

HOUSING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 29 September 2021

Chair:

Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors Present:

Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Janine Calikes (Depute), Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Isobel Dorman (*substitute for Councillor Mary Donnelly*), Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor George Greenshields, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Catherine McClymont (*substitute for Councillor Mo Razzaq*), Councillor John Ross (ex officio), Councillor Jared Wark

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor David Shearer

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

H Calley, Administration Officer; H Goodwin, Finance Manager (Resources); E Maxwell, Human Resources Business Partner; P MacRae, Administration Adviser; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy); A Thompson, Public Relations Officer; L Wyllie, Administration Assistant

Housing and Technical Resources

D Lowe, Executive Director; A Finnan, Head of Housing Services; J Forbes, Property Manager (Assets and Estates Services); F McCafferty, Head of Property Services

1 Declaration of Interests

The following interest was declared:-

Councillor(s)	Item(s)	Nature of Interest(s)
Chalmers	Land at Birch Place, Blantyre – Asset Transfer to Blantyre Soccer Academy	Publicly supported the Group's asset transfer request

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing and Technical Resources Committee held on 30 June 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

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

A joint report dated 23 August 2021 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 13 August 2021 for Housing and Technical Resources (excl HRA).

An overspend position of £0.131 million was reported at 13 August 2021 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 of £3.211 million had been estimated to date to be recharged to those budgets to cover fixed costs.

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 overspend of £0.131 million as at 13 August 2021 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 5 May 2021 (Paragraph 7) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 28 April 2021 (Paragraph 4) and 23 June 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/2022 - Housing and Technical Resources - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

A joint report dated 23 August 2021 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 13 August 2021 for Housing and Technical Resources (HRA) and providing a forecast for the year to 31 March 2022.

As at 13 August 2021, there was a breakeven position against budget and the forecast for the budget to 31 March 2022 was also a breakeven position. The COVID-19 lockdown had an impact on the Property Services section which provided the property repairs and maintenance service to the HRA. The section continued to incur non-variable costs which required to be offset by income recovery, therefore, a recharge of £0.233 million was estimated to date to the HRA revenue budget to cover those fixed costs.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on Housing and Technical Resources' (HRA) revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, and the forecast to 31 March 2022 of a breakeven position, be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 May 2021 (Paragraph 7) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 23 June 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

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

A joint report dated 8 September 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 2021 to 13 August 2021.

At its meeting on 23 June 2021, the Executive Committee approved a capital programme budget for Housing and Technical Resources of £8.387 million which included carry forward. On 25 August 2021, the Executive Committee also agreed changes to the Programme totalling a net increase of £0.159 million. Details were provided in Appendix A of the report. The total capital programme budget for 2021/2022, therefore, amounted to £8.546 million.

Anticipated spend to 13 August 2021 was £0.848 million and actual spend amounted to £0.629 million. This represented a position of £0.219 million behind profile and reflected the anticipated timing of spend on a number of projects within multi-year programmes, including Essential Services Fabric Upgrade, Prioritised Urgent Investment and Central Energy Efficiency Fund.

The Committee decided: that the Housing and Technical Resources' (excl HRA) capital programme of £8.546 million and expenditure to 13 August 2021 of £0.629 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 23 June 2021 (Paragraph 6)]

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

A joint report dated 23 August 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 2021 to 13 August 2021.

Following a review of the Housing Investment Programme, £14.720 million required to be carried forward into 2022/2023 to meet revised timescales and estimated completion dates associated with the New Council Housing Programme. Details of the sites affected were provided in the report.

The revised budget of £79.640 million, based on the amended capital programme for the year, had been approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 22 September 2021. Appendix A of the report detailed the financial position for Housing and Technical Resources (HRA).

The actual spend to 13 August 2021 was £26.065 million. In addition to the planned works, higher costs would be incurred, reflecting the overheads from Property Services which required to be recovered. For HRA capital, this was estimated at £2.978 million to the current period and had been included in the actual spend of £26.065 million.

Due to ongoing industry issues with shortages of materials and price increases, the timescales for the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) would continue to be monitored and a revised position presented to a future meeting of the Executive Committee for approval, if required.

The Committee decided: that the revised Housing and Technical Resources' (HRA) capital programme of £79.640 million and expenditure of £26.065 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 22 September 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

Councillor Cooper joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business

7 Housing and Technical Resources – Workforce Monitoring – May to July 2021

A joint report dated 7 September 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 May to July 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 June 2021

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 June 2021 (Paragraph 11)]

8 Housing and Technical Resource Plan – Quarter 4 Progress Report 2020/2021

A report dated 12 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Housing and Technical Resource Plan 2020/2021 Quarter 4 Progress Report.

Details were provided on:-

- ◆ progress made in the Resource Plan measures, as detailed in the Quarter 4 Progress Report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report
- ◆ those measures which had changed in red/amber/green (RAG) status during the period from Quarter 2 to Quarter 4, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report
- ◆ areas where improvement was required, together with management actions

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Housing and Technical Resources' Quarter 4 Progress Report 2020/2021, summarised at paragraph 4.2 of the report and detailed at Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) that the key achievements made by the Resource to date, as detailed in paragraph 4.3 of the report, be noted;
- (3) that the areas for improvement and associated management actions, as detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report, be noted; and

- (4) that the additional scrutiny of changes in RAG status between Quarter 2 and Quarter 4, as summarised at paragraph 4.5 and detailed at Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 4 September 2019 (Paragraph 10) and 16 September 2020 (Paragraph 15)]

9 Scottish Housing Regulator – Annual Assurance Statement 2020/2021

A report dated 1 September 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the Council's Annual Assurance Statement 2020/2021.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) published a revised Regulatory Framework in February 2019 which introduced the requirement for social landlords to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to confirm compliance with regulatory requirements and, if appropriate, identify any material breaches. The Annual Assurance Statement 2020/2021 was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

A detailed summary of the key requirements for Assurance and how they had been addressed was attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

In 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SHR issued revised guidance for landlords relating to the publication of Annual Assurance Statements. Although the Regulator had indicated that standard timescales had been reinstated for 2021, it continued to recognise that the pandemic was likely to have affected each landlord's ability to comply fully with all regulatory requirements and asked the landlord to acknowledge where this was the case. The SHR advised this would be considered when assessing each landlord's performance and risk and would subsequently inform the level of engagement that would be required with each landlord.

The report highlighted that the Council had been partially compliant in respect of fire safety for Gypsy/Traveller sites. A programme of work had been progressed, resulting in 1 of the Council's 2 sites being fully compliant in terms of fire safety standards, while partial compliance had been achieved at the other site. Compliance with fire safety guidance continued to be a key focus of activity for the Council.

If approved, the Annual Assurance Statement would be submitted to the SHR to confirm the required assurance.

The Committee decided: that the Council's Annual Assurance Statement 2020/2021 be approved and submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

[Reference: Minutes of 25 November 2020 (Paragraph 8)]

10 Former Walston Primary School, Elsrickle Asset Transfer to Biggar and District Men's Shed

A report dated 25 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on a request for asset transfer, by lease, of the former Walston Primary School, Elsrickle to Biggar and District Men's Shed.

Biggar and District Men's Shed, an organisation which aimed to provide recreational facilities for and advance the social needs, health and wellbeing of men living in Biggar and the surrounding areas, was seeking a permanent location within the area from which to operate and the former Walston Primary School building met its requirements. It had submitted a request for Community Asset Transfer of the main school building, excluding the neighbouring former canteen building and residential property, the validation date for which was 11 May 2021.

In addition to placing the application and supporting documentation on the Council's Planning Portal, notices were placed on the property advising that the Council was considering an asset transfer. The closing date for responses was 21 June 2021 at which time 3 representations had been received which related to car parking and access. Biggar and District Men's Shed had demonstrated it would have parking for about 20 cars and that it had responded to the parties' concerns.

The request had been placed before the Community Asset Transfer Assessment Panel on 19 August 2021 and details of the matters taken into consideration by the Panel were provided in the report.

The proposal was for Biggar Men's Shed to use the property for workshops and meeting space with aspiration for a market garden in the future. Not all rooms would be used immediately and, in recognition of the requirement for income to support the running costs, it was proposed that some rooms would be let out in the short-term.

Biggar Men's Shed did not have funding to refurbish the property so the business model was based on income generation from other means. It was recognised in the business plan that the initial years would carry a financial risk.

It was proposed that the former Walston Primary School, as shown on the plan attached to the report, be leased to Biggar and District Men's Shed on the terms and conditions detailed in the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the former Walston Primary School be leased to Biggar and District Men's Shed, subject to the terms and conditions outlined in Section 5 of the report; 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 lease and enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

11 Land at Birch Place, Blantyre – Asset Transfer to Blantyre Soccer Academy

A report dated 25 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on a request for asset transfer, by sale, of the open space at Birch Place, Blantyre to Blantyre Soccer Academy.

