

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 8 November 2023

Chair:

Councillor Davie McLachlan

Councillors Present:

Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Mathew Buchanan, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Andrea Cowan, Councillor Margaret Cowie (Depute), Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Colin Dewar, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Ross Gowland, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Ross Lambie, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Eileen Logan (*substitute for Councillor Kirsty Williams*), Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Norman Rae, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Margaret B Walker (*substitute for Councillor Allan Falconer*)

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Kirsty Williams

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

G Booth, Finance Manager (Resources); H Calley, Administration Officer; M Lunny, Legal Services Adviser; E Maxwell, HR Business Manager; D McMillan, Accountant; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy); L Wyllie, Administration Assistant

Housing and Technical Resources

S Gibson, Executive Director; S Egan, Head of Housing Services; J Forbes, Head of Property Services; G McParland, Property Manager (Assets and Estates); C Mitchell, Strategy and Support Manager; J Read, Strategy and Policy Adviser

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair referred to the appointment of Councillor Cowie as Depute Chair of this Committee and thanked the outgoing Depute Chair, Councillor Lennon, for his contribution to the work of the Committee.

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 30 August 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/2024 - Housing and Technical Resources (Excl Housing Revenue Account (HRA))

A joint report dated 11 October 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April to 8 September 2023 for Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA).

As at 8 September 2023, there was a breakeven position against the phased budget.

Virements were proposed to realign budgets and those were detailed in appendices B and C to the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position as at 8 September 2023 on Housing and Technical Resources' (excl HRA) Revenue Budget, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 August 2023 (Paragraph 5) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 11 October 2023 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/2024 - Housing and Technical Resources (Housing Revenue Account (HRA))

A joint report dated 11 October 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April to 8 September 2023 for Housing and Technical Resources (HRA).

As at 8 September 2023, there was a breakeven position against the phased budget.

The Committee decided: that the breakeven position on Housing and Technical Resources' (HRA) Revenue Budget, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 August 2023 (Paragraph 6) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 11 October 2023 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Capital Budget Monitoring 2023/2024 - Housing and Technical Resources (Excl Housing Revenue Account (HRA))

A joint report dated 18 October 2023 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 8 September 2023.

The revised budget for Housing and Technical Resources was £12.258 million. On 13 September 2023, the Executive Committee agreed changes to the Programme totalling a net increase of £0.335 million as detailed in Appendix A of the report.

Anticipated spend for the period was £1.364 million and spend to 8 September 2023 amounted to £1.297 million. This represented an underspend of £0.067 million which was due to a timing issue only.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' (excl HRA) capital programme of £12.258 million and expenditure for the year of £1.297 million, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 August 2023 (Paragraph 9) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 13 September 2023 (Paragraph 6)]

6 Capital Budget Monitoring 2023/2024 - Housing and Technical Resources (Housing Revenue Account (HRA))

A joint report dated 11 October 2023 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 8 September 2023.

The budget was based on the revised capital programme for the year which had been approved by the Executive Committee on 16 August 2023.

The Housing capital programme for 2023/2024 totalled £69.596 million and was detailed, along with the funding sources, in Appendix A of the report.

Actual expenditure to 8 September 2023 was £19.378 million. This was £1.920 million behind programme and was due to a number of external fabrics projects being behind programme due to projects requiring to be reprogrammed to take account of new, more effective procurement routes and delays requiring further consideration of technical options for some works.

The Committee decided: that the revised Housing and Technical Resources' (HRA) capital programme of £69.596 million and expenditure to 8 September 2023 of £19.378 million, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 August 2023 (Paragraph 10), Minutes of the Executive Committee of 16 August 2023 (Paragraph 4) and 11 October 2023 (Paragraph 4)]

7 Housing and Technical Resources – Workforce Monitoring – July and August 2023

A joint report dated 14 September 2023 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 July and August 2023:-

- ◆ 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 10 June 2023

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 August 2023 (Paragraph 11)]

8 South Lanarkshire Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 to 2029

A report dated 23 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted:-

- ◆ requesting approval for South Lanarkshire Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024 to 2029
- ◆ providing an update on additional considerations given as part of the development of South Lanarkshire Council's SHIP 2024 to 2029

The SHIP identified affordable housing development priorities within the local authority area to guide the way in which Scottish Government funding and other resources were allocated to achieve current South Lanarkshire Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2022 to 2027 outcomes.

