert Thomson, Jim Wardhaugh, Pat Watters

Attending:

Corporate Resources

C Lyon, Administration Officer

Finance and Information Technology Resources

R Scott, Accountant

Housing and Technical Resources

J Hayton, Executive Director; P Murphy, Head of Support Services; S Short, Customer/ Administration Manager; J Stobie, 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 15 November 2006 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 24 January 2007 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2006/2007 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 8 January 2007 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Information Technology 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 29 December 2006.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £40.722 million and expenditure to date of £29.051 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2006 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Capital Budget Monitoring 2006/2007 - Housing and Technical Resources (Excl HRA)

A joint report dated 8 January 2007 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Information Technology 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 29 December 2006.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £7.507 million and expenditure to date of £4.911 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2006 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2006/2007 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 8 January 2007 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Information Technology Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 29 December 2006 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2007.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2007 of a breakeven position be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2006 (Paragraph 5)]

7 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2006/2007 - Housing and Technical Resources (Excl HRA)

A joint report dated 8 January 2007 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Information Technology Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 29 December 2006 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2007.

Details were provided on proposed budget virements to realign budgets to reflect current service provision for the homeless.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted;

- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2007 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the budget virements to realign the income and expenditure budgets to reflect current service provision for the homeless be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2006 (Paragraph 6)]

8 Property Services Performance Review

A report dated 12 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ the trading position of the Property Services Trading Division which had achieved an operating surplus of £3.455 million
- ◆ personnel issues including maximising attendance and training and development statistics
- ◆ contract/statutory performance indicators at 1 December 2006
- ◆ the Housing Investment Programme
- ◆ customer complaints and enquiries recorded during November 2006
- ◆ customer satisfaction levels

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2006 (Paragraph 7)]

9 Housing and Technical Resources - Workforce Monitoring - October to December 2006

A joint report dated 12 January 2007 by the Executive Directors (Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Housing and Technical Resources for the period October to December 2006:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2006 (Paragraph 8)]

10 Antisocial Behaviour Policy

A report dated 8 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Antisocial Behaviour Policy.

As part of the agreed consultation process, the draft Policy had been issued to a wide range of stakeholders, including local housing forums and tenant and resident associations. The consultation period had run from the end of September 2006 until 2 February 2007.

The South Lanarkshire Antisocial Behaviour Policy aimed to promote public awareness of the actions which the Council and its partners were taking to tackle antisocial behaviour and details on the 8 key sections within the Policy were provided. It was proposed that the Policy would take effect from 1 April 2007.

An Antisocial Behaviour Annual Report which followed the structure and layout of previous reports had also been developed and, following publication, would be circulated to a wide range of stakeholders. The Annual Report set out progress made in the year and detailed key actions to be taken in the year ahead.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee: that the Antisocial Behaviour Policy be approved and implemented with effect from 1 April 2007.

[Reference: Minutes of 20 September 2006 (Paragraph 10)]

11 Housing Allocations Policy - Suspension of Application Due to Antisocial Behaviour

A report dated 22 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on a proposed amendment to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy in relation to people on the waiting list who had or who were alleged to have been involved in antisocial behaviour.

The current Housing Allocations Policy had been approved in November 1999. Following a review of a recent case, it had been identified that the Council's Policy and procedures in relation to the way in which housing applicants who had or who were alleged to have been involved in antisocial behaviour required clarification.

The proposed amendment to the Policy was detailed and was designed to ensure a proper balance between the rights of the individual and the interests of the wider community.

The amendment to the Policy would be effective from 1 March 2007.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee: that the amendment to the Housing Allocations Policy, as detailed in the report, be approved and implemented with effect from 1 March 2007.

[Reference: Minutes of 28 June 2006 (Paragraph 9)]

12 Award of Debt Collection Services Contract

A report dated 9 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the outcome of the tendering process for the Debt Collection Services contract.

The contract would run from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2010 with an option to extend for up to a 2 year period. Following completion of pre-qualification questionnaires, the Assessment Panel had selected a shortlist of 6 appropriate companies who had been invited to tender. The 3 tenders returned had been evaluated on a 60% cost and 40% quality basis and, following a full assessment of each tenderer, the Assessment Panel considered that bcwgroup best demonstrated the ability to deliver the Council's operational requirements.

The total cost of the contract over the 3 year period was £2.1 million.

The Committee decided: that the Debt Collection Services contract be awarded to bcwgroup plc for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2010 with an option to extend for up to a 2 year period.

