

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 18 May 2011

Chair:

Councillor Alex McInnes

Councillors Present:

John Anderson, David Baillie (Depute), Walter Brogan, Andy Carmichael, Maureen Devlin, Jim Docherty, Barry Douglas, Graeme Horne, Bobby Lawson, Brian McKenna, Jean McKeown, John Murray, Richard Tullett

Councillors' Apologies:

Jackie Burns, Douglas Edwards, Beith Forrest, Ian Gray, Anne Higgins, Edward McAvoy, Brian McCaig, Patrick Ross-Taylor, David Shearer, Bert Thomson

Attending:**Corporate Resources**

G Cochran, Administration Assistant; 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; S Short, Customer/Administration Manager

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 2 March 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 2010/2011 - Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 28 March 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 2010 to 18 March 2011.

A higher than anticipated underspend of £1.950 million was forecast due to the impact of the adverse weather experienced in November, December and January. Officers would continue to monitor the position and every effort would be made to reduce the level of underspend.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £42.033 million and expenditure to date of £33.997 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 March 2011 (Paragraph 4)]

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

A joint report dated 28 March 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 2010 to 18 March 2011.

An underspend of £1.565 million was anticipated in 2010/2011 in relation to the Private Housing Scheme of Assistance. Spending on the Scheme had been affected by adverse weather conditions throughout November, December and January, delayed progress on site and a drop in the level of applications. Consideration would be given to what element of the underspend would be carried forward into 2011/2012 to allow planned works to be completed.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £6.941 million and expenditure to date of £3.912 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 March 2011 (Paragraph 5)]

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

A joint report dated 29 March 2011 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 18 March 2011 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 2 March 2011 (Paragraph 6)]

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

A joint report dated 29 March 2011 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 18 March 2011 against budgeted expenditure for Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl 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 underspend on the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA) of £0.022 million, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2011 of an overspend of £0.065 million be noted; and

- (3) that the budget virements, as detailed in Appendices B, C and D to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 March 2011 (Paragraph 7)]

7 Property Services Performance Review

A report dated 26 April 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 £3.981 million at 18 March 2011
- ◆ personnel issues including maximising attendance
- ◆ contract/statutory performance indicators at 18 March 2011
- ◆ the Housing Investment Programme
- ◆ customer complaints and enquiries at 18 March 2011

At 18 March 2011, Property Services Trading Division accounts showed an under-recovery on target surplus with a forecast to 31 March 2011 of an under-recovery of £0.520 million. This was mainly due to variations in workload experienced during the year. Overall, the Resource would achieve a breakeven position.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 March 2011 (Paragraph 8)]

8 Housing and Technical Resources - Workforce Monitoring - January to March 2011

A joint report dated 20 April 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 January to March 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 11 December 2010

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 March 2011 (Paragraph 9)]

9 Community Alarm Service - Transfer of Lead Responsibility to Social Work Resources

A joint report dated 21 April 2011 by the Executive Directors (Housing and Technical Resources) and (Social Work Resources) was submitted on proposals to transfer the management of the Community Alarm Service from Housing and Technical Resources to Social Work Resources.

The Community Alarm Service was currently provided jointly by Housing and Technical Resources and Social Work Resources. The profile of the Service had changed in recent years with a marked increase in the number of owner-occupiers receiving the Service and the Service taking a more prominent role in support and care arrangements for a range of different care groups. Although some aspects of the Service performed well, neither Resource had overall strategic lead for the Service. The need for improvements had been identified in terms of consistency and integration across key operational functions and a small cross Resource working group had been established to review the Service. The key findings were summarised in the report, including the identification of a number of areas where there was a current lack of a consistent and integrated approach to service delivery.

With the increased numbers of older people living independently and wishing to remain in their own homes, it was considered that both community alarms and telecare services would play an increasingly important role. Social Work Resources recognised the central importance of the Community Alarm Service in the delivery of community care outcomes and also had the lead role in the development of telecare services.

It was proposed that Social Work Resources take lead responsibility for the development and management of the Community Alarm Service. Housing and Technical Resources would continue to have responsibility for the maintenance and renewal of warden call systems for the Council's sheltered housing and combined door entry/community alarm systems in its multi-storey blocks.

Housing and Technical Resources would, in the interim, continue to be responsible for the community alarm call handling through the Control Centre. This arrangement would be given further consideration as part of the review of the Council's Contact Centres. A Service Level Agreement between Housing and Technical and Social Work Resources would determine appropriate Service standards.

In order to achieve consistency in terms of charging for the Service, it was proposed that new Service users in the Cambuslang and Rutherglen area, which was the only area across South Lanarkshire where Service users were not currently charged for the Service, be asked to pay the standard charge of £1.54 per week from 1 July 2011.

A budget of £167,528 would be transferred from Housing and Technical Resources to Social Work Resources to fund the new arrangement.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:

- (1) that Social Work Resources assume overall responsibility for the management and delivery of the Council's Community Alarm Service from 1 July 2011;
- (2) that a budget of £167,528 be transferred from Housing and Technical Resources to Social Work Resources to meet the costs of the Service transferring;
- (3) that Housing and Technical Resources continue to have responsibility for the upkeep and renewal of alarm equipment within sheltered housing and combined door entry/alarm systems in multi-storey blocks;
- (4) that the standard charge for the Community Alarm Service be introduced for Council tenants in Rutherglen/Cambuslang who first received the service on or after 1 July 2011; and
- (5) that further consideration be given to the future call handling arrangements for Alert calls as part of the current review of the Council's Customer Contact Centres.

10 Housing Allocation Policy Evaluation

A report dated 22 April 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the outcome of the evaluation of the Housing Allocation Policy.

The current Policy came into effect on 29 June 2009 and it had been agreed to carry out an evaluation of the Policy after the first year of operation.

The evaluation had focused on 4 key aspects of the Policy:-

- ◆ Local Letting Plan (LLP) targets
- ◆ Local Letting Initiatives (LLIs)
- ◆ effective matching of applicants to vacant properties
- ◆ number of offers made to Urgent Housing Need applicants

Details were provided on the findings of the evaluation and recommendations in relation to each of the policy areas evaluated.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the outcome of the evaluation of the Housing Allocation Policy be noted;
- (2) that the proposed amendments to the Housing Allocation Policy, as detailed in paragraphs 5.8, 5.9 and 8.4 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) that the proposed actions and implementation timescales, as detailed in paragraphs 4.6, 5.10, 6.5 and 7.4 and Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 3 September 2008 (Paragraph 9)] and Minutes of 30 June 2010 (Paragraph 11)]

11 Housing Allocation Policy - Local Letting Plans 2011/2012

A report dated 22 April 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ the performance of the Housing Allocation Policy against the 2010/2011 Local Letting targets
- ◆ the Local Letting Plan targets for 2011/2012
- ◆ a number of proposed amendments to Local Letting Initiatives

The Housing Allocation Policy required the preparation of Local Letting Plans on an annual basis for each of the 8 Housing Management Areas.

During 2010/2011 an evaluation of the Housing Allocation Policy had been carried out to ensure that the Policy was working effectively and that its outcomes were as expected. 2 of the key Policy areas considered were:-

- ◆ performance against Local Letting Plan (LLP) targets; and
- ◆ the use of Local Letting Initiatives (LLIs)

The outcome of this evaluation had been taken into account in the development of LLPs for 2011/2012.

Performance information set against targets during 2010/2011 was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. The Housing Management Areas were generally meeting their targets with the exception of Urgent Housing Need (UHN) within Clydesdale and East Kilbride.

Following the evaluation, it was proposed that South Lanarkshire wide letting targets should be set for each of the housing lists to assist with statistical reporting and monitoring.

The proposed letting targets for 2011/2012 for each of the Housing Management Areas were also detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. In order to respond to local housing need, some minor adjustments were proposed for 2011/2012. The letting targets proposed for each sheltered housing development were detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

It was proposed that 7 LLIs be removed, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report, and that the scope of a further 6 LLIs, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be amended for 2011/2012.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the performance against the 2010/2011 LLP targets be noted;
- (2) that the 2011/2012 LLP targets, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (3) that the 2011/2012 LLP targets for sheltered housing developments, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved; and
- (4) that the amendments to LLIs, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 17 June 2009 (Paragraph 6) and 17 February 2010 (Paragraph 10)]

Councillor Docherty left the meeting after consideration of this item of business

12 Strategy for Tenant Participation in South Lanarkshire 2011 to 2015

A report dated 18 April 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Council's third Tenant Participation Strategy.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 had introduced a range of duties in relation to tenant participation. The key requirements of this legislation were that a Tenant Participation Strategy be prepared and that a register of tenant organisations be maintained.

Work had taken place over the last 12 months to agree the scope, content and timeline for the Strategy which would run from 2011 to 2015. The draft Strategy had been issued for consultation from 29 November 2010 until 14 March 2011. The views expressed during the consultation exercise confirmed clear support for the new Strategy to extend beyond the statutory duties and take a broader focus on developing opportunities for engagement and involvement.

The Strategy for 2011 to 2015, attached as an appendix to the report, set out the position in relation to the development of tenant participation and highlighted 3 strategic outcomes required to enable tenants to have realistic opportunities to become involved and help shape the Housing Service.

Regular updates on the Strategy would be provided to the Central Liaison Group and progress would be reported annually to this Committee.

The Committee decided: that the Councils' Tenant Participation Strategy for the period 2011 to 2015 be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 February 2011 (Paragraph 14)]

13 Management of Asbestos within Council Houses and Related Common Areas

A report dated 15 April 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted providing an update on the management of asbestos within Council houses and related common areas.

The Council's Asbestos Management Policy was based on the regular inspection of properties to identify the presence of any asbestos and for carrying out a risk assessment based on the type of asbestos and its condition and location.

All relevant officers had now been suitably trained and processes were in place to ensure that, prior to work being undertaken, information was passed to the contractors concerned.

The initial surveying and inspection of all common areas was now complete and any asbestos identified that presented a risk had either been treated or removed under controlled conditions. Information had been recorded on the Asbestos Management System and, in order to meet legislative obligations, letters would be issued to all residents in the blocks advising of the results.

All common areas within blocks would be inspected on a cyclical basis to ensure that the condition of any asbestos previously identified remained safe. The frequency of those inspections would be determined on a risk basis.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 April 2009 (Paragraph 9)]

14 Notification of Contracts Awarded - 1 February to 31 March 2011

A report dated 15 April 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ contracts awarded by Housing and Technical Resources in the period 1 February to 31 March 2011
- ◆ contracts awarded under the Primary School Framework Agreement Phase 2
- ◆ contracts awarded by Procurement Services

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 2 March 2010 (Paragraph 16)]

15 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.