

# HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 10 August 2022

## Chair:

Councillor Davie McLachlan

## Councillors Present:

Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Mathew Buchanan, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Andrea Cowan, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Colin Dewar, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Ross Gowland, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, Councillor Ross Lambie, Councillor Martin Lennon (Depute), Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Norman Rae, Councillor Dr Ali Salamati (*substitute for Councillor John Bradley*), Councillor David Shearer

## Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor John Bradley, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio)

## Attending:

### Finance and Corporate Resources

H Calley, Administration Officer; J Davitt, Public Relations Officer; H Goodwin, Finance Manager (Resources); E Maxwell, HR Business Manager; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy); S Somerville, Administration Manager; L Wyllie, Administration Assistant

### Housing and Technical Resources

D Lowe, Executive Director; A Finnan, Head of Housing Services; J Forbes, Head of Property Services; C Mitchell, Strategy and Support Manager

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## 1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

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## 2 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/2022 - Housing and Technical Resources (Excl Housing Revenue Account (HRA))

A joint report dated 28 June 2022 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 for Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA).

An overspend position of £0.939 million was reported at 31 March 2022 which was mainly due to additional expenditure in relation to the COVID-19 response, including temporary accommodation costs for homeless people.

The COVID-19 lockdown also had an impact on Property Services which provided the property investment, repairs and maintenance service to the HRA and other Resources' capital and revenue budgets. The Service continued to incur non-variable costs which required to be offset by income recovery, therefore, a recharge had been made to those budgets to cover fixed costs.

The main risk associated with the Council's revenue budget was that there was an overspend. The risk had been assessed as low given the detailed budget management applied across the Resources. The risk would be managed through 4-weekly budget monitoring meetings at which any variance would be analysed. In addition, the probable outturn exercise ensured early warning for corrective action to be taken, where appropriate.

Virements were proposed to realign budgets and those movements were detailed in appendices B, C and D of the report.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the overspend of £0.939 million as at 31 March 2022 on the Housing and Technical Resources' Revenue Budget (excl HRA), as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2021 (Paragraph 3) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 29 June 2022 (Paragraph 2)]*

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### **3 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/2022 - Housing and Technical Resources - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

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A joint report dated 29 June 2022 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 for Housing and Technical Resources (HRA).

As at 31 March 2022, there was a breakeven position against the phased budget.

The COVID-19 lockdown had an impact on Property Services which provided the property repairs and maintenance service to the HRA. The Service continued to incur non-variable costs which required to be offset by income recovery, therefore, a recharge would be required at year-end to HRA revenue budget to cover a share of those fixed costs.

The main risk associated with the Council's revenue budget was that there was an overspend. The risk had been assessed as low given the detailed budget management applied across the Resources. The risk would be managed through 4-weekly Budget Monitoring meetings at which any variance would be analysed. In addition, the probable outturn exercise ensured early warning for corrective action to be taken, where appropriate.

Virements were proposed to realign budgets and those movements were detailed in Appendix A of the report.

**The Committee decided:**

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

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2021 (Paragraph 4) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 29 June 2022 (Paragraph 2)]*

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#### **4 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/2023 - Housing and Technical Resources (Excl Housing Revenue Account (HRA))**

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A joint report dated 6 July 2022 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April to 20 May 2022 for Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA).

As at 20 May 2022, there was a breakeven position against the phased budget.

Virements were proposed to realign budgets and those movements were detailed in appendices B and C of the report.

##### **The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the breakeven position as at 20 May 2022 on the Housing and Technical Resources' (excl HRA) revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 29 June 2022 (Paragraph 2)]*

*Councillor Colin Dewar entered the meeting during this item of business*

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#### **5 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/2023 - Housing and Technical Resources - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

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A joint report dated 6 July 2022 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April to 20 May 2022 for Housing and Technical Resources (HRA).

As at 20 May 2022, there was a breakeven position against the phased budget.

**The Committee decided:** that the breakeven position on the Housing and Technical Resources' (HRA) revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 29 June 2022 (Paragraph 2)]*

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#### **6 Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/2022 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl Housing Revenue Account (HRA))**

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A joint report dated 20 July 2022 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 2021 to 31 March 2022.

At its meeting on 8 December 2021, this Committee noted that the budget for Housing and Technical Resources for the financial year 2021/2022, including carry forward, was £8.146 million. Since that meeting, the Executive Committee, at its meeting on 2 February 2022, had also agreed the changes to the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme totalling a net decrease of £1.345 million. This took the Housing and Technical Resources' programme for 2021/2022 to £6.801 million.

The programme underspend of £1.317 million was mainly due to the timing of project spend on a number of projects within multi-year programmes, as outlined in the report.

