

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of special meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 10 February 2011

Chair:

Councillor Alex McInnes

Councillors Present:

John Anderson, David Baillie (Depute), Walter Brogan, Jackie Burns, Andy Carmichael, Maureen Devlin, Jim Docherty, Douglas Edwards, Ian Gray, Anne Higgins, Bobby Lawson, Brian McCaig, Brian McKenna, Jean McKeown, John Murray, David Shearer, Bert Thomson, Richard Tullett

Councillors' Apologies:

Barry Douglas, Beith Forrest, Graeme Horne, Edward McAvoy, Patrick Ross-Taylor

Attending:

Corporate Resources

G Cochran, Administration Assistant; C Lyon, Administration Officer

Housing and Technical Resources

L Freeland, Executive Director; P Murphy, Head of Support Services

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the special meeting of the Housing and Technical Resources Committee held on 4 February 2011 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget 2011/2012

A joint report dated 2 February 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) and the Chief Executive was submitted on:-

- ◆ the Revenue Estimate proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2011/2012 which had been prepared in line with the 30 year business plan for the retention of the Council's housing stock
- ◆ the Housing Capital Programme totalling £38.532 million

The Business Plan had been updated to reflect the level of investment required to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. Significant investment was required to undertake the work on the remaining stock, which included the completion of the kitchen and bathroom renewals by 2012. A capital programme of £38.532 million in 2011/2012 was proposed, requiring a rent increase of 4% to be applied to all Council houses, travelling persons' sites and lockups. This equated to an average rise of £2.15 per week on the current average weekly rent of £53.86.

In line with the Council's commitment to rent harmonisation, it was proposed that the next step of rent harmonisation be progressed. As part of this, it was proposed that all rents be increased by 4% and that rent levels be adjusted to ensure that no tenant paid more than £8.00 above the harmonised level. Any tenant paying less than £10.00 below the harmonised level would have their rent increased by £1.00.

A review of the charges to residents receiving the Council's Factoring Service had been carried out which had shown that the charges did not cover the costs incurred. To ensure full cost recovery, it was proposed that those charges be increased from £14.75 to £24 per quarter over a 2 year period. Charges would be increased to £19.38 per quarter in 2011/2012 and to £24 per quarter in 2012/2013.

In line with the Housing Investment Business Plan, efficiency savings of £0.971 million had been included in the overall budget. This included national diagnostic and structure savings totalling £0.751 million.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:

- (1) that the Revenue Estimate proposals for the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2011/2012, as detailed in the report, and the average weekly rent increase of £2.15 (4%) for Council houses be approved;
- (2) that the 4% rise also be applied to the rent of lockups and travelling persons' sites;
- (3) that the next stage of rent harmonisation be progressed as detailed in the report;
- (4) that the factoring fee be increased from £14.75 to £19.38 per quarter in 2011/2012 rising to £24 per quarter in 2012/2013; and
- (5) that, based on this rent increase, the 2011/2012 Housing Capital Programme of £38.532 million, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of Executive Committee (Special) of 4 February 2011 (Paragraph 2)]

4 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.