

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 13 November 2019

Chair:

Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors Present:

Councillor Walter Brogan (*substitute for Councillor Mo Razzaq*), Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Jackie Burns, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Stephanie Callaghan (Depute), Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor George Greenshields, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Catherine McClymont (*substitute for Councillor Martin Lennon*), Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Collette Stevenson, Councillor Jared Wark

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor John Ross (ex officio)

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

J Burke, Administration Assistant; M M Cairns, Legal Services Manager; H Goodwin, Finance Manager (Resources); C Lyon, Administration Officer; M Milne, 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; 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 4 September 2019 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Chair referred to Agenda Item 13 of the previous minutes in relation to the Redesign of the Out of Hours Emergency Repairs Service and advised that, while there was not a follow up report on this agenda, a constructive meeting had taken place to consider progress to date and a further meeting would take place on 16 December 2019.

In response to a specific question raised, the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) clarified the position in relation to the title of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the minutes be approved as a correct record; and
- (2) that the position on the Redesign of the Out of Hours Emergency Repairs Service be noted.

3 Capital Budget Monitoring 2019/2020 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 23 October 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 to 13 September 2019.

The Committee decided: that Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £7.310 million and expenditure to 13 September 2019 of £0.881 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 4 September 2019 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2019/2020 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 3 October 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 to 13 September 2019.

The Committee decided: that Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £61.835 million and expenditure to 13 September 2019 of £18.936 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 4 September 2019 (Paragraph 4)]

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

A joint report dated 19 September 2019 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 13 September 2019 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2020.

Following the probable outturn exercise, the financial forecast for the revenue budget to 31 March 2020 was a breakeven position.

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 2020 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 June 2019 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/2020 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 20 September 2019 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 13 September 2019 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2020.

Following the probable outturn exercise, the financial forecast for the revenue budget to 31 March 2020 was a breakeven position.

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 2020 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 4 September 2019 (Paragraph 6)]

7 Housing and Technical Resources – Workforce Monitoring – July to September 2019

A joint report dated 14 October 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 July to September 2019:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ discipline, grievance and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 4 September 2019 (Paragraph 9)]

8 Housing and Technical Resource Plan – Quarter 2 Progress Report 2019/2020

A report dated 7 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Housing and Technical Resource Plan for 2019/2020.

Details were provided on progress made at the end of quarter 2, covering the period 1 April to 30 September 2019, in implementing the priority projects identified in the Resource Plan.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 25 September 2019 (Paragraph 7)]

9 Acquisition of Land for Park and Ride Facility at Bridge Street, Cambuslang

A report dated 2 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the acquisition of land at Bridge Street, Cambuslang, extending to 2.4 acres or thereby, for the development of a park and ride facility to serve Cambuslang station.

The Community and Enterprise Resources Committee had approved the South Lanarkshire Park and Ride Strategy at its meeting on 30 October 2018. The Strategy identified the growth in rail patronage within South Lanarkshire and the requirement for improved and additional park and ride car parking spaces adjacent to Network Rail stations.

Cambuslang station had been identified within the Strategy as a high priority location for additional park and ride spaces. Roads and Transportation Services had determined that vacant land to the north of Cambuslang station entrance at Bridge Street, Cambuslang would be suitable for a new facility, providing an additional 260 spaces.

The land was in the ownership of Forrest Developments Limited, who had been actively marketing the site for a range of uses including residential, retail or commercial, which were all compatible with planning policy for the area. A price of £700,000 had been provisionally agreed with Forrest Developments Limited which reflected the alternative uses for the land. The site was mainly level, vacant and had direct access to the adopted road.

In terms of the Park and Ride Strategy, a funding grant for the acquisition costs of £800,000 had been secured from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport. Funding could include all related aspects necessary to conclude the land purchase.

The principal terms and conditions for the acquisition were detailed in the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the site at Bridge Street, Cambuslang, extending to 2.4 acres or thereby, be acquired from Forrest Developments Limited for the sum of £700,000, exclusive of VAT, and in terms of principal conditions outlined in Section 4 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 acquisition and enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

[Reference: Minutes of the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee of 30 October 2018 (Paragraph 11)]

10 Domestic Dwelling Houses Within Carstairs Junction – Surplus to Housing Requirements

A report dated 7 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted requesting approval to declare the domestic dwellings at 1, 3 and 5 Allison Place, Carstairs Junction, surplus to the operational requirements of Housing Services.

Previous reports to this Committee in September 2015 and January 2017 had proposed a range of recommendations to address sustainability issues within the rural villages of Clydesdale North and South. The recommendations approved were aimed at consolidating and promoting the future sustainability of the Council housing stock in those areas and included selective demolition of properties where an oversupply of housing had been identified and where those properties were a blight on the local community.

This Committee had also approved proposals to consider diversification and ownership initiatives of non-core rented stock.

