

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
29 JANUARY 2020

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held in the Council Chambers, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 29 January 2020 at 9.30am.

Present: Councillors B Brawn, C Ahern, A Bailey, P Barrett, T Gray, D Illingworth, A Jarvis, G Laing (substituting for E Drysdale), R McCall (substituting for C Shiers), S McCole, T McEwen, B Pover and R Watters.

In Attendance: B Renton, Executive Director (Housing and Environment); C Mailer, M Dow (up to and including Art. 48), S Coyle, J McColl, E Ritchie (from Art. 46), S Watson and C Cranmer (up to and including Art. 46) (all Housing and Environment); C Flynn, A Taylor and L Haxton (up to and including Art. 45) (all Corporate and Democratic Services).

Also in Attendance: Chief Inspector I Scott (Police Scotland) (up to and including Art. 44); Area Manager G Pryde, Group Manager B McLintock and Station Manager D Anderson (all Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) (both up to and including Art. 44); and C Stewart (Tenants' Representative).

Apologies: Councillor E Drysdale and C Shiers.

Councillor Brawn, Convener, Presiding.

The Convener led the discussion for Arts. 41-43 and 47-52, and the Vice-Convener for Arts. 44-46.

41. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Convener welcomed all those present to the meeting. Apologies for absence and substitutes were noted as above.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors C Ahern and S McCole both declared a Non-Financial interest in Art. 46.

43. MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE OF 30 OCTOBER 2019 FOR APPROVAL AND SIGNATURE

The minute of the meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee of 30 October 2019 (Arts. 521-532) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

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44. POLICE AND FIRE REFORM: LOCAL SCRUTINY AND ENGAGEMENT

(i) Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Interim Activity Report

The Committee received a joint verbal report from Area Manager G Pryde and Group Manager B McLintock of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) providing an update on the activity within the Perth and Kinross area covering the interim period 1 December 2019 to 5 January 2020.

In response to a query from Councillor McEwen on the team approach by Perth and Kinross Council and Partners in relation to the recent fires at the Pomarium Flats in Perth, Group Manager McLintock confirmed that a number of home safety/reassurance visits have been carried out on properties within the block, he further stated that SFRS attended recently held public meeting along with officers from Housing and Community Police. C Mair further commented that a full on-site joint inspection of the flats was carried out with members of the Locality Housing Teams, representatives from SFRS and members of the Housing Improvements Team to help identify the immediate actions required to reinstate the building and to identify any improvement actions. She further stated that since the fires, a number of actions had been undertaken, sprinkler systems have been installed in the two bin rooms, extra work to the fire access gates, a complete clear-out of the cellars, enhanced CCTV, enhanced security and additional caretaking service at the flats.

Councillor Gray referred to the reduction in unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) down from 187 to 101 in the period and queried if there was an attributable cost to SFRS for dealing with these false alarms. In response Area Manager Pryde confirmed one of the key reasons for the reduction was due to the preventative action plan currently in place to work with partners / owners of buildings to bring these UFAS down whilst not increasing the risk. He further stated this is an ongoing process and the target is to decrease the number of UFAS calls by 15% over the next three years.

In response to a question from Councillor Laing on how many of the 101 UFAS were malicious and how many were attributable to faulty systems. In response Group Manager McLintock confirmed these are broken down into four separate areas, faulty equipment, false alarms, good intent and UFAS, commercial properties accounted for 55% of the 101 callouts and of these six were malicious calls and fifteen were 'good intent'.

Resolved:

The interim update on operational and community safety engagement activities of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Perth and Kinross area be noted.

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(ii) Perth and Kinross Local Policing Area – Interim Activity Report

The Committee received a verbal report from by Chief Inspector I Scott, Police Scotland 'D' Division (Tayside) providing an interim update on local policing activity in the Perth and Kinross area for the period 1 December 2019 to 5 January 2020.

Councillor McCole referred to the number of breath tests carried out over the festive period by Road Policing Units and queried whether these were primarily for alcohol use or a mixture of both alcohol and drug use. In response Chief Inspector Scott confirmed that it was a mixture of both, but that alcohol remained the greater proportion of failed breath tests.

Councillor Barrett referred to the appearance of posters in the city centre in December and the subsequent investigations of possible hate crime activity and queried whether any positive lines of enquiry had been established to help detect any individuals. In response Chief Inspector Scott advised that this type of activity was not classed as a hate crime and subsequently had not been investigated as one. He stated that this was more of a community concern incident and confirmed that despite extensive investigation using CCTV, no individual had been identified.

Resolved:

The interim update on performance of Police Scotland against the local policing priorities for the Perth and Kinross area be noted.

CHIEF INSPECTOR I SCOTT, AREA MANAGER G PRYDE AND GROUP MANAGER B MCLINTOCK ALL LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

45. COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

There was submitted and noted a report by the Depute Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer (20/27) providing an update on progress with Community Planning priorities since the last update on 30 October 2019.