In 2019, the Council transferred ownership of the former Rowan Hall, Blantyre to Blantyre Soccer Academy from which it operated a Community Hub. The Council owned an area of open space, which was landlocked with no vehicular access, adjacent to the Community Hub at Birch Place, Blantyre. Blantyre Soccer Academy was seeking to extend its community activities in partnership with other local organisations to create a community food growing area, COVID-19 memorial area, wild growing area and outdoor recreational space. The Academy had submitted a request for Community Asset Transfer of the open space, the validation date for which was 24 May 2021.

In addition to placing the application and supporting documentation on the Council's Planning Portal, notices were placed on the property advising that the Council was considering an asset transfer. The closing date for responses was 9 July 2021 at which time no representations had been received.

The request had been placed before the Community Asset Transfer Assessment Panel on 19 August 2021 and details of the matters taken into consideration by the Panel were provided in the report.

The proposal was to dispose of approximately 1,943 square metres of open space at Birch Place, Blantyre, as shown on the plan attached to the report, to Blantyre Soccer Academy, on the terms and conditions detailed in the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the open space at Birch Place, Blantyre be sold to Blantyre Soccer Academy, subject to the terms and conditions outlined in Section 5 of the report; 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 sale and enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

Councillor Chalmers, having declared an interest in the above item, left the meeting during its consideration

12 Overtoun Park, Rutherglen – Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club Limited

A report dated 25 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on a request by Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club Limited for a lease of ground at Overtoun Park, Rutherglen for the construction of indoor courts and a community hub.

Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club had 7 existing outdoor courts at its facilities in Viewpark Drive and Burnside Road, Rutherglen, however, with a growing membership, loss of play due to inclement weather and an increased community development programme, it was seeking to develop an indoor facility. The Tennis Club had identified the site of the former tennis courts within Overtoun Park, Rutherglen as a potentially suitable location and had undertaken considerable consultation in preparation of a request to the Council for a 25-year ground lease at a nominal rent.

At its meeting on 5 May 2021, in view of representations received on the matter and to allow officers to fully consider the issues raised and consult with local members, the Committee deferred consideration of the item to a future meeting. Those representations had since been assessed, considered and discussed with Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club.

The proposal did not constitute a community asset transfer request under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, as Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club Limited was not an eligible community transfer body as defined in section 77 of the Act. Nevertheless, the same considerations as for a community asset transfer request had been taken into account and were detailed in the report.

The proposal was for the creation of 4 tennis courts and 2 Padel courts under a steel frame structure with a tensioned fabric skin. A spine of converted shipping containers would provide the required accommodation and facilities. In addition, the covered area would offer facilities including:-

- ◆ community “pay-as-you-go” use of the courts and limited free slots
- ◆ a community café with free WiFi
- ◆ toilets available for public use
- ◆ table tennis, table football and pool
- ◆ community cinema events
- ◆ flexible/functional spaces available for community use such as dance, fitness, yoga, exercise, art classes, etc

The project was ambitious and required further development in relation to design and funding, however, in order to move on to the next stage of the project, the Club required the confidence that the land at Overtoun Park would be available to it to lease. In order to mitigate against some of the risk associated with the unknown elements of the project, it was proposed that any offer of lease would be conditional to the requirements detailed in the report.

It was proposed to grant a lease of ground in the vicinity of that shown on the plan attached at Appendix 1, subject to the terms and conditions set out in the report.

There followed a full discussion and exchange of views during which officers:-

- ◆ responded to members’ questions on various aspects of the report
- ◆ undertook to clarify the position in relation to assignation to ensure that this could only be done with the Council’s express consent

The Committee decided:

- (1) that an area of land at Overtoun Park, Rutherglen be leased to Rutherglen Lawn Tennis Club Limited, subject to the terms and principal conditions outlined in Sections 4 and 5 of the report; 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 lease and enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 May 2021 (Paragraph 1)]

Councillor Greenshields joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business

In terms of Standing Order No 13, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 11.05am for a 5 minute period. The meeting reconvened at 11.10am

13 Proposed Lease of Ground at Palace Grounds Car Park, Palace Grounds Road, Hamilton with Associated Right of Access in Favour of ESP Limited

A report dated 18 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on a proposed 99-year lease of ground at Palace Grounds Car Park, Hamilton, with associated access in favour of ESP Limited.

In order to service the rapid vehicle charging station at Palace Grounds Car Park, Hamilton, the operator, Fastned UK Limited, sought consent to vary its lease extents and allow the Council to grant a 99-year lease to ESP Limited for the construction of a substation and associated cabling.

It was proposed that ESP Limited would lease the site and construct the substation and would have the right to sublease the substation to Scottish Power Distribution (SPD) following completion. The substation required to be constructed on the ground extending to 25 square metres or thereby, shown on the plan attached to the report, which was owned by South Lanarkshire Council and held in the Hamilton Common Good Account.

Whilst the substation was to service the adjacent vehicle charging facility, the substation lease could also serve the wider area, therefore, there would be a rental charge of £9,000.

It was proposed to lease the land subject to the terms and conditions detailed in the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that a 99-year lease of ground at Palace Grounds Car Park, Hamilton be granted to ESP Limited on the main lease terms and conditions outlined in Section 4 of the report;
- (2) that all necessary rights be granted to ESP Limited to maintain the substation and the cables serving the substation, as shown in the plan attached to the report; and
- (3) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, if appropriate, be authorised to conclude all matters in respect of the grant of lease and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

14 South Lanarkshire Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022 to 2027

A report dated 15 September 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on:-

- ♦ progress in delivering affordable housing through the Strategic Local Programme Agreement (SLPA) during 2020/2021
- ♦ the updated Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2022 to 2027

The SHIP identified strategic housing projects to help deliver affordable homes and inform the allocation of the affordable housing grant through the SLPA. The SHIP and SLPA were reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes to the 5 year rolling SHIP to include progress made to deliver affordable housing in 2020/2021 and planned progress in the current year 2021/2022.

During 2020/2021, 339 additional affordable homes for rent had been delivered. A summary of completions by the Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners during 2020/2021 was provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

Since the easing of restrictions for construction sites which had been introduced as a result of COVID-19, the Council and RSL partners had worked with contractors and the Scottish Government to ensure that the affordable housing programme was delivered as quickly and safely as possible. Some projects had been delivered on time in 2020/2021, however, the timeframe for other sites had been extended. A summary of the 949 additional homes, either under construction, completed or acquired through the Home+ Programme and the Open Market Purchase Scheme (OMPS), was contained in Appendix 2 to the report. Delivery of sites was being closely monitored and all steps taken to ensure early completion whilst achieving compliance with relevant guidance and restrictions in place at a national level.

A copy of the SHIP and associated table of priority sites was attached as Appendix 3 to the report and included projects with a total capacity for delivering up to 2,606 homes in South Lanarkshire over its lifespan. It had been updated in line with the Scottish Government's guidance for the preparation of SHIPs.

The cost to deliver the housing programme would be met through additional borrowing supplemented by Scottish Government grant funding. The impact of the additional borrowing and all additional costs had been reviewed in line with the long-term business plan and would be submitted for approval as part of the Annual Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget.

The Council would continue to review its Affordable Housing Supply Programme to consider, wherever possible, opportunities to extend the current programme to meet identified local housing need and demand.

If approved, the SHIP 2022 to 2027 would be submitted to the Scottish Government by 29 October 2021 to inform the allocation of the affordable housing grant funding through the SLPA. Thereafter, it would be collated into a national programme for Ministerial approval, following which, the SLPAs would be prepared for sign off by each local authority.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the progress made in increasing the supply of affordable housing through the SHIP and SLPA be noted; and
- (2) that the content of the SHIP 2022 to 2027, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 25 November 2020 (Paragraph 9)]

15 Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) 2020/2021

A report dated 11 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted providing an update on:-

- ◆ the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the requirement to produce an Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) covering performance during 2020/2021
- ◆ arrangements to monitor and report on Charter progress throughout 2021/2022

The Charter contained 32 measures of performance which reflected a mixture of qualitative, survey-based information as well as a range of efficiency and effectiveness measures. To comply with the requirements set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), the Resource submitted its 2020/2021 performance information to the Regulator on 28 May 2021.

The Charter report was consistent with those of previous years and a summary, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, provided further details on each indicator together with a comparison against the Scottish average for all social landlords and that of the other Scottish local authority landlords. Of the 12 reported indicators, 6 had improved, 3 remained the same and 3 had declined.

