

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 13 July 2011

Chair:

Councillor Alex McInnes

Councillors Present:

John Anderson, David Baillie (Depute), Walter Brogan, Jackie Burns, Andy Carmichael, Maureen Devlin, Douglas Edwards, Anne Higgins, Bobby Lawson, Brian McCaig, Brian McKenna, John Murray, Patrick Ross-Taylor, David Shearer, Bert Thomson, Richard Tullett

Councillors' Apologies:

Jim Docherty, Barry Douglas, Beith Forrest, Ian Gray, Graeme Horne, Edward McAvoy, Jean McKeown

Attending:**Corporate Resources**

C Lyon, Administration Officer

Finance and Information Technology Resources

L Murray, Accountant

Housing and Technical Resources

L Freeland, Executive Director; A Finnan, Head of Area Services; D Lowe, Head of Property Services; P Murphy, Head of Support 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 18 May 2011 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Capital Budget Monitoring 2011/2012 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 17 June 2011 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 10 June 2011.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £41.928 million and expenditure to date of £2.645 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 May 2011 (Paragraph 3)]

Councillor Burns entered the meeting during this item of business

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2011/2012 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 17 June 2011 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 10 June 2011.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £4.361 million and expenditure to date of £0.083 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 May 2011 (Paragraph 4)]

5 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2011/2012 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 20 June 2011 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 10 June 2011 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2012.

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 (HRA) of £0.023 million, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2012 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 18 May 2011 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2011/2012 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 17 June 2011 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 10 June 2011 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2012.

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 £0.039 million, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2012 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 18 May 2011 (Paragraph 6)]

7 Property Services Performance Review

A report dated 17 June 2011 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 £0.552 million at 13 May 2011
- ◆ personnel issues including maximising attendance
- ◆ contract/statutory performance indicators at 13 May 2011
- ◆ the Housing Investment Programme
- ◆ customer complaints and enquiries at 13 May 2011

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 May 2011 (Paragraph 7)]

8 Housing and Technical Resources - Workforce Monitoring - April and May 2011

A joint report dated 15 June 2011 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 April and May 2011:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers
- ◆ Joint Staffing Watch as at 12 March 2011

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 May 2011 (Paragraph 8)]

9 Housing and Technical Resources' Resource Plan 2011/2012

A report dated 5 May 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on Housing and Technical Resources' Resource Plan for 2011/2012. Details were provided on:-

- ◆ Resource achievements and performance during 2010/2011
- ◆ Resource objectives and actions for 2011/2012
- ◆ capital and revenue resources for 2011/2012
- ◆ the organisational structure of the Resource

In line with the Council's performance management arrangements, a mid year progress report on actions identified in the 2011/2012 Resource Plan would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee: that the Housing and Technical Resources' Resource Plan for 2011/2012 be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2010 (Paragraph 10)]

10 Greenhill Court Refurbishment - Proposals to Demolish and Reconfigure Flatted Properties

A report dated 17 June 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the refurbishment of Greenhill Court, Rutherglen.

Of the 175 properties in Greenhill Court, 172 were managed by the Council as social rented housing. One was occupied as a Caretaker's office and 2 properties were owner occupied.

Despite the central location of the development and the investment work that had been carried out, demand for the properties was low and turnover high. Issues impacting on the properties' letting ability included poor quality heating/insulation and a lack of security, despite controlled entry to the main entrance and a Caretaking Service.

A Local Letting Initiative had been in place since 2009 limiting the allocation of housing to applicants on the Urgent Need list to no more than 30% in order to tackle issues of low tenancy sustainment and the high level of tenancy failures and abandonments. This initiative was currently proving successful.

An extensive refurbishment programme was proposed for Greenhill Court with the overall aim to ensure a welcoming, secure building where individual properties were energy efficient, secure and attractive. A key element of the refurbishment would be the creation of a central foyer and concierge station with entrances leading to the front and rear of the property which meant that the security of, and access to, the building could be monitored and controlled.

The creation of the new entrance layout required the space currently occupied by 2 flats within Block 3, the Caretaker's flat in Block 2 and part of 1 flat in Block 2. Consultation would be undertaken with the 3 tenants concerned to identify their housing needs and preferred areas for rehousing. Priority would be awarded to the tenants to find suitable alternative housing and they would be compensated in accordance with the statutory Homeloss and Disturbance Scheme.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that, in consultation with the tenants, the 2 flats at Block 3 be demolished to enable the redevelopment of the central foyer/concierge station and main entrances to Greenhill Court, Rutherglen as part of the overall refurbishment of all 5 blocks;
- (2) that, in consultation with the tenant, the flat at Block 3 be reconfigured from a 2 bedroom property with internal stairs to a 1 bedroom property with level access to enable the redevelopment of the central foyer/concierge station and main entrances to Greenhill Court, Rutherglen as part of the overall refurbishment of all 5 blocks;
- (3) that the current Caretaker's flat at Block 2, House 1 be demolished to allow the construction of a new concierge station and associated facilities; and
- (4) that the 3 tenants be re-housed and compensated in accordance with the statutory Homeloss and Disturbance Scheme.

11 Provision of Anti-social Investigation Services to Link and Margaret Blackwood Housing Associations

A report dated 10 June 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on proposals to provide the services of the Council's Anti-social Investigation Team (ASIT) to Link and Margaret Blackwood Housing Associations.

In March 2011, approval had been given by this Committee for the provision of the services of the Council's Anti-social Investigation Team to Clyde Valley Housing Association. At that time, it had also been reported that discussions were ongoing with other Housing Associations who had indicated an interest in establishing similar arrangements.

It was now proposed that the services of the Anti-social Investigation Team be provided to Link and Margaret Blackwood Housing Associations based on the terms and conditions contained in the Service Level Agreements which were attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report. Service Level Agreements had been developed in consultation with the Council's Legal Services and provided a clear outline of the process through which cases would be referred and investigated.

The Service Level Agreements would run for a 2 year period from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2013 and would commence following the formal sign off of the Agreement by both Housing Associations.

Discussions on providing ASIT services were continuing with another Housing Association and it was anticipated that other Associations might also be interested. It was, therefore, proposed that powers be delegated to the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, to enter into further agreements with other Housing Associations in the future. Details of those would be presented to this Committee for noting.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the services of the Council's Anti-social Investigation Team (ASIT) be provided to Link and Margaret Blackwood Housing Associations based on the terms and conditions detailed in the Service Level Agreements; and
- (2) that powers be delegated to the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, to enter into further agreements with other Housing Associations in the future.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 March 2011 (Paragraph 10)]

12 Housing Investment Programme

A report dated 14 June 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the:-

- ◆ delivery of the Housing Investment Programme in 2010/2011
- ◆ development and delivery of the 2011/2012 Programme

Work carried out in terms of the 2010/2011 Programme was detailed in the report. Achievement within the 2010/2011 Programme had been adversely impacted on by the severe weather conditions as well as the additional asbestos surveys which had been required. 2,850 kitchens and bathrooms had been installed which was 100 less than the original target. 7 external fabric projects had also completed with a further 7 carried forward into the 2011/2012 Programme.

A Capital Investment Programme of £41.928 million had been approved for 2011/2012. The main investment works to be carried out would again be kitchen and bathroom replacements, with 1,356 planned. Those works would see the completion of the kitchen and bathroom replacement programme.

Further projects had also been included in the Programme to assist the Council meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). Those had been identified through stock condition surveys/information as well as repairs histories and included:-

- ◆ central heating upgrading
- ◆ external fabric repairs, including roofs and walls
- ◆ windows/external doors

Priorities had been identified for each of those work types through a technical appraisal of the stock information held. Due to the nature of some of the works in the approved Programme, progress in their implementation had taken longer than initially anticipated due to external factors. In order to minimise the effect that the delays would have on the ability of the Council's housing stock to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by the 2015 deadline, a supplementary works programme had been developed to bring forward projects to address property failures from future years from unaffected work streams. Full details of those proposals were provided in the appendix to the report. The Programme would be monitored over the remainder of the year to ensure delivery of the 2011/2012 Programme spend and, if necessary, further works would be brought forward to achieve this.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the content of the report be noted; and
- (2) that a report be submitted to the Executive Committee requesting approval for the amendments to the 2011/2012 Housing Investment Programme.

