

# Notice of meeting and agenda

## Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

**10.00am, Tuesday, 16 April 2013**

Dean of Guild Court Room, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh

This is a public meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend

### Contact

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## **1. Order of business**

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- 1.1 Including any notices of motion and any other items of business submitted as urgent for consideration at the meeting.

## **2. Declaration of interests**

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- 2.1 Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

## **3. Deputations**

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- 3.1 Edinburgh Tenants Federation – e-mail dated 9 April 2013 (circulated)

## **4. Minutes**

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- 4.1 Minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 26 February 2013 (circulated) – submitted for approval as a correct record.

## **5. Key Decisions forward plan**

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- 5.1 Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan April to June 2013 (circulated)

## **6. Business Bulletin**

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- 6.1 Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Business Bulletin 16 April 2013 (circulated)

## **7. Executive decisions**

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- 7.1 Welfare Reform
- a) Further Update – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)
  - b) Council Tax Reduction Scheme Arrangements – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)
  - c) Scottish Welfare Fund Arrangements – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)
  - d) Managing Arrears Arising from Housing Benefit Under-Occupancy Restrictions – report by the Director of Services for Communities (circulated)

e) Motion By Councillor Ricky Henderson – Welfare Reform – submitted in terms of Standing Order 16.1:

- “1) Committee wishes to express its concern regarding the impact that the range of Welfare Reform measures is having on people in Edinburgh.
- 2) Specifically the Committee is concerned that, from April 2013, measures to reduce housing benefit for tenants of local authorities and housing associations (Bedroom Tax) have not taken account of the acute shortage of one bedroom homes. This will lead to significant hardship for the tenants affected and increase the risk of homelessness.
- 3) Committee is further concerned that these measures may have an adverse impact on council and housing association landlords’ rental income and their ability to invest in improving their own stock and in building new, affordable to heat, homes.
- 4) Committee notes that there is a significant risk of a reduction of £45 million in capital investment, funded from the Housing Revenue Account, as a result of this and other measures.
- 5) Committee agrees:
  - (a) that where the Director of Services for Communities is satisfied that tenants who are subject to the under-occupancy charge have done all they reasonably could to avoid falling in to arrears, then all legitimate means to collect rent arrears should be utilised except eviction.
  - (b) to establish a joint working group that will include elected members, officials from Housing and Revenues and Benefits, Registered Social Landlords and tenants representatives. The role of the working group shall be to monitor the implementation and impact of various benefits changes and to contribute to consideration of further measures to support tenants.
  - (c) to support calls by local campaigns to scrap the Bedroom Tax.”

- f) Motion By Councillor Burgess – Taking effective Action on “Bedroom Tax” – submitted in terms of Standing Order 16.1:

"This Committee:

- 1) Expresses concern that on 1 April 2013 new restrictions were introduced by the UK Government affecting working-age households occupying social housing such that reductions will be applied to housing benefit payments where tenants are deemed to be under-occupying their homes. This has been called the 'bedroom tax';
- 2) Is further concerned that the bedroom tax is now affecting around 4,000 council tenants and a similar number of housing association tenants in Edinburgh;
- 3) Notes that a range of actions to mitigate the under-occupancy restrictions have been looked at, including providing offers of reasonable alternative accommodation, but that the supply and turnover of smaller accommodation comes nowhere close to meeting the demand and that tenants unable to move to smaller accommodation may fall into rent arrears because of the bedroom tax;
- 4) Is concerned that in 2011-12 there were 93 council tenants losing their homes following eviction action for rent arrears and understands that continuation of the same approach for bedroom tax arrears could make many more people homeless;
- 5) Recognises that the Housing Revenue Account may be affected because of non-payment of the under-occupancy element (bedroom tax), but believes that pro-active support and engagement with tenants, tailored to their circumstances is more effective than the threat of eviction;
- 6) Further recognises that making tenants homeless may not impact directly on the HRA but will increase pressure on homelessness services, increase cost of providing temporary accommodation and longer-term impact on health and social-care services;
- 7) Therefore agrees to take measures to reduce the impact of bedroom tax on council tenants including:
  - (i) redesignating bedrooms, possibly as public rooms, to mitigate under-occupancy restrictions and,

(ii) in determining when and whether to initiate and pursue proceedings to recover a tenancy as a consequence of rent arrears, the council will not evict a tenant for rent arrears due to the under-occupancy element (bedroom tax).