L HAXTON LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

46. PERTH AND KINROSS COMMUNITY JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (20/28) introducing the Perth and Kinross Community Justice Partnership Annual Report 2018-19 which has been submitted to Community Justice Scotland.

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Resolved:

The approach being undertaken by Perth and Kinross Council in respect of the Perth and Kinross Community Justice Partnership and the contents of the 2018-19 annual report as detailed in Appendix 1 to report 20/28, be noted.

C CRANMER LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

47. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) STRATEGIC FINANCIAL PLAN INCORPORATING THE 5-YEAR CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AND RENT STRATEGY TO 2024/25, RESERVES STRATEGY AND OTHER HOUSING CHARGES 2020/21

There was submitted a joint report by the Executive Director (Housing and Environment) and the Head of Finance (20/29) (1) setting out the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for five years from 2020/21 to 2024/25;(2) recommending increases to rents for houses and other HRA property service charges, and an appropriate level of reserves; and (3) detailing the proposed budget for the next five years of the Capital Investment Programme totalling £69.4 million from 2020/21 to 2024/25.

Resolved:

- (i) The Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2020/21 and provisional budgets for financial years 2021/22 to 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report 20/29, be approved.
- (ii) The proposed Housing Revenue Account Capital Investment Programme for 2021/22 to 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 4 to Report 20/29, be approved.
- (iii) The Rent Strategy for 2020/21 and a provisional Rent Strategy for the following 4 years to 2024/25, as detailed in Section 6 of Report 20/29, be approved.
- (iv) The 3.5% rent increase for the year commencing 6 April 2020 for all Council houses be approved, meaning the average weekly rent would be £71.22 per week based on 52 weeks.
- (v) The rent increase of 3.5% for the year commencing 6 April 2020 be approved for:
 - All lock-ups
 - All garage sites
 - Chalets and stances for travelling people at Double Dykes and Bobbin Mill
 - Dispersed tenancies owned by the HRA
 - Greyfriars Hostel
- (vi) The Housing Revenue Account Reserves Strategy, as proposed in Section 7 of Report 20/29, be approved.
- (vii) The proposal to set Housing service charges from 6 April 2020, as stated in Section 10 of Report 20/29, be approved.
- (viii) Endorse and approve, where necessary, the revised level of all housing related charges, as detailed in Appendix 6 to Report 20/29.
- (ix) The progress made to date in delivering and maintaining the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) for improving and managing the housing stock, as

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set out in Section 4 of Report 20/29, and the related business cases, be endorsed.

48. RENT ARREARS AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT MANAGEMENT REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Head of Housing (20/30) (1) providing an overview of actions taken to manage rent arrears and understand issues around Universal Credits; and (2) outlining the support provided to tenants who fall into arrears.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 20/30 be approved.

M DOW LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

FOLLOWING A SHORT ADJOURNMENT THE COMMITTEE RECONVENED AT 11.45AM.

49. COMMON REPAIRS POLICY - REVIEW AND UPDATE

There was submitted a report by the Head of Housing (20/31) seeking approval for the revised Common Repairs Policy.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 20/31 be noted.
- (ii) The amendments to the Common Repairs Policy, as attached in Appendix 2 to Report 20/31, be approved.

50. RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS POLICY - REVIEW AND UPDATE

There was submitted a report by the Head of Housing (20/32) seeking approval for the revised Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 20/32 be noted.
- (ii) The amendments to the Rechargeable Repairs Policy, as attached in Appendix 2 to Report 20/32, be approved.

51. REVISED SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

There was submitted a report by the Head of Housing (20/33) seeking approval for a revised Scheme of Assistance which supports people in the private sector to maintain, repair or adapt their own property.

Resolved:

- (i) The revised Scheme of Assistance, as detailed in Appendix 2 to Report 20/33, be approved.
- (ii) The Executive Director (Housing and Environment) be delegated the authority to amend the Scheme of Assistance in relation to the delivery of Care and Repair Services following the tendering process scheduled to take place in

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early 2020.

- (iii) It be approved that future reviews of the Scheme of Assistance will be in line with the Local Housing Strategy review schedule, unless legislative changes dictate an earlier requirement.

52. HOME FIRST (RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN) - UPDATE

There was submitted a report by the Head of Housing (20/34) providing an update on feedback from the Scottish Government on funding arrangements and progress with the implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Resolved:

- (i) The feedback from the Scottish Government and the revisions to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report 20/34, be noted.
- (ii) The progress to date and the further improvement in the outcomes for homeless people, as detailed in Appendix 2 to Report 20/34, be noted.
- (iii) It be approved that the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan will become part of the suite of strategic documents forming the Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021 and that further updates on progress will be provided to Committee as part of the wider Local Housing Strategy progress reporting arrangements.

53. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – OPERATIONAL UPDATE FOR PERTH AND KINROSS

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) had no operational update to report.

54. POLICE SCOTLAND – OPERATIONAL UPDATE FROM PERTH AND KINROSS

Police Scotland had no operational update to report.

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