13 Funding of External Organisations 2007/2008

A report dated 8 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the provision of funding for 2007/2008 to:-

- ◆ tenants'/residents' groups and organisations
- ◆ a range of external organisations across South Lanarkshire

The grant funding would be made in accordance with Audit Scotland's "Following the Public Pound" requirements and the Council's Good Practice Guide for Funding to Voluntary and Community Organisations.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the following organisations be invited to submit an application form to allow the following grant awards to be made for 2007/2008:-

◆ Loretto Housing	£37,000
◆ Care and Repair	£214,200
◆ Scottish Council for Single Homeless	£3,900
◆ Tenants Information Service	£5,000
◆ Tenant Participation Advisory Service	£3,100
◆ Shelter Scotland	£88,500
◆ East Kilbride Women's Aid	£16,000
◆ Hamilton and Clydesdale Women's Aid	£50,000
◆ Hamilton Churches Drop in Centre	£2,500

- (2) that grants totalling £12,000 be allocated to appropriate tenants'/residents' groups and organisations.

14 Strategy for Tenant Participation in South Lanarkshire 2006 to 2009

A report dated 5 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Council's second Tenant Participation Strategy.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 had introduced a range of duties in relation to tenant participation including a duty to:-

- ◆ prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy
- ◆ maintain a register of tenant groups
- ◆ consult both individual tenants and registered tenant organisations on issues affecting them

The Strategy for 2006 to 2009 set out the progress made in the first strategy covering 2003 to 2006 and highlighted key actions required to continue to develop effective tenant participation. An Action Plan had been developed in partnership with tenants to ensure further progress in relation to the tenant participation agenda. The Action Plan set out a range of actions and timescales which were summarised in the report.

Regular updates on the Strategy would be provided to the Central Liaison Group and progress reported annually to this Committee.

The Committee decided: that the Councils' Tenant Participation Strategy covering 2006 to 2009 be approved.

15 Private Sector Housing Grants - Adaptation Works

A joint report dated 23 October 2006 by the Executive Directors (Housing and Technical Resources) and (Social Work Resources) was submitted on a proposed change to the system for administering grant assistance for adaptations works.

The current system required to be updated to ensure that people in receipt of Private Sector Housing Grant assistance received a high quality and consistent level of service from contractors. To facilitate people's access to appropriate contractors, it was proposed that the Council create and maintain a list of contractors in order that service users could obtain quotes if they wished to do so.

An advert had been placed inviting appropriate contractors to express their interest in carrying out adaptations works. Following this process, the contractors had completed a questionnaire to identify the types of works for which they wished to be considered. Following further evaluation and the completion of an interview process, it had been decided that the following companies be included on the list:-

All Areas Bathroom Works List

- ◆ Barclay Erskine Limited
- ◆ William Donnelly and Sons Limited
- ◆ Gray's Plumbing Services
- ◆ Powerflow Contracts – excluding East Kilbride
- ◆ Dickie and Jack – excluding Rutherglen/Cambuslang

All Areas Several Works List

- ◆ William Donnelly and Sons Limited
- ◆ DCR Plumbing and Heating

Details of how the scheme would operate and measures that would be taken to review the scheme were outlined.

The Committee decided: that the list of contractors to undertake aids and adaptations work associated with the Private Sector Grants Scheme, as detailed in the report, be approved.

16 Homelessness in South Lanarkshire

A report dated 12 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the progress of the implementation of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 and the successful expansion of the Rent Deposit Scheme in South Lanarkshire.

A previous report had outlined the main challenges in implementing the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003.

Progress was reported on:-

- ◆ the current position in implementing the terms of the Act

- ♦ the key implications of the Act for South Lanarkshire Council
- ♦ the expansion of the Rent Deposit Scheme in South Lanarkshire aimed at developing the Councils' use of accommodation in the private sector and cutting down the Council's reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 24 August 2005 (Paragraph 12)]

17 Charter Mark Award for Q and A

A report dated 22 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the award of the Charter Mark standard to the Q and A Service.

Following assessment, verbal feedback had been provided by the assessor confirming that the Q and A Service had achieved the Charter Mark standard. A detailed report on the areas where best practice had been achieved, together with areas identified for improvement, would be received in due course.

A further assessment would be made in February 2008 to ensure that the Service continued to meet the Charter Mark standard.

The Committee decided: that the award of the Charter Mark standard to the Q and A Service be noted.

18 Notification of Contracts Awarded - 20 October 2006 to 10 January 2007

A report dated 9 January 2007 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ♦ contracts awarded by Housing and Technical Resources in the period 20 October 2006 to 10 January 2007
- ♦ contracts instructed under the General Services Partnership

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

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2006 (Paragraph 13)]

19 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

Chairs' Remarks

The Chair thanked the Senior Depute, Depute, members and officers for their tremendous support and hard work and wished them every success for the future.

Councillor McGuinness expressed his thanks to the Chair for his work throughout his 3 terms of office and wished him every success for the future.