

Motions and Amendments

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00 am Tuesday, 5th December, 2023

Dean of Guild Court Room - City Chambers

Motions and Amendments

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Amendment by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee

5 December 2023

Item 7.3 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund update

Amends 1.1.4 as below:

“Agrees to reallocate the remaining capital funds which had been earmarked for RPF project delivery to deliver Council-led projects which can be completed within the timescales required on projects related to net zero, climate adaptation and nature recovery in recognition of the fact that these are unfunded capital priorities as outlined in the Sustainable Capital Budget update paper at Finance and Resources committee on 21st November 2023, that becoming a Net Zero City by 2030 is a key aim of the Council Business Plan and that these are cross-cutting themes within the UK SPF criteria. Also agrees that the additional update report mentioned at 1.1.6 will clearly outline how the projects selected for this spending deliver against the various workplans / strategies which fall under the remit of the Net Zero Edinburgh Leadership Board.”

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker

Seconded by:

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023 Item 7.4 – Edinburgh Fair Work Charter

Adds to 1.1.1:

“with the following adjustments:

1) in the “Achieving” status level of the “Real Living Wage” section under “Fair Pay” specify that apprentices should also be paid a Real Living Wage for businesses to be considered “Achieving” in this category

2) in the ‘Inclusivity’ section include actions relating to specific support for unpaid carers”

Adds new 1.1.2:

“Requests that the ‘scoping and engagement’ phase of the timescale includes engagement with third sector and voluntary organisations working on employment and employability for women, disabled people, Black and minority ethnic people, care leavers, unpaid carers and other marginalised groups.”

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker

Seconded by:

Addendum by the SNP Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023 Item 7.6 – Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029

Adds at recommendations:

“1.1.8

Notes the excellent work and success rate of the Empty Homes Officer detailed in Appendix 4.

Calls for a report within three cycles exploring the benefits and costs of increasing the size of the Empty Homes Team eg. in Glasgow there are 4 Empty Homes Officers as opposed to 1 in Edinburgh.”

Moved by: Councillor David Key
Seconded by: Councillor Stuart Dobbin

Addendum by the Liberal Democrat Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023 Item 7.6 – Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-29

Adds

1.1.8 Requests quarterly pipeline approvals and completions in table format (similar to the table in 4.1.4 Table 2 of this report) on the Business Bulletin, to allow committee to track realistic progress.

1.1.9 Notes the estimations on Item 2.9 of the SHIP report and requests committee receives updated impact going forward after the induction of the Short Term Let Control Area.

Moved by: Councillor Pauline Flannery
Seconded by: Councillor Jack Caldwell

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023 Item 7.6 – Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-2029

Adds:

1.1.8 Notes from the report that:

“On 2 November 2023 Council declared a Housing [Emergency] due to the acute nature of Edinburgh’s homelessness crisis, coupled with the severe shortage of social rented homes ...” (3.5, p4)

“Edinburgh has one of the lowest proportions of social housing in Scotland with only 13% of homes for social rent compared to the national average of 22%” (Appendix 4, 2.3)

“The majority of the AHSP approvals are for social rent (63%), with most of the remaining homes being for mid-market rent” (Appendix 4, 4.8)

The Scottish Government’s target is for 70% of approvals to be social rent (Appendix 4, 4.8)

1.1.9 Considers that, in the context of the declaration of a Housing Emergency which recognises the severe shortage of social rented homes as a critical factor, and of being a local authority with one of the lowest percentages of social rented homes in Scotland, an investment plan which fails to meet the Scottish Government target of 70% approvals for social rent is not sufficiently radical and that the Council should instead be pursuing an investment plan which delivers above and beyond that target to remedy the historical underinvestment in social rented homes in the city and achieve parity with other local authorities.

1.1.10 Also notes that the investment plan does not consider alternative housing models such as housing co-operatives, “modular” homes or co-housing arrangements which can

provide better quality housing at more affordable rents and should be part of the solution to the Housing Emergency.

1.1.11 Notes that the Council will be developing a Housing Emergency Action Plan and agrees that this process should address the points above such that future iterations of the SHIP greater prioritise investment in social rented homes and alternative housing models.

1.1.12 Also considers that the Emergency Action Plan should further interrogate funding sources for the SHIP, for example by exploring preventative spend projects within health and social care, climate, or economic development where housing has a key role to play in achieving objectives and where additional, external investment from other funds might be appropriate.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker
Seconded by:

Addendum by the Liberal Democrat Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee

5 December 2023

Item 7.7 – Housing Emergency Action Plan

Committee adds

1.1.7 Requests the Service Director, Housing and Homelessness, continues to explore all further options to resolve the housing emergency and requests the 'cyclical updates' are present on May 2024 and August 2024 Business Bulletins respectively and the Homelessness Action Plan is annually scheduled as routine for scrutiny.

1.1.8 Requests the May 2024 Business Bulletin update (as above) or a 'Void Turnaround Improvement Strategy' report (as determined suitable) includes the feasibility of 're-decoration vouchers' for properties where repairs / re-decoration are the primary barrier to allowing Lets of Void properties (supporting Action Area 1.).

1.1.9 Requests the following action areas are appended to the final Housing Emergency Action Plan;

1.1.9.1 Adds Action Area 26. "Ensure there is dedicated resource to liaise across Lothian council areas, when appropriate, to develop a strategic housing partnership across the City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council, East Lothian Council, and West Lothian Council."