8) Agrees that the Council will use its influence to encourage Registered Social Landlords to adopt a policy of not evicting tenants for bedroom tax arrears.”

- 7.2 Connected Capital Programme Status Update – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)
- 7.3 Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 Annual Report and Scottish Climate Change Declaration Annual Report – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)
- 7.4 Corporate Governance Senior Management Structure – Revised Arrangements – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)
- 7.5 Towards an Edinburgh Autism Strategy – A Plan for People with Autism who do not have a Learning Disability – joint report by the Directors of Health and Social Care and Children and Families (circulated)
- 7.6 Integration of Adult Health and Social Care Consultation: Scottish Government Response – report by the Director of Health and Social Care (circulated)
- 7.7 Redesigning the Community Justice System: Response to the Scottish Government’s Consultation – report by the Chief Social Work Officer (circulated)
- 7.8 Funding Models for Tourism Promotion – report by the Head of Economic Development (circulated)

## **8. Routine decisions**

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- 8.1 George Street: Festival Traffic Management – referral from the Transport and Environment Committee – report by the Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance (circulated)
- 8.2 Conference Invitation – International Conference on the History of Freemasonry – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)

## 9. Motions

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### 9.1 By Councillor Rose – Waste Collections - submitted in terms of Standing Order 16.1:

“Committee:

- 1) Notes that from 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013 waste collections a policy, of not collecting waste contained in bins which are overflowing or where the waste is beside the bins, has been publicised and implemented in a phased manner
- 2) Notes that there have been many occasions, before and after 4<sup>th</sup> February, where the Services for Communities Department of City of Edinburgh has failed to uplift public waste as advertised, leaving waste on the street with the attendant inconvenience and risks to residents
- 3) Notes there is a discrepancy between the standards being applied by the Council's performance of its waste collection duties and the standards it is applying to residents
- 4) Resolves to instruct suspension of the implementation of the policy noted in paragraph 1 for at least four weeks from the date of this motion and until such time as performance of collection has improved and the manner of the implementation of the policy has been reviewed by the Director of Services for Communities.”

### 9.2 By Councillor Mowat – Concessionary Fares - submitted in terms of Standing Order 16.1:

“Given confusion over who will pay for concessionary fares for trams, and comments from the Convenor of SESTran Bus Operator's group at a SESTran meeting on 22nd February 2013 that they will be locally funded, comments which were uncontradicted by the Transport Scotland representative at that meeting, Committee instructs that a report be prepared in one cycle detailing the discussions with all interested parties and progress on negotiating who will pay for concessionary fares.”

## **Carol Campbell**

Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance

## Committee Members

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Councillors Burns (Convener), Cardownie (Vice-Convener), Burgess, Chapman, Child, Nick Cook, Edie, Godzik, Ricky Henderson, Hinds, Lewis, Mowat, Rankin, Rose and Ross.

## Information about the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

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The Corporate Policy and Strategy consists of 15 Councillors and is appointed by the City of Edinburgh Council. The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee usually meets every four weeks.

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee usually meets in the Dean of Guild Court Room in the City Chambers on the High Street in Edinburgh. There is a seated public gallery and the meeting is open to all members of the public.

## Further information

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If you have any questions about the agenda or meeting arrangements, please contact Louise Williamson, Committee Services, City of Edinburgh Council, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ, Tel 0131 529 4830, e-mail [louise.p.williamson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:louise.p.williamson@edinburgh.gov.uk) .

A copy of the agenda and papers for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the main reception office, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh.

The agenda, minutes and public reports for this meeting and all the main Council committees can be viewed online by going to [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol).