

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the special meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 21 January 2026

Chair:

Councillor Davie McLachlan

Councillors Present:

Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Mathew Buchanan, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Andrea Cowan, Councillor Margaret Cowie (Depute), Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Colin Dewar, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Gladys Ferguson-Miller (*substitute for Councillor Ian McAllan*), Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Ross Gowland, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Eileen Logan (*substitute for Councillor Gerry Convery*), Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Norman Rae, Councillor Kirsten Robb, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Kirsty Williams

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Ian McAllan

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

L Cunningham, Administration Officer; K Gowrie, Finance Manager (Resources); E-A McGonigle, Administration Adviser; K McLeod, Administration Assistant

Housing and Technical Resources

S Gibson, Executive Director; S Egan, Head of Housing Services; C Jardine, Head of Property Services

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget 2026/2027

A joint report dated 22 December 2025 by the Executive Directors (Housing and Technical Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ the revenue estimate proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2026/2027 which had been prepared in line with the 30-year Business Plan
- ◆ the 2026/2027 Housing Capital Programme totalling £90.434 million

The HRA revenue budget for 2026/2027 had been prepared in line with the 30-year HRA Business Plan, developed to reflect the investment priority to maintain and improve the housing stock to meet national housing quality and energy efficiency standards. 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 from the original 2025/2026 revenue budget was outlined in Appendix 1 to the report. The main expenditure movements were detailed in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

The 2026/2027 budget proposal included a provision of £1.331 million for bad debt. This was a decrease from 2025/2026, reflecting the expected position for 2026/2027 and was required to continue to provide for the potential impact on rent collection and arrears. This included contingency for the ongoing uncertainty on rental collections in the coming year due to cost of living pressures, continued managed migration to Universal Credit and an allocation of £0.300 million for tenancy sustainment mitigation.

During previous budget engagement, tenants had favoured multi-year agreements on the basis that they would have some clarity regarding rent levels in the medium-term. This was year 3 of a 3-year multi-year agreement, with the rent increase of 6.50% being proposed for 2026/2027. In addition to council houses, this increase would apply to Gypsy/Traveller sites, lock-ups, garage sites, as well as charges for close cleaning and laundry services within flatted properties where this service was in place.

In February 2016, the Council approved the application of an additional £10 weekly rental charge to all new build properties let on, or after, 1 April 2016. Since that time, the increase had been applied to all Council new build house rents, regardless of property type and size. In preparing the budget and rent-setting proposals for 2026/2027, further consideration had been given to the additional weekly charge, and it was considered appropriate that a revised approach to setting the new build premium be progressed, whereby the increase to be applied to new build properties would vary to reflect property type and size.

It was recommended that for new properties let to tenants on, or after, 1 April 2026, the weekly additional rent charge for new build properties move to a base rent level plus a 15% premium, rather than a £10 weekly additional charge. The base rent reflected the size and type of property, while the premium reflected the energy efficiency of new build properties, with tenants benefiting from lower fuel bills. The application of a 15% premium on energy efficient, new build properties would support the continuation of the new build programme. The proposal would mean that the Council would have the following 3 levels of house rent:-

- ◆ base rent level (standard South Lanarkshire rent determined by size and type)
- ◆ base rent level plus £10 per week for new builds let on, or after, 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2026
- ◆ base rent level plus 15% premium for new builds let on, or after, 1 April 2026

Based on the latest Scottish Housing Charter returns, the average rent charges for South Lanarkshire Council tenants were currently the 8th lowest of local authority landlords in Scotland and were the lowest of all social landlords who operated in South Lanarkshire.

The proposed 2026/2027 HRA Capital Programme, totalling £90.434 million, was detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

The funding allocation for 2026/2027 for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme had not yet been confirmed, however, in the interim, a programme had been developed based on the grant allocation for 2025/2026 and the estimate would be increased or decreased once the 2026/2027 grant funding was confirmed. Further information would be provided to the Executive Committee once confirmation of the grant had been received, including any required amendments to the 2026/2027 Capital Programme.