An oversupply of housing had been identified within the village of Carstairs Junction and, following Committee approval in 2015, selected demolitions had taken place. Those demolitions had been completed prior to the major investment works which were ongoing to the retained stock within the village at Allison Street, Pettinain Road and King Street.

In addition to those properties already demolished, the 4 in a block property at 1 to 7 Allison Place, Carstairs Junction comprised 3 Council owned flats and one privately owned flat. The Council owned properties had been vacant for 5 years and were deemed to be surplus to operational requirements. The one residential owner at 7 Allison Place did not wish to voluntarily sell his property to the Council.

To support other actions to promote sustainability in Carstairs Junction, it was proposed that the option to sell the 3 vacant flats within block 1 to 7 Allison Place be explored. All of the properties required a degree of investment and modernisation but were in a marketable condition. It was proposed that the properties be declared surplus to Housing Services' requirements and that the Estates Service be instructed to place the properties on the open market. Any sale would be conditional on receiving the required consent from the Scottish Government within the terms of Sections 12 and 14 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

It was noted that a lower offer in comparison to the market value would still be of benefit to the Council rather than the continued rent loss. This approach could have wider benefits to the community and sustainment of local communities.

The properties would remain on the open market until a suitable offer was received. In the meantime, should demand for Council housing change within these villages, there remained the option to no longer consider them as surplus and to let them accordingly.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the 3 properties at 1, 3 and 5 Allison Place, Carstairs Junction be declared surplus to the operational requirements of Housing Services; and
- (2) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, be authorised to place those properties on the open market for sale as residential properties.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 January 2017 (Paragraph 10)]

11 South Lanarkshire Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2020 to 2025

A report dated 7 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ♦ progress in delivering affordable housing through the Strategic Local Programme Agreement (SLPA) during 2018/2019
- ♦ the updated Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for the 5 year period from 2020 to 2025

The SHIP was a key part of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) which linked the strategic priorities and outcomes in the LHS to a strategic plan to deliver new affordable housing which, in turn, guided the allocation of available Scottish Government investment funding to meet those priorities and outcomes.

The Council's LHS 'Affordable Homes; Sustainable Places', covering the 5 year period from 2017 to 2022, was approved by the Executive Committee on 30 August 2017. It included a housing supply target for 1,500 additional affordable homes over that period.

Working in consultation with Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners and the Scottish Government, good progress had been made by the Council and RSLs in delivering development priorities to the financial year end in March 2019 in respect of the SLPA .

A total of 445 additional homes for social rent were delivered across South Lanarkshire, including:-

- ◆ 252 housing association homes
- ◆ 132 new build Council houses
- ◆ 61 Council homes purchased through the Open Market Purchase Scheme

225 of the units were for general needs and 220 of the units were for particular needs. A summary of the completed units was provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

Work continued on the Home+ Programme to ensure the target of 1,000 additional homes was achieved by March 2021. A summary of the 502 additional homes either under construction, completed or acquired to date was provided in Appendix 2 to the report.

A copy of the SHIP and associated table of priority sites was attached as Appendix 3 to the report. It had been updated in line with the Scottish Government's guidance for the preparation of SHIPs, available at the time of preparation.

The SHIP included projects with a total capacity for delivering up to 3,141 homes in South Lanarkshire over its lifespan, including 2,931 new build and 210 open market purchase properties. The actual output would be subject to a detailed development assessment of the viability of each identified site as well as the level of grant funding which was available for the period to 2025.

The SHIP had been submitted to the Scottish Government on 25 October 2019 pending Committee approval, to be collated into a national programme for Ministerial approval and, thereafter, the SLPAs would be signed off with each local authority.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the progress made in increasing the supply of affordable housing through the Strategic Housing Investment Programme Agreement be noted; and
- (2) that the content of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2020 to 2025, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 22 August 2018 (Paragraph 9) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 30 August 2017 (Paragraph 10)]

12 Update on Welfare Reform Legislative Changes

A report dated 7 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the key aspects of the Welfare Reform Programme on landlord and homelessness services.

An update was provided on the following:-

- ◆ 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 the remaining legacy benefit and tax credit claimants onto UC, previously known as “Managed Migration”, was now termed “moving to UC”. A pilot scheme, which involved up to 10,000 people, commenced in July 2019 in Harrogate. The pilot had been based on asking claimants to opt to move to UC voluntarily during work-focused interview at job centres. On that basis, it was likely that, initially, there would be small number of claimants moved to UC. The UK Government had confirmed that it still anticipated full rollout of UC by 2023.

Other changes came into effect from 15 May 2019 for couples in receipt of Pension Credit. Where one partner was aged above Pension Credit age and the other person was aged under, they would no longer be able to make a new claim for Pension Credit, instead they would have to claim UC. “Mixed age couples” on Pension Credit could continue to remain on Pension Credit so long as they continued to satisfy the qualifying conditions.

From October 2019, the maximum rate at which deductions could be made from UC had been reduced from 40% to 30% of the standard UC allowance. In addition, the period over which advances could be recovered would be extended from 12 to 16 months from October 2021.