Any underspend on those projects, along with the funding, would be carried forward into the next financial year, as required. An update on the 2022/2023 capital programme was detailed in a separate report to the Committee.

£0.036 million of capital spend would be required to be recorded as revenue spend. This transfer meant that, for the purpose of publishing the Council's Annual Accounts only, there was a capital spend of £5.448 million.

**The Committee decided:** that the Housing and Technical Resources' (excl HRA) capital programme of £6.801 million, and expenditure for the year of £5.484 million, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2021 (Paragraph 5) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 2 February 2022 (Paragraph 4)]*

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## **7 Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/2022 - Housing and Technical Resources (Housing Revenue Account (HRA))**

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A joint report dated 7 July 2022 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 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The Housing capital programme for 2021/2022 totalled £79.640 million and was detailed, along with the funding sources, in Appendix A of the report.

The actual expenditure on the Housing programme was £73.181 million, a net underspend of £6.459 million. The delivery of the Housing capital programme for 2021/2022 had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of that underspend related to the New Housing Supply Programme and was due to the volume of buy backs, which had been lower than targeted levels, due to the current market conditions. The remainder of the underspend related to the Council's ongoing investment in stock, which had been affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

**The Committee decided:** that the revised Housing and Technical Resources' (HRA) capital programme of £79.640 million and expenditure to 31 March 2022 of £73.181 million be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2021 (Paragraph 6) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 29 June 2022 (Paragraph 5)]*

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## **8 Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/2023 - Housing and Technical Resources (excl Housing Revenue Account (HRA))**

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A joint report dated 20 July 2022 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 to 20 May 2022.

The budget of £8.125 million for Housing and Technical Resources was based on the overall capital programme for 2022/2023, which had been approved by the Executive Committee on 29 June 2022.

The financial position for Housing and Technical Resources was detailed in Appendix A of the report.

The total capital programme for Housing and Technical Resources was £8.125 million. This budget was based on the original programme of projects approved by the Council in February 2022, which had been updated to include budget carried forward from the financial year 2021/2022, as well as additional funding received and used to fund expenditure incurred in 2021/2022.

As in previous years, it had been identified that, to comply with accounting rules, some project expenditure would be reported through the revenue budget as it could not be classed as capital. £4 million had been transferred to Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget, along with the relevant funding for the Private Housing Scheme of Assistance project (£1 million) and £3 million of the Planned Asset Management budget.

In relation to Planned Asset Management, the total overall budget across capital and revenue remained at £4.800 million. This would continue to be reviewed to ensure that it was classed appropriately, as revenue or capital and any further movement reported to a future meeting. Those accounting adjustments were included in the programme of £8.125 million.

The position for period 2 was anticipated spend to date of £0.061 million and spend to 20 May 2022 amounted to £0.061 million.

**The Committee decided:** that the Housing and Technical Resources' (excl HRA) capital programme of £8.125 million and expenditure to date of £0.061 million be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of South Lanarkshire Council (Special) of 23 February 2022 (Paragraph 3) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 29 June 2022 (Paragraph 5)]*

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## **9 Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/2023 - Housing and Technical Resources (Housing Revenue Account (HRA))**

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A joint report dated 6 July 2022 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 to 20 May 2022.

The budget was based on the capital programme for the year, which had been presented to the Executive Committee on 29 June 2022.

The Housing capital programme for 2022/2023 totalled £52.230 million and was detailed, along with the funding sources, at Appendix A to the report.

Expenditure to 20 May 2022 was £3.289 million.

**The Committee decided:** that the revised Housing and Technical Resources' (HRA) capital programme of £52.230 million and expenditure of £3.289 million, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 29 June 2022 (Paragraph 5)]*

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## **10 Housing and Technical Resources – Workforce Monitoring – April and May 2022**

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A joint report dated 5 July 2022 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 April and May 2022:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ discipline, grievance and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ◆ Staffing Watch as at 12 March 2022

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2021 (Paragraph 7)]*

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## **11 Annual Review of the South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2021/2022**

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A report dated 29 June 2022 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the third annual review of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019 to 2024.

The RRTP, which aimed to significantly reduce homelessness and achieve rapid rehousing in South Lanarkshire, was structured around 5 high level priority objectives. There were 53 indicators against which the Council and its partners monitored progress, comprising 33 actions and 20 measures. In accordance with wider reporting arrangements across the Council, those indicators were categorised into 'blue', 'green', 'amber' and 'red' depending on the progress made against them.

During 2021/2022, positive progress had been made. Over 96% of the indicators were on or only slightly behind target, to achieve the projected outcomes within the identified timescales.

