

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 23 May 2018

Chair:

Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors Present:

Robert Brown, Archie Buchanan, Jackie Burns, Janine Calikes, Stephanie Callaghan (*substitute for Councillor Horne*), Graeme Campbell, Andy Carmichael, Maureen Chalmers, Gerry Convery, Poppy Corbett, Fiona Dryburgh (*substitute for Councillor Razzaq*), Alistair Fulton, Geri Gray, Eric Holford, Mark Horsham (*substitute for Councillor Stevenson*), Martin Lennon, Eileen Logan, Catherine McClymont (*substitute for Councillor Falconer*), Colin McGavigan, Richard Nelson, David Shearer

Councillors' Apologies:

Maureen Devlin, Mary Donnelly, Allan Falconer, Graeme Horne, Carol Nugent, Mo Razzaq, John Ross, Collette Stevenson

Attending:**Finance and Corporate Resources**

J Burke, Administration Assistant; J Kilpatrick, Finance Adviser; C Lyon, Administration Officer; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; E McPake, 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 (Assets and Estates Services); 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 7 March 2018 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Capital Budget Monitoring 2017/2018 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 14 May 2018 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 2017 to 2 March 2018.

Work was ongoing to clarify the predicted spend position for this financial year and current estimates suggested an outturn of £3.262 million. This was an underspend of £1.349 million and reflected the anticipated timing of spend in relation to the Headquarters Fabric Upgrade and Central Energy Efficiency Fund projects. Funding would carry forward into the next financial year.

The Committee decided: that Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £4.611 million and expenditure to date of £2.037 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 March 2018 (Paragraph 4)]

Councillor Gray entered the meeting during this item of business

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2017/2018 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 14 May 2018 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 2017 to 2 March 2018.

Work was ongoing to clarify the predicted spend position for this financial year and current estimates suggested an outturn of £36.860 million. This was an underspend of £3.721 million and reflected the anticipated timing of spend in relation to the Urban Park Development at the former Blairbeth Golf Course site and the continued work of the Housing Investment Programme. Funding for those projects would carry forward into the next financial year.

The Committee decided: that Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £40.581 million and expenditure to date of £29.247 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 March 2018 (Paragraph 5)]

5 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/2018 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 2 May 2018 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 2 March 2018 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2018.

Following a probable outturn exercise, the forecast for the revenue budget to 31 March 2018 was a breakeven position. The outturn position included proposed transfers to reserves, totalling £0.659 million, in respect of Temporary Homelessness General Revenue Grant funding required for the 2018/2019 savings exercise (£0.300 million) and also for use in future years (£0.359 million).

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2018 of a breakeven position be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 March 2018 (Paragraph 6)]

6 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/2018 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 2 May 2018 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 2 March 2018 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2018.

Following a probable outturn exercise, the financial forecast for the revenue budget to 31 March 2018 was a breakeven position. The outturn position included proposed transfers to reserves totalling £0.029 million.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2018 of a breakeven position be noted.

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

7 Housing and Technical Resources - Workforce Monitoring - January to March 2018

A joint report dated 12 April 2018 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 January to March 2018:-

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

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 March 2018 (Paragraph 8)]

8 Housing Repairs Policy Review

A report dated 27 April 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the revised Housing Repairs Policy.

The current Housing Repairs Policy had been introduced in 1 October 2010 to assist in the delivery of the statutory duty to provide a repairs service to maintain the Council's housing stock and related assets to an acceptable standard.

A 12 month consultation on the revised Policy was undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources in partnership with tenants' representatives and the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Repairs Sub-Group, supported by the South Lanarkshire Tenant Development Support Project. Officers worked closely with tenants to agree the scope and timeline for the review. Through this process, a review of the Policy had been carried out and a consultative draft document was issued for formal consultation between 29 January and 16 April 2018.

The draft policy covered the responsive and planned repairs services that the Council provided and included the following key sections:-

- ◆ policy objectives
- ◆ access to the service
- ◆ repair responsibilities
- ◆ service standards
- ◆ comments, compliments and complaints
- ◆ monitoring and review

Following discussion, it was agreed that a specific provision be included in section 5.7 of the Policy that, as part of the 5-yearly survey of the Council's housing areas, tenants would be notified of when the survey would take place, a summary of any works required and when the works would be carried out.

The Committee decided: that the revised Housing Repairs Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and implemented with effect from 2 July 2018, subject to a specific provision being included at section 5.7 of the Policy that, as part of the 5 yearly survey of the Council's housing areas, tenants be notified of when the survey would take place, a summary of any works required and when the works would be carried out.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 June 2010 (Paragraph 12)]

9 Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022

A report dated 26 April 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced a range of duties in relation to tenant participation, with the key requirements to prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy and maintain a register of tenant organisations.

It had been agreed with tenant representatives that, taking into account the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and the focus of the Scottish Housing Regulator on landlord, homelessness and gypsy/traveller services, the Strategy would be broadened to include other customer groups.

To reflect this approach, the Council's 4th Tenant Participation Strategy had been named the Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy. This included tenants, future tenants, homeless people and residents of gypsy/traveller sites.

An 18-month pre-consultation process had been carried out by Housing and Technical Resources and the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group, supported by the South Lanarkshire Tenant Development Support Project. A consultative draft of the Strategy had been produced in January 2018 and formal consultation had taken place between 29 January and 16 April 2018 which included a range of events as detailed in the report.

The Strategy set out:-

- ◆ the strengths of the Council's approach and achievements to date
- ◆ what the Council intended to do to further develop customer involvement
- ◆ how the Council would measure success and monitor progress

The overall objective of the Strategy was to provide customers with a range of effective opportunities to become involved and help shape housing services in South Lanarkshire. In order to achieve this objective, the following 4 strategic outcomes had been agreed with the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group:-

- ◆ 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

The action plan included in the Strategy set out the detail of the actions and outcomes intended to ensure that progress was made in relation to each of those strategic outcomes.

A copy of the full draft Strategy was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- (2) that an annual progress report on the strategic outcomes be presented to this Committee in autumn 2019.

10 Disposal of Former Glengowan Primary School, Academy Street, Larkhall - Deduction for Abnormal Development Costs

A report dated 20 April 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the proposed reduction in purchase price in relation to the disposal of the former Glengowan Primary School, Academy Street, Larkhall to Rosewood Homes and Properties Limited to reflect the abnormal development costs.

At its meeting on 12 October 2016, the Committee had approved the sale of the former Glengowan Primary School, Larkhall to Rosewood Homes and Properties Limited (Rosewood) for the sum of £515,000 exclusive of VAT.

The offer, and subsequent contract with Rosewood, allowed for the deduction from the purchase price of justifiable abnormal development costs that were not apparent at the time of the original offer. Rosewood had subsequently carried out comprehensive site investigations and surveys and submitted details of abnormal costs totalling £365,180. Following negotiations, those costs had been reduced to £190,000, leaving a net disposal price of £325,000. The costs had been scrutinised by the Council's Geotechnical Engineer and Chartered Building Surveyors who had confirmed them as being fair and justifiable. Rosewood had stated that, without the reduction in purchase price, the project was unviable and they would require to withdraw from the contract to purchase.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the purchase price for the former Glengowan Primary School, Larkhall, extending to 0.4266 hectares (1.05 acres) or thereby, to be disposed of to Rosewood Homes and Properties Limited, be reduced to the revised purchase price of £325,000 exclusive of VAT and in terms of the principal conditions detailed 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 other matters pertaining to the disposal of the property and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

[Reference: Minutes of 12 October 2016 (Paragraph 13)]

11 Proposed Lease of Ground at East Kilbride Expressway with Associated Servitude Right of Access in Favour of SP Distribution plc

A report dated 20 April 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c) in view of the timescales involved, by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to:-

- ◆ grant a 99 year lease of approximately 25 square metres of ground at the East Kilbride Expressway to SP Distribution plc to construct a new electricity sub-station subject to the terms and conditions detailed in the report
- ◆ grant consent to lay cables and for a servitude right of access to allow the inspection and maintenance of cables servicing the sub-station
- ◆ authorise the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, to conclude all matters in respect of the lease and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council

The Committee decided: that the action taken in terms of Standing Order 36(c), by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to approve the lease of ground at East Kilbride Expressway to SP Distribution plc, along with an associated servitude right of access, be noted.

12 Update on Welfare Reform Legislative Changes

A report dated 26 April 2018 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the:-

- ◆ impact of key aspects of the Welfare Reform programme on landlord and homelessness services
- ◆ roll-out of Universal Credit “Full Service” within South Lanarkshire

An update was provided on the following activities:-

- ◆ under occupancy provisions
- ◆ benefit cap
- ◆ Universal Credit

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 March 2018 (Paragraph 14)]

13 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.