1.1.9.2 Adds Action Area 27. "Ensure parity, where legislatively possible, between Planning and Housing departments and committees, and increase opportunities for departments and committees to co-ordinate to meet Housing Supply Targets in LDP 2016 and City Plan 2030 respectively."

1.1.9.3 Adds Action Area 28. "Guarantee action areas 1., 14., 16., 17. and 18. prioritise the dignity and wellbeing of residents above all quotas, targets and figures, and recognises the critical work officers currently do to ensure these values are upheld in all transactions."

1.1.10 Requests the final action plan is broken down by practical steps that can be taken now and aspirational actions that require substantial additional capital.

Moved by: Councillor Jack Caldwell

Seconded by: Councillor Pauline Flannery

Amendment by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023 Item 7.7 – Housing Emergency Action Plan

Deletes recommendations 1.1.2 – 1.1.6 and replaces with:

1.1.2 Notes that Council agreed that the “structure and reporting schedule of this additional Plan will be discussed in a workshop environment with the Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work committee”, and that the plan would take “a human rights-based approach to future work”.

1.1.3 Notes that Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work committee has not been involved in the development of the draft plan, and that this report fails to include an IIA which would be a helpful way of ensuring that a human rights-based approach is taken to this work.

1.1.4 Looks forward to engaging with officers and relevant stakeholders, including those with lived experience of the impact of the housing emergency, to develop the plan.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker

Seconded by:

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023

Item 7.8 – Strategy for purchasing land and homes to meet affordable housing need

Add at the end of recommendations:

1.1.5 Notes that the council has powers to compulsorily purchase properties such as long-term empty homes but that the council does not use these powers due to a lack of suitable budget;

1.1.6 Therefore agrees to receive an update report within three cycles on the feasibility of using CPO powers to bring long-term empty homes back into use and retaining those which align with the council's asset management strategy and disposing of those which do not.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker
Seconded by:

Amendment by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023 Item 7.10 – Tenant Participation and Community Engagement 24-27

Deletes all recommendations and replaces with:

- 1.1 Recognises that funding to support tenant participation and community engagement is of vital importance.
- 1.2 Notes that Councillors have been asked to agree spending of over £550k of public money without:
 - a) oversight of the SLA which governs the contract;
 - b) a RAG status update (or similar) against the KPIs contained within the SLA;
 - c) explanation of how the proposed spend delivers value for money in the context of other local authorities delivering a similar service differently and at lower cost.
- 1.3 Considers that for Councillors to approve spending without this information falls short of the level of scrutiny the public expect from and entrust of Elected Members and is poor governance.
- 1.4 Therefore, requests that officers engage with groups to bring forward refreshed proposals for spending on tenant participation which will address these concerns and be integrated with the Housing Emergency Action Plan and any other relevant strategies / action plans relating to community engagement which exist in the Council.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker

Seconded by:

Amendment by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5th December 2023

Item 7.11 – Affordable Housing Commuted Sums

Deletes all recommendations and replaces with:

- 1.1 Notes that the Council recently declared a Housing Emergency;
- 1.2 Notes the Planning Committee decision at paragraph 5 to receive a report in Autumn 2024;
- 1.3 Given the Housing Emergency and need to develop an Emergency Action Plan, agrees that this Committee will receive a report on the same subject within 2 cycles.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker

Seconded by:

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee

5 December 2023

Item 9.1 – By Councillor Caldwell – EdIndex during the Housing Emergency

Adds:

7) Notes that there are a number of challenges reported with using EdIndex related to digital exclusion and / or comprehension, felt most acutely by older adults and some disabled people, and requests that this report pays particular attention to these issues.

8) Recognises that individual, 1-1 support to help individuals to submit an EdIndex form is the best way of addressing this problem and that, whilst training has been put in place with some services within the Council to signpost people to the EdIndex site – for example, within the library service – proactive support for individual applicants to complete an EdIndex form is not currently offered.

9) Therefore, requests that this report also covers detail on what resourcing could be put in place to trial a programme of application support – for example, via scheduled drop in sessions in libraries, community centres, or over the phone – with oversight of this programme given to the HART team, who already work closely with disabled applicants or those with additional support needs, to ensure consistency in support for applicants from the point of application through to offer and post-offer support / tenancy sustainment, recognising that this is an important tenet of trauma informed working.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker

Seconded by:

Addendum by the Liberal Democrat Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023 Item 9.2 – By Councillor Hyslop – Discretionary Housing Payments

Adds after last paragraph;

Requests this report seeks input from the Accessible Housing Sounding Board.

Moved by: Councillor Jack Caldwell
Seconded by: Councillor Pauline Flannery

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Committee 5 December 2023 Item 9.2 – By Councillor Hyslop – Discretionary Housing Payments

Adds at the end:

Notes that DHP has the particular policy intention of helping people on a meanwhile basis to access more appropriate / affordable accommodation, but that this is a challenge in Edinburgh where rents are hugely inflated.

Notes that other benefits and funds are available relating to addressing pressures on housing / homelessness prevention, for example the Tenant Grant Fund and Tenant Hardship Fund. Also notes that other funds exist which support tenancy sustainment such as the School Clothing Grant and Scottish Welfare Fund.

Therefore, requests that this report also includes an outline of funds in addition to DHP whose general objectives are to prevent homelessness / support tenancy sustainment, outline the nuances of the policy intentions behind each of these funds, the different criteria attached to them (for example, which funds are eligible for benefit recipients vs non benefit recipients) and the funding streams for them, all with a view to setting out if there are additional considerations which ought to be made when reviewing funding needs for DHP going forward.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker
Seconded by: