

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 5 May 2021

Chair:

Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors Present:

Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Stephanie Callaghan (Depute), Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Mark Horsham (*substitute for Councillor Collette Stevenson*), Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Jared Wark

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor George Greenshields, Councillor John Ross (ex officio), Councillor Collette Stevenson

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

M M Cairns, Legal Services Manager; J Davitt, Public Relations Team Leader; H Goodwin, Finance Manager (Resources); E Maxwell, Human Resources Business Partner; P MacRae, Administration Adviser; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy); L Wyllie, Administration Assistant

Housing and Technical Resources

D Lowe, Executive Director; A Finnan, Head of Housing Services; F McCafferty, Head of Property Services

Order of Business

The Committee decided: that the items of business be dealt with in the order minuted below.

1 Proposed Lease of Ground at Overtoun Park, Rutherglen to Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club Limited

The Chair advised that a number of representations had been received in respect of the proposed lease of ground at Overtoun Park, Rutherglen to Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club Limited. To allow officers to fully consider the issues raised and consult with local members, it was proposed that consideration of the item be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee decided: that consideration of the proposed lease of ground at Overtoun Park, Rutherglen to Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club Limited be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

2 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing and Technical Resources Committee held on 17 February 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2020/2021 – Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 14 April 2021 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 2020 to 26 February 2021.

At its meeting on 17 February 2021, the Committee had noted that the budget for the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme for the financial year 2020/2021, including carry forward, was £6.529 million. There had been no changes to this budget allocation since the last meeting. Spend to 26 February 2021 amounted to £1.919 million.

Details of the financial position for the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme to 26 February 2021 were given in Appendix A to the report.

The predicted outturn position for 2020/2021, advised by Property Services, was £4.565 million. This represented an underspend of £1.964 million which, in the main, reflected the anticipated timing of spend on a number of projects, resulting in the budget being required in 2021/2022 rather than 2020/2021.

The progression of a number of those projects had been impacted by the ongoing lockdowns due to COVID-19. This included projects within multi-year programmes including Prioritised Urgent Investment, Central Energy Efficiency Fund, Civic Centre Fabric Upgrade, Essential Services Fabric Upgrade together with the Gypsy Traveller Site project at Swinhill. Any underspend on those projects, together with funding, would be carried forward into the next financial year.

The year-end position was currently being finalised and this would be reported to the Executive Committee on 23 June 2021. The ongoing implications of COVID-19 continued to have an impact on the level of capital spend achieved in the current financial year. The final position would be reported to the next meeting of the Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 30 June 2021.

The Committee decided:

- (1)** that the Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (excl HRA) of £6.529 million and expenditure to 26 February 2021 of £1.919 million be noted; and
- (2)** that the projected outturn of £4.565 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 17 February 2021 (Paragraph 3) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 28 April 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Capital Budget Monitoring 2020/2021 – Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 30 March 2021 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 2020 to 26 February 2021.

The Housing Capital Programme for 2020/2021 of £48.172 million was detailed in Appendix A to the report. The delivery of the original HRA Capital Programme for 2020/2021 had been affected by COVID-19 restrictions. At its meeting on 23 September 2020, the Executive Committee approved a revised programme which reflected the modified timescales and costs of the programming and undertaking of works during lockdown.

Expenditure to 26 February 2021 was £36.015 million, which included higher costs reflecting an element of fixed overheads from Property Services that required to be recovered.

The Committee decided: that the revised Housing and Technical Resources' capital programme (HRA) of £48.172 million and expenditure to 26 February 2021 of £36.015 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 25 November 2020 (Paragraph 4) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 10 February 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021 – Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA)

A joint report dated 30 March 2021 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of actual expenditure against the revenue budget for the period 1 April 2020 to 26 February 2021 for Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA) and providing a forecast for the year to 31 March 2021.

As at 31 March 2021, an overspend of £2.247 million had been forecast against the annual budget, comprised of an overspend of £1.265 million due to COVID-19, partially offset by an underspend of £0.018 million due to reduced printing costs and under recovery of income of £1.000 million, due to COVID-19, for Property Services costs which would not be fully recovered.

This was an increase of £1.100 million from the previously reported figure to reflect the £1.000 million reduced income for Property Services and £0.100 million of additional tenancy sustainment expenditure, both of which were directly as result of the pandemic, the costs of which were being met from the Council's COVID-19 funding.

As at 26 February 2021, there was an overspend of £1.784 million against the phased budget. This was as a result of additional expenditure in relation to the COVID-19 response, including additional expenditure for temporary accommodation costs for homeless people and the cost of additional Health and Safety measures for employees and service users.

An additional £0.282 million of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan funding had been allocated as a redetermination of General Revenue Grant. The funding would be used to support the delivery and implementation of the South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019 to 2024. Confirmation had been received from the Scottish Government that unspent sums could be carried forward to 2021/2022. It was proposed to transfer to reserves any RRTP balance at the year-end, to continue the delivery of the Plan.

Further details on variances for individual services and budget virements were provided in the appendices to the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the overspend of £1.784 million at 26 February 2021 on the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (excl HRA), as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2021 of an overspend position of £2.247 million be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 17 February 2021 (Paragraph 5) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 28 April 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

7 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021 – Housing and Technical Resources (HRA)

A joint report dated 30 March 2021 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure for the period 1 April to 26 February 2021 against budgeted expenditure for the Housing and Technical Resources' revenue budget (HRA) and providing a forecast for the year to 31 March 2021.

