

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 8 December 2010

Chair:

Councillor Alex McInnes

Councillors Present:

Jackie Burns, Andy Carmichael, Maureen Devlin, Douglas Edwards, Beith Forrest, Graeme Horne, Bobby Lawson, Brian McCaig, Patrick Ross-Taylor

Councillors' Apologies:

John Anderson, David Baillie (Depute), Walter Brogan, Jim Docherty, Barry Douglas, Ian Gray, Anne Higgins, Edward McAvoy, Brian McKenna, Jean McKeown, John Murray, David Shearer, Bert Thomson, Richard Tullett

Attending:

Corporate Resources

C Lyon, Administration Officer

Housing and Technical Resources

L Freeland, Executive Director; A Finnan, Head of Area Services; P Murphy, Head of Support Services; 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 29 September 2010 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Capital Budget Monitoring 2010/2011 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 9 November 2010 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (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 October 2010.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £42.033 million and expenditure to date of £19.717 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 September 2010 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2010/2011 - Housing and Technical Resources (Excl HRA)

A joint report dated 9 November 2010 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (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 October 2010.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £6.941 million and expenditure to date of £1.738 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 September 2010 (Paragraph 4)]

5 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2010/2011 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 8 November 2010 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 29 October 2010 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2011.

Details were provided on proposed budget virements to realign budgets.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2011 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the budget virements, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 September 2010 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2010/2011 - Housing and Technical Resources (Excl HRA)

A joint report dated 8 November 2010 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 29 October 2010 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), together with a forecast to 31 March 2011.

Details were provided on proposed budget virements to realign budgets.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the underspend on the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA) of £0.002 million, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2011 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the budget virements, as detailed in Appendices B, C and D to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 September 2010 (Paragraph 6)]

7 Statutory Performance Indicators - 5 Year Comparison 2005/2006 to 2009/2010

A joint report dated 17 November 2010 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on Housing and Technical Resources' Statutory Performance Indicators for the financial year 2009/2010. Comparisons and explanations, where appropriate, were provided for the 5 year period covering 2005/2006 to 2009/2010.

Any areas for performance improvement would be set out in the Resource Plan and Service Plans.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' Statutory Performance Indicators for 2009/2010 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 25 November 2009 (Paragraph 7) and Executive Committee of 3 November 2010 (Paragraph 14)]

8 Property Services Performance Report

A report dated 11 November 2010 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 £2.353 million at 31 October 2010
- ◆ personnel issues including maximising attendance
- ◆ contract/statutory performance indicators at 31 October 2010
- ◆ the Housing Investment Programme
- ◆ customer complaints and enquiries at 31 October 2010
- ◆ customer satisfaction levels

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 September 2010 (Paragraph 7)]

9 Housing and Technical Resources - Workforce Monitoring - August to October 2010

A joint report dated 12 November 2010 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 August to October 2010:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers
- ◆ Joint Staffing Watch as at 11 September 2010

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 September 2010 (Paragraph 8)]

10 Housing and Technical Resources' Resource Plan 2010/2011 - Quarter 2 Progress Report

A report dated 4 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Housing and Technical Resources' Resource Plan 2010/2011. Details were provided on progress made at the end of quarter 2, covering the period 1 April to 30 September 2010, in implementing the priority projects identified in the Resource Plan.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 June 2010 (Paragraph 9)]

11 Home Insulation Grant Award

A report dated 1 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the outcome of the funding bid made by the Council to the Scottish Government in terms of the Universal Home Insulation Scheme (UHS).

The Scottish Government had made available grant funding totalling £10 million to assist in improving energy efficiency, principally in private housing within Scotland. The Council had submitted a bid of £2.1 million in August 2010 for the installation of cavity wall insulation to 1,900 owner occupier homes in blocks of flats, which also contained Council tenants, and had been successful in obtaining an award of £800,000.

The bid had been compiled to allow the Council to also have the cavity wall insulation installed into the Council houses within those blocks but which would be paid for by Scottish Power under current funding arrangements.

The programme of insulation work, which would benefit 1,200 households in South Lanarkshire, required to be completed by the end of March 2011 and, therefore, the following actions were proposed:-

- ◆ that the Council engage its current partner agent, EAGA, to undertake all of the work
- ◆ that, in the first instance, the offer of grant be made to residents in properties where current records showed that cavity wall insulation did not exist or was known to be defective
- ◆ that only in situations where permission could not be obtained from enough owners of the homes known to be ineffectively insulated, the offer of grant be made available to other home owners

The programme would result in financial benefits to tenants as a result of reduced fuel bills and would also help to reduce carbon emissions.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the grant award of £800,000 from the Scottish Government for the installation of cavity wall insulation be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed actions required to deliver the programme of works, as detailed in the report, be approved.

12 Proposals for the Reconfiguration of Sheltered Housing Stock in Rutherglen

A report dated 12 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on proposals for the reconfiguration of sheltered housing stock in Rutherglen.

The Best Value Service Review of Sheltered Housing, carried out in November 2004, had identified that the majority of sheltered properties within the Rutherglen area had historically been used as mainstream accommodation and had been redesignated by Glasgow City Council as sheltered housing. The Council had only one purpose built complex within the Rutherglen area. The Review had also identified that many of the former mainstream properties did not meet the standard criteria or requirements of sheltered housing, with the design and location of some developments having resulted in low demand from applicants.

The non-purpose built properties in Rutherglen at Chapel Court, Castlefern Road and Woodend Road had become increasingly unpopular with elderly tenants due to a number of reasons which were detailed in the report.

The future Registered Social Landlord development programme and regeneration proposals for the area included the provision of additional properties suitable for older people. 24 amenity units had been completed in 2009/2010 as part of the Cairns and Fernhill Regeneration Programme and a further 102 units were planned for 2011 to 2013 within Cambuslang, Fernhill and Rutherglen.

In order to progress the reconfiguration of the properties, it was proposed that:-

- ◆ consultation be undertaken with existing sheltered tenants, including an appraisal of their housing needs and preferences in respect of the following options:-
 - ◆ remain in current tenancy with continuing support from Community Sheltered Housing Officer
 - ◆ remain in current tenancy with dispersed alarm connected to the Council's 24-hour control centre
 - ◆ transfer to alternative suitable housing
- ◆ no further offers be made to sheltered applicants after 1 January 2011
- ◆ current applicants on the housing list whose preference included those properties be advised that this stock would revert to mainstream

The Committee decided: that the following properties, currently designated as sheltered accommodation, be redesignated and returned to the mainstream housing stock:-

- ◆ 16 properties at Chapel Court, West End
- ◆ 32 properties at Castlefern Road/Kirkmuir Drive, Fernhill
- ◆ 12 properties at Woodend Road, Fernhill

13 Sheltered Housing Development - Cambuslang and Rutherglen Areas

A report dated 12 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on proposals to provide additional sheltered housing in Cambuslang and Rutherglen.

A key priority of the Local Housing Strategy was to tackle the shortage of purpose-built sheltered housing in the Cambuslang and Rutherglen area. The Cambuslang area had the lowest level of sheltered housing provision in South Lanarkshire, with only 2 housing association sheltered developments providing 61 properties. The Council had no sheltered housing stock in Cambuslang and, in view of the rise in the elderly population within the Cambuslang and Rutherglen area, it was considered important to increase the range of housing and support options to meet their needs.

As part of the existing management process, the Council's own surplus land and property assets had been considered for internal reallocation to meet alternative operational or strategic needs prior to being sold. Through this process, Housing and Technical Resources had expressed an interest in David Walker House Care Home in Rutherglen when the facility became surplus and could be transferred from Social Work Resources to Housing and Technical Resources which was estimated to be in spring 2012.

A further opportunity had recently been identified via Strathclyde Fire and Rescue to acquire the Cambuslang Fire Station at Clydeford Road as detailed in the appendix to the report. The site was located centrally in Cambuslang close to local amenities and was designated within the adopted South Lanarkshire Local Plan 2009 as having residential use. It was anticipated that the site had capacity for up to 24 sheltered housing flats. However, the final capacity would be subject to the mix and determined through an application for planning consent.

It was proposed to carry out a full feasibility study to inform the development of detailed proposals for both sites, including a full site appraisal, preparation of a detailed project plan including demolition, design brief for sheltered housing, preparation of budget cost plan and recommendations for procurement.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Executive Director (Enterprise Resources), in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, as required, be instructed to negotiate the acquisition of the former fire station site at Clydeford Road, Cambuslang in accordance with the Council's land acquisition strategy;
- (2) that a feasibility study be undertaken in relation to sheltered housing provision at Clydeford Road, Cambuslang and David Walker House Care Home, Rutherglen and provision made within the Housing Investment Programme for development costs; and
- (3) that a further report be submitted to this Committee setting out detailed proposals for the development of sheltered housing, subject to successful progression of the site acquisition.

14 Inspection of South Lanarkshire Council's Housing and Homelessness Services by the Scottish Housing Regulator

A report dated 15 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the outcome of the inspection of the Council's Housing and Homelessness Services carried out during 2010 by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

The Council had been notified that it would receive a full baseline inspection of its services in September 2009 and that, as part of this process, it would be required to produce a detailed inspection submission in November 2009.

The Council's submission set out how well it considered that it had performed against key standards in housing management, property and asset management and homelessness services. The submission also set out how the Council met its obligations in terms of a range of cross cutting issues including leadership, strategic and operational planning, customer involvement, equalities, value for money and continuous improvement.

The full inspection of services had commenced on site on 22 February 2010 and had concluded on 15 March 2010. The final report had been published by the Scottish Housing Regulator in October 2010 and set out a detailed assessment of the Council's key housing services. The Council's services had been assessed as follows:-

- ◆ Housing Management 'A' grade – excellent performance
- ◆ Asset Management and Repairs 'A' grade – excellent performance
- ◆ Homelessness 'C' grade – fair performance

The overall assessment outlined the Council's strengths and also identified some areas for improvement. The Council had already submitted plans for improvement on the areas identified to the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the process of concluding the report.

The Council's report, along with other Scottish local authorities' reports, was available on the Scottish Housing Regulator's website. The results of the inspection would also be publicised to tenants and other stakeholders through the Housing News, The Reporter and the Council's website.

The Committee decided: that the outcome of the inspection of the Council's Housing and Homelessness Services be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 25 November 2009 (Paragraph 19)]

Councillor Horne entered the meeting during consideration of this item of business

15 Notification of Contracts Awarded - 1 September to 31 October 2010

A report dated 12 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on contracts awarded by Housing and Technical Resources in the period 1 September to 31 October 2010.

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

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 September 2010 (Paragraph 16)]

16 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.