1 indicator was complete, 44 were progressing well and were on target, 7 showed minor slippage and 1 was report later/contextual. A summary of key highlights and achievements in relation to each of the 5 priority objectives for 2021/2022 (Year 3) was detailed in the report.

In addition to reviewing progress against the actions and measures set out within the RRTP action plan, the annual review also provided the opportunity to examine the RRTP to ensure that priority objectives, actions and measures remained appropriate, relevant and measurable. As a result, it was proposed that 1 amendment be made to the RRTP action plan. The amendment was detailed in the report and had been incorporated into the RRTP action plan for 2022/2023.

The review of progress in Year 3 of the RRTP noted that, under very challenging circumstances, significant positive indicators of success had been achieved. The review also confirmed the continuing commitment of partners to deliver RRTP priorities over the short-term as well as securing the longer-term objectives of the Plan.

Year 4 priorities would build on key learning points from the first 3 years of the plan and also on the progress achieved by working in partnership to deliver services which were focused on preventing homelessness and minimising the impact of homelessness where crisis could not be avoided.

A detailed summary of the key priorities to be progressed during Year 4 of the Plan (2022/2023) was as follows:-

- ◆ continue to deliver affordable homes for social rent
- ◆ ongoing focus on prevention of homelessness, particularly in relation to households with children
- ◆ continue to reduce long-term homelessness
- ◆ sustain or increase the proportion of social housing lets directed to homeless households
- ◆ further progress the homelessness Directions contained within the Strategic Commissioning Plan
- ◆ continue to maintain and develop links to the Local Child Poverty Action Report
- ◆ monitor implementation of specific pathways for victims of domestic abuse and young care leavers
- ◆ continue to implement specific pathways for individuals released from prison
- ◆ continue to focus on pathways and a Housing Options approach for young people
- ◆ continue to expand the council's HomeStart service for new tenants
- ◆ continue to expand the Housing First approach
- ◆ continue to convert temporary units to permanent accommodation

The RRTP Annual Review 2021/2022, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, was submitted to the Scottish Government by the required timescale of 30 June 2022.

The outcomes from the RRTP Annual Review 2021/2022 would be submitted to the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership Board for noting on 14 September 2022.

The RRTP confirmed the level of resources required to be directed towards the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. The Scottish Government had provided £2,184,717 in funding to assist in the development and implementation of the RRTP which included £451,000 to support the continued implementation of the RRTP in 2022/2023.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the progress made in delivering the RRTP objectives, as set out in the RRTP Annual Review 2021/2022, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the proposed revisions to the RRTP, detailed in section 5 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) that the key priorities to be progressed in 2022/2023, detailed in section 7 of the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 30 June 2021 (Paragraph 12)]*

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## **12 Housing Allocation Policy – Medical Assessment**

A joint report dated 15 July 2022 by the Executive Directors (Housing and Technical Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted requesting approval to increase the Housing Services' establishment.

The revised Housing Allocation Policy had been approved by Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 20 March 2019 and was introduced in May 2019. The policy was subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure that its aims were being met. The policy included provision for applicants' medical circumstances to be assessed and considered within the assessment of their housing needs. The medical assessment service was currently carried out by an independent medical adviser and provided an assessment of an applicant's medical needs in relation to an application for housing (including appeals) and homelessness applications.

The service had been delivered through the current service provider for over 20 years and was due to end in March 2023. The provider had confirmed that it would not be in a position to continue to provide the service after that point. Whilst the contract had been routinely subject to open procurement over the period, it had, however, attracted little or no interest from alternative providers.

On 8 December 2021, this Committee approved a minor change to the Allocation Policy to support any required change in approach. A revised approach had been identified and required the addition of a Strategy and Policy Officer to the Housing Services' establishment. This Officer would work with colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership to carry out the medical assessment function.

An appraisal of alternative approaches to the medical assessment function had been completed by staff from Housing and Technical Resources and the South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP).

The exercise appraised that a joint approach by Housing and Health staff was the preferred medical assessment service model. Furthermore, it had been considered that the Health Professional role would be best carried out by an Occupational Therapist. This professional would have the appropriate training and skills to assess whether an applicant's current home would be adapted or equipment provided, to make it suitable to their physical needs and were also trained in assessing mental health and developmental needs.

Work to develop the new approach was currently being progressed and it had been confirmed that the Housing input to the service could not be delivered from within existing resources. It was, therefore, proposed to add 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) post of Strategy and Policy Officer (Medical Assessment) on Grade 3, Level 2-4, SCP 63-74 (£33,651 to £39,162) to the Housing and Technical Resources staffing establishment. This post would have the specific responsibility for medical assessments and supporting wider joint working with the Health and Social Care Partnership.