The report provided further information on each performance indicator. The Resource Plan 2021/2022 would continue to be monitored and reported as part of the 6-monthly update to the Committee.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Council's reported performance and contextual information for the Scottish Social Housing Charter and comparisons with other landlords, detailed at Appendix 1 of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the future use of the Charter for ongoing scrutiny by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), tenants and other service users be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 25 November 2020 (Paragraph 10)]

16 Council Open Market Purchase Scheme

A report dated 19 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted advising of 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 approve the purchase of a property on the open market exceeding the authorised £100,000 limit to increase the supply of Council housing stock and to contribute to key strategic priorities and outcomes identified in the Local Housing Strategy.

The Scheme of Delegation placed a financial limit for acquisitions, under the Council House Open Market Purchase Scheme, of £100,000. Estates Services had been asked to identify properties on the open market which were suitable in meeting a specific housing need that could not be met within the Council's existing housing stock. A 3 bedroomed semi-detached house at 8 Swisscot Avenue, Hamilton, had become available on the open market with an asking price in excess of the authorised limit. As there was a lack of stock of this size, authority for the purchase of the property had been required quickly, to meet timescales for the offer process, and to enable the Council to negotiate the acquisition. Based on assessment of market valuations, the Estates Section advised that a reasonable threshold for the purchase of this property would be in the region of £125,000. As with every purchase, the Council's surveyors sought to secure best value.

Once the acquisition was concluded, an application would be made to the Scottish Government to recover grant subsidy towards the purchase of the property through the Affordable Housing Supply Grant.

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 8 Swisscot Avenue, Hamilton on the open market to meet specific housing need and demand within an area, 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 8 Swisscot Avenue, Hamilton 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)]

17 Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 Annual Review 2020/2021

A report dated 7 September 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the third annual review of the Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022.

The Housing Services' Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 had been approved by the Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 23 May 2018.

The Annual Review of the Strategy 2020/2021 and associated Action Plan was attached as Appendix 1 to the report and summarised progress made between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 in engaging with and involving customers in developing and shaping Housing Services. Good progress had been made in 17 of the 23 objectives across the 4 strategic outcomes. The report outlined key achievements in 2020/2021 and the priority areas to be continued in 2021/2022.

The review also sought to understand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions had on services and the ability to engage with customers. The challenges presented in maintaining effective engagement and meeting face-to-face had resulted in a significant expansion of the use of online engagement platforms which had a number of positive outcomes, as detailed in the report.

As part of the review, customer representatives within the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group highlighted the priorities they wished to see progressed by Housing Services in 2021/2022. Officers would continue to work with customer representatives, other services and partners to progress those priorities through the remaining term of the Strategy.

2021/2022 was the final year of the current Customer Involvement Strategy. Consideration would be given by both officers and customer representatives on how the current processes and methods of engagement could be improved and adapted to meet the continually evolving requirements of housing, homelessness and services for Gypsy/Travellers, including the role and structure of the next Customer Involvement Strategy.

The Committee decided: that the Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 Annual Review 2020/2021, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 May 2018 (Paragraph 9) and 25 November 2020 (Paragraph 11)]

18 Update of the Housing and Technical Resources' Risk Register and Risk Control Plan

A report dated 26 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted providing an update on the Housing and Technical Resources' Risk Register and Risk Control actions.

Housing and Technical Resources had followed Council guidance in developing, monitoring and updating its Risk Control Register on an ongoing basis. The Register had been developed to ensure that the Resource:-

- ◆ was fully aware of the top risks
- ◆ was able to prioritise those risks
- ◆ had controls in place to eliminate or minimise the impact of the risk

The risks were scored in accordance with the Council's scoring mechanism based on likelihood and impact of risk. This resulted in risks being scored between 1 to 25 (low to very high). Risks were scored on their inherent risk (risk if nothing was done) and their residual risk (risk after applying controls). The Risk Register for the Resource had been developed and was monitored on an ongoing basis by the Resource Risk Management Group to add new risks and to review the score of existing risks. The main changes to the Risk Register were summarised in the report.

Information on the risk scoring matrix and definitions for likelihood and impact was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Details of all risks which had scored very high and high were provided in Appendix 2 to the report. Risks evaluated as being medium or low risk would be monitored to ensure that they continued to be adequately managed.

As a result of COVID-19, 1 risk control action due for completion in 2020/2021, Affordable Housing Supply Programme, had been revised by the Scottish Government for completion during 2021/2022. The outstanding actions to mitigate risks within the Risk Control Plan would be progressed by the relevant officers.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the contents of the Resource Risk Register be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that risk control actions would continue to be progressed by relevant officers.

[Reference: Minutes of 25 November 2020 (Paragraph 12)]

19 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.