Information was provided on the budget consultation programme undertaken by the Council in conjunction with the Budget Scrutiny Group and the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group.

The Head of Housing Services responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report and, where information was not readily available, undertook to provide this to the relevant members.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:

- (1) that the proposed rent increase of 6.50% to be applied in 2026/2027 to all council houses, Gypsy/Traveller sites, lock-ups and garage sites and the revenue estimate proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be endorsed;
- (2) that the proposed increase in charges applied for the provision of close cleaning and laundry services of 6.50% in 2026/2027 be endorsed;
- (3) that a 15% premium be added to all new build rent charges that were let either on, or after, 1 April 2026, reflecting the increased energy efficiency measures within those properties and to support the continuing new build programme, as detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report, be endorsed;
- (4) that, based on the rent increase of 6.50%, the 2026/2027 Housing Capital Programme of £90.434 million, as detailed in Appendix 2, be endorsed; and
- (5) that the recommendations be referred to the Executive Committee for endorsement, then to Council for approval.

[Reference: Minutes of 17 December 2025 (Paragraph 9) and Minutes of the special meeting of South Lanarkshire Council of 26 February 2025 (Paragraph 2) and Minutes of South Lanarkshire Council of 24 February 2016 (Paragraph 3)]

3 Acquisition of Affordable Homes at Almada Street, Hamilton

A report dated 9 January 2026 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted requesting approval to acquire 36 affordable housing properties from Keepmoat Homes at the former University of the West of Scotland site, Almada Street, Hamilton, for inclusion in the Council's housing stock.

On 30 November 2022, the Executive Committee approved a new affordable housing supply target for the Council, aiming to deliver an additional 1,300 homes by 31 March 2027. The proposal was for this to 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 Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP).

On 27 November 2024, as part of the approval of the SHIP 2025 to 2030, the Committee was advised that, due to a range of external factors, this target was unlikely to be achieved, however, efforts and focus would still be given to maximise the number of additional council homes delivered by March 2027.

On 17 December 2025, the SHIP 2026 to 2031 was approved by the Committee. This included projects with a total potential capacity for delivering up to 2,408 affordable homes in South Lanarkshire over the 5-year period to March 2031 and included reference to new council homes proposed at the former University of the West of Scotland site, Almada Street, Hamilton. A site plan, showing the location of the proposed development, was circulated to members of the Committee under separate cover.

In April 2025, the Council entered discussions with Keepmoat Homes to fulfil its planning obligation for new affordable homes, as detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report. The proposal had been assessed by the Council's relevant technical and commercial services as presenting value for money for the Council. It was proposed to acquire 36 completed houses from Keepmoat Homes, subject to the following principal conditions:-

- ◆ the Council would pay a land payment prior to works commencing and take ownership of the site
- ◆ the balance for each unit would then be paid in the following stages – floor slab, wind and watertight, and completion
- ◆ the Council would receive a third-party warranty covering defects and structure for a period of no less than 10 years
- ◆ each party would be responsible for their own legal fees

The Head of Property Services responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report and, where information was not readily available, undertook to provide this to the relevant members.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the acquisition of 36 completed affordable homes from Keepmoat Homes at the former University of the West of Scotland site, Almada Street, Hamilton, for a total price of £8,836,800 (which included the cost of land and excluded VAT) to fulfil the planning obligations associated with the residential development of the site be approved; and
- (2) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in conjunction with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, be authorised to conclude all matters pertaining to those transactions, in the appropriate manner and in the best interests of the Council, where each individual transaction was in excess of the current £200,000 acquisition limit under the existing delegated powers arrangements.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 30 November 2022 (Paragraph 6) and Minutes of 27 November 2024 (Paragraph 10) and 17 December 2025 (Paragraph 9)]

4 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.