A breakeven position on the HRA was reported at 26 February 2021 with the budget to 31 March also forecast to show a breakeven position. This reflected the impact of COVID-19 being managed within the overall HRA finances.

The impact of COVID-19 on the budget continued to be monitored, including the impact on repairs which had varied throughout the year. Rental debt continued to be at higher levels in comparison to previous years which would require increased bad debt provision levels at the end of the year. Annual rental income projections for the year were lower as a result of delayed completion of new build properties.

Details of proposed virements were provided in Appendix A to the report.

Property Services continued to incur non variable costs, an element of which required to be offset by income recovery.

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;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2021 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 17 February 2021 (Paragraph 6) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 28 April 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

8 Housing and Technical Resources – Workforce Monitoring – January and February 2021

A joint report dated 15 March 2021 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 January and February 2021:-

- ◆ 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 December 2020

There followed a full discussion during which officers responded to members' questions on:-

- ◆ provision of lateral flow COVID test kits to relevant sectors of the workforce within Housing and Technical Resources
- ◆ consideration of service delivery in tandem with agile ways of working
- ◆ method of conducting exit interviews

With regard to the provision of lateral flow COVID test kits, the Council provided those to a limited sector of the workforce, however, they were available, free of charge, from the Scottish Government website or could be collected from testing centres. A global communication would be sent out to the workforce advising of the availability of the tests.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 17 February 2021 (Paragraph 7)]

Councillors Buchanan and Holford joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business

9 Lease of 2 to 16 Milton Road, College Milton, East Kilbride to Distell International Limited

A report dated 16 April 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on a proposed 10 year lease of the industrial premises at 2 to 16 Milton Road, East Kilbride to Distell International Limited.

The property at 2 to 16 Milton Road, East Kilbride consisted of 8 industrial units totalling 50,400 sq ft, which had been fitted out by East Kilbride District Council in 1995 to facilitate Burns Stewart distillers making East Kilbride their head office base. In return, Burns Stewart had entered into a 25 year lease, which included a purchase option, exercisable at any time during the duration of the lease.

Burns Stewart's business and lease interests had been acquired by Distell International Limited. The existing lease terminated on 31 March 2020 and, since that date, the lease had continued by agreement on the original terms.

Distell International Limited had confirmed to the Council that they did not wish to purchase the premises from the Council at this time, however, they were willing to enter into a new lease, subject to the terms and conditions detailed in the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that a 10 year lease of the premises at 2 to 16 Milton Road, East Kilbride be granted to Distell International Limited; and
- (2) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in conjunction with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, be authorised to conclude all matters in respect of the grant of a lease and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

10 Housing and Technical Resource Plan 2021 to 2022

A report dated 6 April 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Housing and Technical Resource Plan 2021 to 2022.

Details were provided on the Resource Plan for 2021/2022, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, which outlined the:-

- ◆ key areas of focus for the year ahead
- ◆ Resource objectives and outcomes
- ◆ measures and actions
- ◆ resourcing of the Plan

The Resource Plans for 2021/2022, which had been approved at the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 28 April 2021, would be presented to the individual Resource Committees for noting and subsequent monitoring.

In line with the Council's performance management arrangements, a mid-year progress report on actions identified in the 2021/2022 Housing and Technical Resource Plan would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

In response to an issue raised regarding maintenance and painting of tenemental closes, officers undertook to submit a report on the general issue of planned maintenance to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Resource Plan 2021/2022, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and
- (2) that a Quarter 2 Progress Report on the Resource Plan 2021/2022 be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

[Reference: Minutes of 28 April 2021 (Paragraph 6)]

11 Council House Open Market Purchase for Specific and Urgent Housing Need at 58 Eider Grove, East Kilbride

A report dated 7 April 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the 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 seek approval to purchase a property at 58 Eider Grove, East Kilbride, on the open market.

The Council House Open Market Purchase Scheme allowed for the purchase of property to increase the supply of Council housing stock aligned to 4 key strategic outcomes identified in the Local Housing Strategy. One of the key outcomes was the purchase of property to meet the urgent housing needs of a specific applicant. Grant subsidy towards the purchase of any property on the open market was available from the Scottish Government through the Affordable Housing Supply Funding Grant.

The Scheme of Delegation placed a financial limit for acquisitions, under this scheme, of £100,000.

Estates Services had been asked to identify properties on the open market suitable to meet a specific housing need that could not be met within the Council's existing housing stock. A 5 apartment property at 58 Eider Grove, East Kilbride had been identified which would be suitable, however, the value of this property exceeded the maximum financial limit of £100,000 set out in the current Delegated Authority for acquisition of land and property. As with every purchase, the Council's surveyors would seek to secure best value in any acquisition. Engagement had taken place with other Council services to confirm that the property at 58 Eider Grove, East Kilbride was suitable.

Authority for the purchase had been required in order to meet timescales for the offer process and to enable the Council to negotiate the acquisition more effectively on the open market.

Once the acquisition was concluded, an application would be made to the Scottish Government to recover grant subsidy towards the purchase of this property.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c) by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to authorise the purchase of 58 Eider Grove, East Kilbride on the open market to meet an urgent specific housing need, be noted; and
- (2) that the action taken by 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 purchase of 58 Eider Grove, East Kilbride, and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 July 2015 (Paragraph 9) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 26 August 2015 (Paragraph 12)]

12 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.