[Reference: Minutes of 11 February 2011 (Paragraph 3)]

13 Anti-social Behaviour Annual Report 2010/2011

A report dated 10 June 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the publication of the Anti-social Behaviour Annual Report 2010/2011.

The South Lanarkshire Council Anti-social Behaviour Strategy emphasised the commitment to promoting awareness of services and the actions that the Council and its partners had taken to tackle anti-social behaviour. The Anti-social Behaviour Annual Report played a key role in progressing this objective.

The content of the Annual Report for 2010/2011 had been prepared to reflect the outcome of the first annual review of South Lanarkshire's second Anti-social Behaviour Strategy. The Annual Report 2010/2011 confirmed that the Council's approach to tackling anti-social behaviour was founded on partnership working and was fundamentally based around:-

- ◆ problem solving
- ◆ neighbourhood management
- ◆ community policing
- ◆ community engagement

The report set out a number of key achievements for the year including details on the following initiatives:-

- ◆ Operation Sentinel
- ◆ Alcohol Drama
- ◆ Breaking the Cycle
- ◆ Hamilton Safer Streets
- ◆ Particip8 Overton
- ◆ Clydesdale Young Persons' Project
- ◆ Anti Sectarianism Initiative

The report also set out the priorities for the year ahead in continuing to tackle anti-social behaviour across South Lanarkshire.

The Committee decided: that the Anti-social Behaviour Annual Report 2010/2011 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 25 November 2009 (Paragraph 17)]

14 Annual Report on the Housing and Technical Resources' Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2010/2011

A report dated 10 June 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on progress made against the Housing and Technical Resources' Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2010/2011 along with priorities for 2011/2012.

The Action Plan set out the objectives and priority actions in relation to mainstreaming equalities within Housing and Technical Resources. The key achievements of the 2010/2011 Plan were detailed in the report.

The 2011/2012 Equality and Diversity Action Plan had recently been developed and would continue to drive progress in relation to mainstreaming equality and placing an emphasis on access to services. Key areas for action in 2011/2012 included:-

- ◆ implementing the Equality Act 2010
- ◆ consultation and engagement
- ◆ access to information and services
- ◆ equality impact assessment
- ◆ training and development

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 June 2010 (Paragraph 14)]

15 The Local Housing Strategy 2012 to 2017

A report dated 17 June 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Local Housing Strategy 2012 to 2017.

A report to this Committee in March 2011 had outlined the requirement for the Council to produce a new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) covering the period 2012 to 2017. The Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) had now signed off the Council's Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) on 21 June 2011 which meant that the Council was now able to submit its new Local Housing Strategy to the Scottish Ministers.

The Strategy was based on an ongoing and detailed assessment of key housing issues and challenges and built on the Council's existing Strategy and progress made since it had been approved in 2004.

Guidance provided on new Local Housing Strategies confirmed that they should cover issues previously addressed in separate strategic documents including homelessness, fuel poverty and private sector housing. The guidance also emphasised that the Local Housing Strategy should focus on outcomes rather than processes and should link to national and local outcomes reflected in the Single Outcome Agreement. The Council's new Strategy retained a thematic structure and covered:-

- ◆ balanced housing markets
- ◆ investing in housing quality
- ◆ sustainable neighbourhoods
- ◆ meeting particular housing needs
- ◆ homelessness
- ◆ the rural challenge

The draft Local Housing Strategy 2012 to 2017 would be issued at the end of July 2011 for a 3 month consultation period to allow extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. It was proposed that the final draft Local Housing Strategy 2012 to 2017 be submitted to this Committee in January 2012 for approval before being submitted to the Scottish Government in February 2012.

An awareness session for all elected members on the Local Housing Strategy and its key themes would be arranged later this year.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the progress in developing the Local Housing Strategy be noted; and
- (2) that the timescales for consultation and the related timeline for preparing the Local Housing Strategy for submission to the Scottish Government by February 2012 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 March 2011 (Paragraph 14)]

16 Notification of Contracts Awarded 1 April to 31 May 2011

A report dated 16 June 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ contracts awarded by Housing and Technical Resources in the period 1 April to 31 May 2011
- ◆ contracts awarded under the Primary School Framework Agreement Phase 2

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

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 May 2011 (Paragraph 14)]