Local authorities were required to update the SHIP on an annual basis with sites added, removed or revised as appropriate. The most recent SHIP, which covered the period from 2023 to 2028, had been approved by this Committee on 5 October 2022.

The LHS 2022 to 2027 had been approved at the Executive Committee on 30 November 2022 and highlighted a commitment by the Council and its partners to actively seek opportunities to develop housing across South Lanarkshire to meet housing need and support social and economic regeneration.

On 30 November 2022, the Executive Committee also approved a new affordable housing supply target for the Council, aimed at delivering an additional 1,300 homes by 31 March 2027. This would be delivered through a combination of new council homes and the acquisition of existing homes from the market, with the new sites set out within the SHIP.

The SHIP 2024 to 2029 had been developed by:-

- ◆ maximising opportunities to bring forward town centre and existing Council or community planning partner-owned sites to assist in achieving the Council's new 1,300 additional homes target
- ◆ maximising opportunities to bring forward private sites through utilising new procurement routes for developers to build relationships with the Council to assist with longer term development planning
- ◆ continued alignment with the South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership to ensure appropriate current and future housing provision for those with particular needs
- ◆ alignment with relevant aspects of the new National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) to ensure new housing developments contributed to and enhanced existing neighbourhoods

Continued engagement had also taken place with developing Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners along with consultation with internal partners, which this year had been extended to elected members with a special session held on 31 August 2023. Engagement had also taken place with the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group (TPCG).

The Council had submitted the draft SHIP to the Scottish Government on 28 October 2023. The submission highlighted that the document was still in draft form and subject to approval by this Committee. Following approval by this Committee, the document would be published on the Council's website.

The draft SHIP and associated table of priority sites was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. The document had been updated in line with national guidance and provided a detailed context and rationale for the priorities which would be delivered over the 5-year period to March 2029.

Table 1, annexed to the SHIP, set out priorities for grant funding to be delivered over the rolling 5-year period and included projects with a total potential capacity for delivering up to 2,442 affordable homes in South Lanarkshire over the 5-year period to March 2029.

As detailed in the report, a range of key considerations had been made as part of the development of this year's SHIP to ensure alignment with a range of Council priorities which included town centre regeneration and appropriate provision of housing for those with particular needs.

The assumptions and forecasts set out in the SHIP were based on the best information available at the time of preparation and would be subject to refinement as part of the annual review of the SHIP and preparation of the Strategic Local Programme Agreement (SLPA) as individual projects were developed. In accordance with the guidance, this annual agreement would continue to be reviewed and refreshed annually in consultation with the Scottish Government and RSL partners.

The Scottish Government's More Homes Division would collate the South Lanarkshire SHIP into a national programme for ministerial approval and thereafter, the SLPA would be prepared for sign off by each local authority.

Once the SLPA was finalised, the Scottish Government would issue individual programme agreements for RSL and Council projects covering the units, tenure mix, subsidy levels, site start and completion dates, as those came forward. Monitoring and review of the delivery programme by the Council, its RSL partners and the Scottish Government would take place on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 to 2029, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for publication and submitted to the Scottish Government; and
- (2) that the key considerations made as part of the development of the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 to 2029 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 October 2022 (Paragraph 11) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 30 November 2023 (Paragraph 7)]

9 Policy and Strategy Review Schedule

A report dated 18 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted requesting approval for the Policy and Strategy Review Schedule for Housing and Technical Resources.

The Policy and Strategy Review Schedule was established in 2011 with regular updates provided, most recently on 14 December 2022. It assisted annual service planning by providing a timeframe for the formal review of all key housing policies and strategies. It informed the development of the annual work plan for customer involvement and provided a basis for the Council to ensure that its statutory obligations were delivered.

The proposed Schedule reflected changes in the local and national policy context and was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It included review dates that had been revised to take account of the work underway within the Resource to introduce a new Housing and Property Management system and the associated demands placed on staff resources. It set out:-

- ◆ details of housing policies and strategies
- ◆ the frequency of reviews
- ◆ when the reviews were next scheduled to take place

As part of the policy and strategy review process, associated procedures and protocols, which supported the delivery of services, were also considered and reviewed as appropriate. This ensured that scope for service improvements was also considered as part of the review process.

The scope of the policy and strategy areas covered by the Schedule was consistent with the key service areas identified by the Scottish Housing Regulator's regulatory framework, as detailed in the report.

In addition, the review also incorporated key housing and other strategies which the Resource had lead responsibility for within the Council.

The Schedule would inform the next round of Resource and Service Plans for 2024/2025 and would be used to establish a joint programme for customer engagement.

The proposed frequency of review was considered appropriate to the individual policy or strategy area. An updated Schedule would be presented to this Committee on an annual basis which would advise of progress and any amendments to the Schedule.

The Committee would continue to be fully updated in relation to the development of the specific policies and strategies contained within the Schedule.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the 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 Committees, in line with the Schedule.

[Reference: Minutes of 14 December 2022 (Paragraph 10)]

10 Laundry Facilities – Introduction of Charging 2024/2025

A report dated 18 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on a proposal for the introduction of laundry charges across relevant high rise flats from 1 April 2024.

The Council owned a total of 21 high rise blocks in East Kilbride, Hamilton and Cambuslang. Laundry facilities for tenants and residents were available within 9 high rise blocks and 1 low rise block of flats and included washing machines, spinners and driers. In East Kilbride, 3 blocks had laundry facilities charged at a nominal fee. In Hamilton and Cambuslang, 6 high rise blocks and 1 low rise block had similar laundry facilities which, in the past, had been free to use by tenants and residents. The remaining 12 high rise blocks had no laundry facilities.

As charging arrangements were not consistent, an appraisal had been undertaken which identified the need to introduce a standardised charging arrangement. This would address the inequity of the current position in East Kilbride and service-wide as the cost of the service would be borne across all Council tenants rather than by those directly using the service.

Standardising charges for washing and drying facilities would generate income to the Council to meet the significant and increasing costs of equipment, electricity, maintenance and ad-hoc repairs. The proposed level of charge had been developed to reflect the costs associated with the use and maintenance of the equipment. The introduction of charging was only applicable to those blocks with existing laundry facilities.

A benchmarking comparison with 3 local laundrettes was detailed in Table 1, with the estimated annual income detailed in Table 2 within the report.

Following approval by this Committee, a programme of engagement with those affected tenants and residents would be undertaken prior to the introduction of charging from 1 April 2024.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the introduction of laundry charges, as detailed in section 4 of the report, from 1 April 2024, be approved; and
- (2) that it be noted that a programme of engagement with tenants and residents would be undertaken on the introduction of charging.

11 Acquisition of 6 Houses at Tenter Place and Lampmaker Drive, Hamilton

A report dated 11 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted requesting approval to acquire 6 houses at Tenter Place and Lampmaker Drive, Hamilton from Lovell Homes.

On 30 November 2022, the Executive Committee approved the revised Council Housing Supply Programme target of 1,300 additional homes to increase the total number of council homes in South Lanarkshire by March 2027. It was noted within the report to that Committee, that this would be achieved through a flexible combination of new homes, built on behalf of the Council on existing Council owned land, new homes purchased 'off the shelf' from housing developers and the acquisition of suitable existing homes.

Through the ongoing redevelopment of the former Philips factory site at Wellhall Road, Hamilton, Lovell Homes was building a total of 163 houses. As part of the Section 75 Planning Agreement for the development, Lovell Homes was providing 40 houses to the Council through a Turnkey arrangement.

An opportunity had arisen for the Council to acquire an additional 6 'off the shelf' units within the current calendar year. The houses comprised four, 3-bedroom semi-detached and two, 3-bedroom townhouses. Those units would help increase supply and meet housing need in a high pressure area. The Council was already acquiring units within the development as part of the Section 75 Agreement and therefore, there would be an existing management presence within the immediate locality.

The properties had been assessed as being in an area of housing need and the properties were of a size and type that the Council had demand for. The acquisitions presented the Council with an opportunity to deliver additional housing more quickly than through its ongoing new build programme as planning consent had already been granted and development was nearing completion. It was highlighted that the proposed acquisition of the 6 units was an entirely separate transaction from the previous transaction for 40 houses which were being acquired pursuant to planning obligations in the Section 75 Agreement.

The acquisitions would be eligible for Scottish Government Affordable Housing Grant funding and an assessment of the market value of the houses confirmed that the proposed price represented good value for money.

Therefore, it was proposed to acquire the 6 properties at Tenter Place and Lampmaker Drive, Hamilton from Lovell Homes subject to the following principal conditions:-

- ♦ the purchase price to be £1,306,000, exclusive of VAT, which would be payable on the date of entry

- ◆ the date of entry to be upon completion
- ◆ each party to be responsible for their own legal fees

The Committee decided:

- (1) that 6 houses at Tenter Place and Lampmaker Drive, Hamilton, be acquired from Lovell Homes for the total sum of £1,306,000, exclusive of VAT, for addition to the Council's housing stock; 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 other matters pertaining to the acquisition 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 the Executive Committee of 30 November 2022 (Paragraph 7)]

12 Annual Report - Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity within Housing and Technical Resources

A report dated 10 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted providing an overview of progress made in relation to mainstreaming equalities within Housing and Technical Resources during 2022/2023 and highlighting the key actions being progressed during 2023/2024.

The Housing and Technical Resources' Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group continued to progress the Equality and Diversity work plan and support a consistent approach to mainstreaming equality and diversity across the Resource.

Details were provided on progress made in meeting those commitments during 2022/2023 and the key priorities for 2023/2024 were outlined.

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

The Committee decided: that the progress made during 2022/2023 and key actions for 2023/2024 in relation to mainstreaming equalities be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 14 December 2022 (Paragraph 17)]

13 Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) 2022/2023

A report dated 29 September 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted providing an update on:-

- ◆ the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the requirement to produce an Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) covering performance during 2022/2023
- ◆ arrangements to monitor and report on Charter progress throughout 2023/2024

The Charter contained 32 measures of performance which reflected a mixture of qualitative, survey-based information as well as a range of efficiency and effectiveness measures. To comply with the requirements set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), the Resource submitted its 2022/2023 performance information to the Regulator on 26 May 2023.

The Charter report was consistent with those of previous years and a summary, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, provided further details on each indicator together with a comparison against the Scottish average for all social landlords and that of the other Scottish local authority landlords. There were 7 indicators where performance had improved in the last year, details of which were included in the report along with a summary of the position and context in relation to 5 indicators where performance had reduced.

A key objective of the Charter process was to ensure robust scrutiny and consideration of the performance of landlords. As trends emerged, the comparative aspect of performance with others would inform and reflect on areas for future tenant and service user scrutiny and potential areas for service improvement.

The Resource Plan 2023/2024, which included the majority of the Charter indicators, would continue to be monitored and reported as part of the 6-monthly update to the Committee.

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Council's reported performance and contextual information for the Scottish Social Housing Charter and comparisons with other landlords, as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the future use of the Charter for ongoing scrutiny by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), tenants and other service users, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 October 2022 (Paragraph 14)]

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

A report dated 10 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted providing an update on the Housing and Technical Resources' Risk Register and Risk Control actions.

Housing and Technical Resources 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 top risks
- ◆ was able to prioritise those risks
- ◆ had controls in place to eliminate or minimise the impact of the risk

The risks were scored in accordance with the Council's scoring mechanism based on likelihood and impact of risk. This resulted in risks being scored between 1 to 25 (low to very high). Risks were scored on their inherent risk (risk if nothing was done) and their residual risk (risk after applying controls). The Council's scoring matrix was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Risk Register for the Resource had been developed and was monitored on an ongoing basis by the Resource Risk Management Group to add new risks and to review the score of existing risks. The main changes to the Risk Register, including 5 new risks, were summarised in the report.

Details of all risks which had scored very high and high were provided in Appendix 2 to the report. Risks evaluated as being medium or low risk would be monitored to ensure that they continued to be adequately managed.

Appendix 3 to the report provided a comparison of risk scores for 2022 and 2023. This appendix also detailed changes in risk descriptions.

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the contents of the Resource Risk Register be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that risk control actions would continue to be progressed by relevant officers.

[Reference: Minutes of 14 December 2022 (Paragraph 16)]

15 Notification of Contracts Awarded - 1 April to 8 September 2023

A report dated 15 September 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on contracts awarded by Housing and Technical Resources, valued in excess of £50,000, in the period 1 April to 8 September 2023, as follows:-

- ♦ contracts awarded by Consultancy Services
- ♦ contracts awarded by the Procurement Team
- ♦ sub contracts awarded by Building Services

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

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the contracts awarded by Consultancy Services, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the contracts awarded by the Procurement Team, as detailed in Appendix B to the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the sub contracts awarded by Building Services, as detailed in Appendix C to the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 May 2023 (Paragraph 10)]

16 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.