A plan had been developed detailing the key actions required to ensure the implementation of the new medical assessment service model by the end of March 2023. This would include arrangements for the recruitment and management of the Housing and Health professionals, where appropriate.

It was proposed that the current service would continue to operate alongside the new service for the first 3 months to enable a seamless transition and ensure the new model was delivered on anticipated outcomes.

The costs of establishing the new post would, in part, be offset against the annual cost of the existing service which amounted to £16,866 in 2021/2022. The remaining amount of £34,652 would be met from within existing Housing Revenue Account budget.

**The Committee decided:** that 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) post of Strategy and Policy Officer (Medical Assessment) on Grade 3, Level 2-4, SCP 63-74 (£33,651 to £39,162) be added to the Housing and Technical Resources staffing establishment.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2021 (Paragraph 8)]*

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### **13 Disposal of Vacant Domestic Dwelling House at 1 Newhousemill Cottages, Newhousemill Road, East Kilbride**

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A report dated 7 July 2022 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted requesting approval to declare the vacant dwelling house at 1 Newhousemill Cottages, Newhousemill Road, East Kilbride surplus to the operational requirements of Housing Services and progress its disposal.

The property had been acquired by East Kilbride District Council from East Kilbride Development Corporation in December 1995 and transferred to South Lanarkshire Council at Local Government Re-organisation. It comprised a 1 bedroom, end terraced, non-traditional, sandstone cottage which was unique in terms of the Council's current residential property portfolio in the East Kilbride area.

The property's construction type differed from the remainder of the housing stock and was adjoined to similar, terraced, sandstone cottages that were now wholly, privately owned.

The property had been upgraded, in part, through the Housing Investment Programme, however, now required significant investment if it was to meet Scottish Housing Quality Standards. The previous tenancy had ended and the property was currently vacant. Disposal of the asset was considered to be the preferred solution in terms of property management.

It was recommended that the property be declared surplus and the Asset and Estates Section be instructed to market the property for sale on the open market.

Disposal of the property would generate a capital receipt which would contribute to the Housing Account's capital investment programme. A Home Report would be required prior to marketing and it was anticipated that the property would generate a high level of interest. Disposal of this property would reduce the Council's liability in terms of management, investment and maintenance.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the vacant property at 1 Newhousemill Cottages, Newhousemill Road, East Kilbride be declared surplus to the operational requirements of Housing Services;
- (2) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) be authorised to deal with the disposal of the property from the Housing Account through the Council's normal surplus property procedure; and
- (3) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, be authorised to conclude all matters in respect of any subsequent disposal and enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

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## 14 Notification of Contracts Awarded - 1 November 2021 to 30 June 2022

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A report dated 8 July 2022 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on contracts awarded by Housing and Technical Resources, valued in excess of £50,000, in the period 1 November 2021 to 30 June 2022, as follows:-

- ◆ contracts awarded by Consultancy Services
- ◆ contracts awarded by Procurement Team
- ◆ contracts awarded by Building Services

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

### The Committee decided:

- (1) that the contracts awarded by Consultancy Services, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the contracts awarded by the Procurement Team, as detailed in Appendix B to the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the sub-contracts awarded by Building Services, as detailed in Appendix C to the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2021 (Paragraph 18)]*

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## 15 Delegated Authority Report – Update

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A report dated 4 July 2022 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on transactions processed by Property Services during Quarters 3 and 4 of 2021/2022, together with a summary for 2021/2022 and Quarter 1 of 2022/2023.

The Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), under delegated powers, had authority to deal with various transactions including:-

- ◆ leases up to the value of £50,000 per annum and a maximum period of 20 years
- ◆ rent reviews up to an increase of £20,000 per annum
- ◆ disposals up to a value of £200,000
- ◆ acquisitions up to a value of £100,000

Details of the transactions undertaken during Quarters 3 and 4, as contained in Appendix 1 of the report, were as follows:-

### Quarter 3 2021/2022:

Number of transactions	56
Total value of lease transactions	£61,287 per annum
Total value of capital transactions	£1,292,703
Total value of miscellaneous transactions	£55,001

### Quarter 4 2021/2022:

Number of transactions	40
Total value of lease transactions	£97,127 per annum
Total value of capital transactions	£486,150
Total value of miscellaneous transactions	£106,650

**Annual Summary 2021/2022:**

Number of transactions	180
Total value of lease transactions	£599,293 per annum
Total value of capital transactions	£3,587,402
Total value of miscellaneous transactions	£476,651

**Quarter 1 2022/2023:**

Number of transactions	65
Total value of lease transactions	£114,400 per annum
Total value of capital transactions	£1,083,352
Total value of miscellaneous transactions	£55,500

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2021 (Paragraph 17)]*

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**16 Urgent Business**

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There were no items of urgent business.