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 service arrangements be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 20 March 2019 (Paragraph 17)]

13 Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) 2018/2019

A report dated 7 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Scottish Social Housing Charter 2018/2019.

The Charter contained 32 contextual indicators, 25 of which related to both councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), with the remaining 7 only applying to RSLs. In line with the requirements set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), Housing and Technical Resources had submitted its 2018/2019 performance information on 30 May 2019.

Nationally, the SHR had published a report at the end of August 2019 which covered 18 of the indicators, detailing the position across all 193 social housing landlords in Scotland. Appendix 1 to the report set out the 18 indicators and, where appropriate, provided a comparison with both the Scottish average and other Scottish local authority landlords.

A report had been presented to this Committee on 4 September 2019 which provided an update on the outcome of the SHR review of the regulatory framework for housing and homelessness services. This included changes to the Charter indicators which would come into effect at the end of 2019/2020.

As part of the Charter requirements, the Council was required to publish a more detailed annual report on its performance by the end of October 2019. Tenants on the Tenants' Participation Co-ordination Group (TPCG) had been involved in the development of the Council's report on performance, which would be included in the 'Housing News' and published on the Council's website.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Council's performance and associated contextual information in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and comparisons with other landlords, as detailed in Appendix 1 to 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 4 September 2019 (Paragraph 16) and 31 October 2018 (Paragraph 13)]

14 Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity within Housing and Technical Resources

A report dated 23 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on progress achieved in relation to mainstreaming Equality and Diversity within Housing and Technical Resources during 2018/2019 together with key action areas identified for 2019/2020.

A number of actions from Housing and Technical Resources' Service and Resource Plans were initially aligned to the equality outcomes. Progress made on those actions had been monitored by the Resource Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group.

During 2018/2019, the Resource had completed a total of 8 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) in respect of the:-

- ◆ Housing Allocation Policy
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
- ◆ Local Letting Initiatives (x6)

The key achievements and areas of progress for Housing and Technical Resources for 2018/2019 were detailed in the report.

The Resource Equality and Diversity Monitoring Report aligned the new Equality Outcomes and would continue to drive the progress in relation to mainstreaming equalities across Housing and Technical Resources. Key principles to be achieved in 2019/2020 included:-

- ◆ continuing to implement EIAs and Fairer Scotland Duty assessments across all new and revised policies and strategies
- ◆ in response to revised Local Housing Strategy guidance, a plan for cross tenure wheelchair accessible housing targets to become an integral part of future Local Housing Strategies
- ◆ continuing to work with the Health and Social Care Partnership to support the objectives of the Housing Contribution Statement and the wider national health and wellbeing outcomes
- ◆ plans to develop a revised sheltered housing needs assessment with the aim of ensuring that those applicants most in need of the sheltered housing support service would be prioritised

- ◆ continuing to engage with Gypsy/Travellers on matters which affected the Gypsy/Traveller community and raise awareness of the Gypsy/Traveller culture through continued staff development sessions
- ◆ working with the South Lanarkshire Homelessness Strategy Group and engaging with those who had lived experience of homelessness to support the implementation of year 1 of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 March 2018 (Paragraph 9)]

15 Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 Annual Review 2018/2019

A report dated 7 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the first annual review of the Council's Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022.

The Council's Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 had been approved by this Committee at its meeting on 23 May 2018.

This was the fourth Strategy developed in partnership with the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group. It outlined how Housing Services would continue to engage with, and involve, customers in shaping the services provided.

It focused on the following 4 strategic outcomes:-

- ◆ customers would be informed and knowledgeable
- ◆ more customers would be involved
- ◆ customers would help to drive continuous service improvement
- ◆ customers would help to shape change and make a difference

Those outcomes included a total of 23 objectives and subsequent actions that would outline how Housing Services and its partners would aim to achieve each of them. The annual review had identified that progress had been made on 18 out of the 23 objectives across the 4 strategic outcomes.

Key achievements for 2018/2019 were highlighted in the report along with priority areas for progression over 2019/2020. The full report was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 May 2018 (Paragraph 9)]

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

A report dated 30 September 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ systems and controls in place within Housing and Technical Resources to control and minimise 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 23 January 2019 (Paragraph 15)]

17 Delegated Authority Report - Update

A report dated 4 October 2019 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the level of transactions processed by Property Services during the period 1 April to 30 September 2019.

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 1 and 2, 1 April to 30 September 2019, were as follows:-

Quarter 1:

Number of transactions	61
Total value of lease transactions	£84,815 per annum
Total value of capital transactions	£1,206,909

Quarter 2:

Number of transactions	55
Total value of lease transactions	£115,559 per annum
Total value of capital transactions	£1,503,214

The Committee decided: that the transactions processed by delegated authority during the period 1 April to 30 September 2019, together with the year end summary, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 June 2019 (Paragraph 14)]

18 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.